

How Okpebholo's Ologbo power project is drawing investors, creating jobs

OUR CORRESPONDENT

BENIN CITY

Edo State's drive to attract fresh investments, expand industrial production and create jobs is gaining momentum with the ongoing development of a 100-megawatt gas-powered electricity plant and industrial park at

Ologbo, Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area. The project, being developed by CCETC and formally launched in February 2026, is emerging as a major pillar of the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo's strategy to improve electricity supply, strengthen industrial capacity and create an envi-

ronment where businesses can operate with greater certainty. The development combines a 100MW natural-gas-powered generation facility with an industrial park, positioning Ologbo as a potential new industrial hub and a strategic centre for power-driven economic activity in Edo. The Federal Ministry of

Information and National Orientation has described the project as part of efforts to promote manufacturing, employment and sustainable economic growth in the state. Project Coordinator, CCETC, Jiang Fan, said the company had recorded substantial progress in the execution of the project, with most

of the generating equipment already delivered to site. "I am in charge of this project and this is our 100 megawatts of power generation and also an industrial park," Fan said. According to him, the facility will generate electricity from natural gas, with individual generating units rated

at about 2.3MW, while the combined capacity is expected to reach 100MW. Fan disclosed that about 90 per cent of the foundation work had been completed, while overall execution of the project had reached roughly half of the planned work.

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Afegbua demands fresh roadmap to reposition The Nigerian Observer

HASSAN DAISY AND BELOVED EKHABAFE

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Hon. Kassim Afegbua, has challenged the management of the Bendel Newspaper Company, publishers of the Nigerian Observer, to develop a fresh and workable roadmap for repositioning the organisation for greater productivity, relevance

and sustainability. Afegbua made the call on Wednesday during an inspection visit to the Bendel Newspaper Company, where he interacted with management and staff and inspected some of the facilities and equipment of the organisation. The Commissioner expressed concern over the condition of some of the equipment and operational facilities, stressing that modern media organisations re-

quire functional technology, efficient management and a highly productive workforce to remain competitive in an increasingly digital environment. He also emphasised the need for greater accountability and productivity among

staff, urging management to ensure that available human and material resources were effectively deployed towards achieving the objectives of the organisation. According to him, the state government is interested in understanding how the

Nigerian Observer can be repositioned to deliver greater value to the people of Edo State, adding that any further investment in the organisation must be backed by a clear and realistic plan capable of producing measurable improvements and sustainable results.

Rather than taking an immediate decision on the future of the organisation, Afegbua gave the management an opportunity to present a convincing revival plan outlining practical measures for im-

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

Edo closes security gaps, rejects criminal control – Braimoh

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has intensified efforts to strengthen security across the state through strategic collaboration with the Nigerian Army and plans to identify suitable locations for new and expanded military formations. The State Government said the initiative was aimed at closing existing security gaps and ensuring that every community, farm, business district and critical infrastructure in Edo remains within the reach of effective security response. The Special Adviser to the Edo State Governor on Public Affairs and Media, Hon. Haruna Braimoh, disclosed this in a statement, saying the

recent assessment of strategic locations by the Edo State Geographic Information Service (EDOGIS), in collaboration with senior military officers, underscored the administration's commitment to protecting lives, property and investments. According to him, the strategic inspection covered several locations, including Iguobazuwa, Igarra, Ososo, Udomi, Irrua, Ubiaja and Benin City, among others. Braimoh said the exercise was designed to identify areas requiring stronger security coverage and determine strategic locations where military formations could be established or expanded to facilitate surveillance and rapid re-

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FACILITIES INSPECTION: Edo State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Hon Kassim Afegbua(left), accompanied by the General Manager of the BNCL, Hon. Peter Odiboh(right) inspects facilities in the company's printing section. PHOTO: EMMANUEL IJEGBAI

FG unveils 100 – day tourism calendar to drive \$100bn economy —Pg 3

UNIPORT ASUU declares indefinite strike over incomplete salaries, allowances —Pg 11

Assad regime planned US journalist's kidnap for weeks —Pg 14

Aghahowa leads ex-youth soccer players Association, seeks —Pg 21 members' cooperation

PHOTO

NEWS

100 Mega Watts Power Generation and Industrial park projects in Ologbo, Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area, Edo State



How Okpebholo's Ologbo power project...

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He also said the project had secured the necessary generation and distribution licences, with the company now undertaking remaining preparations towards commencement of electricity generation and distribution.

The distribution network, he explained, is designed to cover six local government areas, with room for expansion to additional parts of the state.

Fan said the availability of reliable electricity would have a direct impact on Edo's investment climate, particularly by reducing one of the major constraints confronting businesses and industries.

"This is meaningful to businesses and investors in the state," he said.

He added that the industrial park, alongside existing investments around the project area, would create opportunities for more businesses to establish operations in Ologbo, with attendant employment opportunities for residents.

The project is already generating economic activity within the host community, with construction work providing employment for local workers.

Fan said the expected expansion of the industrial park would further increase opportunities for indigenes and residents.

"With a lot of investment

and our industrial park started, more opportunities will be available for the local indigenes to work," he said.

The Ologbo project is being executed against the backdrop of the Okpebholo administration's broader economic agenda, which places security, roads, infrastructure and reliable power supply at the centre of its efforts to attract private capital into Edo.

The administration has consistently presented infrastructure development as a means of creating the conditions for businesses to invest, expand production and employ more people.

The Ologbo investment therefore represents more than the construction of a power plant. Its combination with an industrial park is expected to provide a platform for businesses requiring dependable electricity to establish or expand operations.

The arrangement is also designed to enable Edo to participate more directly in the long-term economic benefits associated with strategic infrastructure and industrial investments.

For residents of Ologbo, the project represents a significant development in a community that has experienced years of electricity challenges.

A local laundry operator, Mr. Imowo Iyip, described the project as "a welcome develop-

ment", recalling the difficulties businesses and households had faced as a result of inadequate electricity supply.

Similarly, Pastor Friday Johnson, who said he had lived in the area for more than two decades, recalled periods when residents depended heavily on generators.

He said recent improvements in electricity supply had brought relief to residents and businesses.

Another resident, Mr. Udok Uwen, described the development as "a very good development" for Ologbo and neighbouring communities.

With the power plant and industrial park progressing side by side, Ologbo is gradually assuming a new economic significance, as Edo seeks to transform infrastructure investment into industrial production, employment and sustainable economic growth.

For the state, the emerging industrial landscape carries a straightforward economic proposition: reliable power to support businesses, infrastructure to attract investors and new investments to create jobs.

As work continues towards completion of the project, attention is increasingly turning to how the 100MW facility and industrial park will translate into sustained industrial activity and wider economic opportunities for Edo residents.

Afegbua demands fresh roadmap...

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proving operations, upgrading facilities, enhancing revenue generation and strengthening overall efficiency.

He challenged the management to demonstrate the value that continued government investment in the newspaper would bring to the state and its people, particularly at a time when traditional media organisations are rapidly adapting to technological advancement and changing pat-

terns of news consumption.

Responding, the General Manager of the Nigerian Observer, Hon. Peter Odiboh, expressed appreciation to the Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for his commitment and efforts towards reviving the Bendel Newspaper Company.

Odiboh reaffirmed the commitment of the management and staff to their duties and to the renewed efforts to reposition the organisation.

He described the Nigerian Observer as an important media institution in Edo State with a rich history of informing the public and providing credible reportage on issues affecting the state and the wider society.

The General Manager expressed confidence that with the right support, modernisation and improved operational strategies, the newspaper would regain greater visibility, productivity and relevance in the media industry.

Edo closes security gaps, rejects criminal...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

sponse to security threats.

"The message from the State is unequivocal: no part of Edo will be surrendered to kidnappers, bandits, cultists, land grabbers, land racketeers or other criminal elements," Braimoh said.

He added that the planned expansion of military presence would complement the efforts of other security agencies while strengthening intelligence gathering, surveillance and rapid response to emerging threats.

The Special Adviser also highlighted the role of accurate land information and geo-spatial intelligence in modern security management, noting that the involvement of EDO-GIS goes beyond conventional land administration.

He explained that reliable spatial data would enable the government and security agencies to better understand the terrain, identify strategic locations and make informed decisions regarding the deployment of security infrastructure.

Braimoh said the renewed security initiative was also aimed at creating the confidence required for economic growth and sustainable development in the state.

He noted that investors needed assurances that their investments were protected, while farmers should be able to access their farms without fear and residents should be able to travel across the state without the threat of criminal attacks.

"Under Governor Monday Okpebholo's leadership, Edo

is demonstrating that security is not merely a response to crime but a fundamental pillar of governance and development," he said.

According to him, the collaboration among the State Government, EDOGIS and the Nigerian Army represents a proactive approach to preventing criminal networks from establishing influence in difficult-to-govern areas.

He said the state would continue to deploy legitimate instruments of governance, intelligence, land administration and security cooperation to protect its people and territory.

"Edo must remain great and a secure Edo is a prosperous Edo, and the determination to secure the State remains unwavering," Braimoh concludes.

FG unveils 100 – day tourism calendar to drive \$100bn economy

OSEMUDIAMHEN FAITH

LAGOS

The Federal Government has backed a 100-Day National Tourism Calendar designed to aggregate Nigeria's festivals, concerts and cultural events on a single digital platform to unlock a \$100 billion tourism and crea-

tive economy.

The calendar, powered by MyCityApp and MyLagoApp, was unveiled at the Ember2Remember National Stakeholders' Conference held in Victoria Island, Lagos.

The Minister of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Mrs. Hannatu Musawa, said the initiative targets the Sep-

tember-to-December festive season to connect visitors, diaspora Nigerians and local consumers with tourism experiences nationwide.

Musawa said government aims to move beyond celebration to deliberately monetise the most economically active period in the national calendar for job creation and in-

vestment.

"This initiative is about deliberately organising, packaging, promoting and monetising one of the most economically active periods in our national calendar," she said.

She noted that every visitor creates a value chain spanning aviation, transportation, hotels, restaurants, entertain-

ment, retail, technology and local communities.

The minister urged state governments, event organisers and tourism operators to upload their programmes for the period onto the platform to create a single credible destination for discovering experiences across Nigeria.

Earlier, Chief Executive Officer of MyCityApp, Mrs. Ifeoma Chukwu, said a \$100 billion tourism economy is achievable for Nigeria if its cultural assets are properly packaged.

"When we speak about building a \$100 billion tourism economy, it may sound

ambitious. But globally, the evidence tells us it is achievable," she said.

The calendar is expected to address fragmentation in tourism promotion and will feature festivals, concerts, exhibitions, food experiences, fashion and sporting events for distribution through a 360-degree media ecosystem.

Dignitaries at the event included Lagos State Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Mrs. Toke Benson-Awoyinka; Enugu State Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, Mrs. Ugochi Madueke; and MTN Nigeria CEO, Mr. Karl Toriola, among others.

**OPENING CEREMONY:**

Representative of the Director-General, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Chief Chiwendu Chukwu (6th R); Director Information and Public Relations, NYSC, Mrs Caroline Embu (4th R); Director of Media Department, Chief Emeka Mgbemena (5th L); and others participants during the opening ceremony of the 2026 combined workshop for NYSC Information and Public Relations, Protocol and Media Officers in Abuja, yesterday.

Edo health ministry begins harmonisation of 2027 operational plan

OLIVER IJIQGBE

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Ministry of Health has commenced the harmonisation of its 2027 Annual Operational Plan (AOP), bringing together key stakeholders and development partners to review priorities, targets and strategies for improved healthcare planning and service delivery.

The harmonisation workshop provided participants with an opportunity to review baseline data, assess proposed targets and make necessary adjustments to the 2027 operational plan to ensure that it reflects the current realities and priorities of the state's health sector.

In his goodwill message,

the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomhole, urged stakeholders to demonstrate commitment to the process, stressing the need for a comprehensive, realistic and implementable operational plan for the development of the health sector.

Oshiomhole called for active participation and cooperation among stakeholders, urging them to take the harmonisation exercise seriously.

The Director of Planning in the ministry, Mrs. Iruobe Lauretta, described planning as a continuous process that requires regular review, assessment and improvement to ensure that set objectives are effectively achieved.

As part of the exercise,

the planning team, led by Omorogbe Kelly, presented an update on the review of baseline data and targets for the 2027 AOP.

The team also reviewed the proposed web-based AOP application and the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, aimed at strengthening the planning process and ensuring that the final document responds adequately to emerging needs in the sector.

Speaking on the exercise, Mr. Zingchang Blessing acknowledged the support of the Federal Government to Edo State in strengthening health-sector planning and finalisation of the 2027 AOP.

Representatives of development partners, the Federal Ministry of Health and other participating institutions also delivered goodwill messages, urging stakeholders to contribute actively to the development and subsequent implementation of the operational plan.

The workshop was attended by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Dr. Eighemherio Paul Ikhumosa, representatives of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), health institutions and other stakeholders.

Participants subsequently presented observations, corrections and proposed adjustments to various components of the 2027 AOP as the harmonisation process continues.

Edo Govt moves to curb ozone layer depletion

MONDAY OISE

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to protecting the ozone layer and promoting sustainable cooling practices to safeguard the environment and human health.

The State Commissioner for Environment and Sustainability, Mr. Nosa Adams, stated this in Benin City during activities marking the 2026 International Ozone Day, with the theme, "Global Action for a Cooler Planet."

The event, held at the State Secretariat, brought together environmental stakeholders and practitioners in the refrigeration and air-conditioning sector.

Represented by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Mrs. Edith Ebowonyi, the Commissioner said that, ten years after the adoption of the Kigali Amendment, the state government would continue to support initiatives aimed at sustainable cooling and environmental protection.

Adams commended refrigeration and air-conditioning practitioners in the state for their contributions to environmental protection, assuring them of government's readiness to collaborate with relevant agencies and stakeholders.

He said such collaboration would include training and capacity development programmes designed to equip practitioners with the knowl-

edge and skills required to adopt environmentally friendly practices.

Earlier, the Edo State Coordinator of the National Association of Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Practitioners (NARAP), Mr. Isaac Oseiga, said the event was organised to train practitioners on the use of tools provided by the Federal Government to support efforts against climate change.

Also speaking, a former National President of NARAP, Mr. Ozaveshe Balogun, described the protection of the ozone layer as an ongoing responsibility that requires the commitment of all stakeholders.

Balogun said ozone layer depletion and climate change have consequences for the environment and everyday human activities, stressing the need to intensify public awareness.

He pledged to take the awareness campaign to rural communities and appealed to the government for greater support to expand the campaign on sustainable cooling and environmental protection.

The high point of the event was the unveiling of a book on Nigeria's Leadership Role in Ozone Layer Protection, authored by Balogun.

The programme also featured a technical session during which participants were trained on the use of various tools and equipment designed to promote environmentally friendly refrigeration and air-conditioning practices.

FG pushes national care policy to unlock women's economic potential

ABUJA

The Federal Government has reaffirmed its commitment to developing a National Care Policy aimed at unlocking women's economic potential, reducing the burden of unpaid care work and promoting inclusive national development.

Hajiya Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, Minister of Women Affairs stated this at the National Care Sector De-

velopment Workshop on the Care Digital Platform and Draft National Care Policy Economy Summit in Abuja.

Sulaiman-Ibrahim, represented by the ministry's Permanent Secretary, Mrs Esuabana Nko-Asanye, said the initiative reflected Nigeria's commitment to inclusive economic growth, social development, women's economic empowerment and the wellbeing of families and communities.

According to her, women

and girls continue to shoulder a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities, limiting their opportunities in education, employment, entrepreneurship, leadership and public life.

She noted that the lack of affordable childcare and other care services forced many women, especially those in poor and vulnerable households, to choose between earning an income and caring for their families.

"Nigeria cannot fully realise the productive potential of its women if millions remain constrained by unequal care responsibilities.

"This is not simply a women's issue. It is an issue of economic efficiency, social justice and national development.

"We must move from viewing care as an invisible household obligation to recognising it as an essential component of our national economic infrastructure," she said.

Sulaiman-Ibrahim, said Nigeria's changing demographics, rapid urbanisation and evolving family structures had increased demand for childcare, healthcare, disability support and elderly care services.

She added that strengthening the care economy would expand early childhood development services, childcare centres, community and home-based care, while creating employment opportunities for young people, women entrepreneurs, coop-

eratives, social enterprises and private-sector providers.

The minister described the care economy as an essential foundation of society that had remained undervalued and underinvested despite its enormous contribution to human development and economic productivity.

She stressed the need to recognise the economic value of unpaid caregivers and improve data collection to accurately measure unpaid care work and its contribution to Nigeria's economy.

NEWS

Eligibility suit: Atiku gets court nod to serve Tinubu

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja has granted an application by the presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress, Atiku Abubakar, to serve court processes on President Bola Tinubu through the All Progressives Congress.

Justice Inyang Ekwo granted the application while ruling on an ex parte motion filed by Atiku's counsel, O.T. Omotayo-Ojo, seeking an order for substituted service on the President.

Atiku and his party, ADC, are seeking the disqualification of Tinubu and the APC from participating in the 2027 presidential election over an allegedly forged National Youth Service Corps discharge certificate submitted to the Independent National Electoral Commission.

The suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1888/2026, has Tinubu, APC and INEC as the first to third defendants, respectively.

The plaintiffs are asking the court to compel INEC to remove the names of Tinubu and

APC from the list of candidates and political parties for the 2027 presidential election.

Moving the motion on Wednesday, Omotayo-Ojo told the court that the application became necessary because the plaintiffs had been unable to effect personal service of the originating summons and other processes on Tinubu.

He, therefore, urged the court to permit the documents to be served on the President through the APC, the second defendant in the suit.

Justice Ekwo granted the application.

Following an undertaking by Omotayo-Ojo, who held

the brief of Silas Onu, that the plaintiffs would effect service within seven days, the judge ordered that the processes be served within the period.

The judge subsequently adjourned the suit until September 28 for mention.

At the previous proceedings on September 1, Onu had informed

the court that the plaintiffs were yet to personally serve Tinubu with the originating summons and had sought an order permitting substituted service.

Meanwhile, Tinubu, the APC and INEC have filed responses challenging the competence of the suit and urging the court to dismiss it.

Police repel bandit attack in Katsina, rescue four victims

KATSINA

The Katsina State Police Command has repelled a bandit attack in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of the state, rescuing four kidnapped victims and recovering an AK-47 rifle loaded with five rounds of live ammunition.

The victims comprised three females and a nursing baby who were abducted when armed bandits attacked Makwanta village in the early hours of Wednesday.

This was contained in a statement by the Command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Abubakar Sadiq, made available to newsmen on Thursday.

According to the statement, "On September 16, 2026, at approximately 12:22 am, a distress call was received at the Dutsin-Ma Divisional Police Headquarters reporting that armed bandits had attacked Makwanta village and abducted three female residents.

"Upon receipt of the report, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) immediately mobilised a team of operatives to the scene. The team strategically tracked and blocked the fleeing bandits along the Dutsin-Ma-Danmusa LGA border and engaged the hoodlums in a fierce gun duel."

The statement noted that the

bandits were overpowered by the police team and fled into the surrounding bush with suspected gunshot wounds.

The rescued victims were identified as 14-year-old Marawiya Musa, 50-year-old Mariya Ibrahim, 21-year-old Amina Ibrahim and a nursing baby.

The police said all four victims were rescued unhurt.

Sadiq further said, "During a search of the area, the operatives recovered one AK-47 rifle loaded with five rounds of live ammunition, a Tecno mobile phone, three MP3 players, a knife and three wraps of dried leaves suspected to be Indian hemp."

The command maintained that efforts were ongoing to track and arrest the fleeing suspects, adding that the Commissioner of Police, CP Ali Umar Fage, commended the DPO and his team for what he described as their "gallantry, tactical precision, and swift response."

Fage reaffirmed the command's commitment to sustaining its operations against banditry and other violent crimes across the state. He urged residents to remain vigilant and provide security agencies with timely and actionable information that could assist in protecting lives and property.



NEWS CONFERENCE:

Minister of Youth Development, Comrade Ayodele Olawande (5th R); Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Youth Development, Dr Maryam Keshinro (5th L); Senior Special Assistant to the President on Digital Media, Otega Ogra (4th R); Senior Special Assistant to the President on Youth Initiatives, Titilope Gbadamosi (4th L) and other committee members during a news conference on the National Youth Confab by the Minister of Youth Development at State House in Abuja, yesterday.

Ondo herbal drink deaths rise to 49,170

ABUJA

The death toll from the consumption of a suspected poisonous herbal drink in Ondo State has risen to 49, with about 170 people reportedly affected by the health crisis.

The incident, which was initially reported in Araromi-Obu and Odigbo communities in the Odigbo Local Government Area, has also spread to the Irele Local Government Area, where eight deaths have been reported.

It had earlier been reported that at least 24 residents of Araromi-Obu and Odigbo were confirmed dead after consuming the substance.

The Chairman of the Odigbo Local Government Area, Mr Taiwo Adegoroye, had disclosed that eight people died in Araromi-Obu while 16 others died in Odigbo.

However, the death toll subsequently rose to 27 before reaching 49 as of Wednesday.

Adegoroye said the situation had subsided in the affected communities following interventions by the state and local government medical teams.

Speaking with our corre-

spondent on the telephone, the state Commissioner for Health, Dr Banji Ajaka, confirmed that the number of affected persons had increased and said the health crisis had extended to the Irele Local Government Area.

Ajaka said eight people had been reported dead in Irele as of Tuesday night.

He said, "As we are now, Irele is where we have a serious issue. Our people were there and many people have died. About

eight people have been recorded to have died as of last night.

"So, all the people that have been affected altogether now are about 170, those that have been admitted and those that have died."

The commissioner attributed the health crisis to the consumption of ethanol by the victims, adding that the state government had intensified its response to prevent the situation from spreading to other local government areas.

LG approves ₦20,000 monthly stipend for NYSC members

ABUJA

The Chairman of Urue-Offong/Oruko Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Chief Uno Etim, has approved a monthly stipend of ₦20,000 for each National Youth Service Corps member serving in the area.

Chief Uno announced the approval on Tuesday during a courtesy visit by corps members serving in the local government area.

He said, "For the corps members serving here, we have approved a monthly stipend of ₦20,000 for each of the corps members, and the payment takes immediate effect." The Council

Chairman told the corps members that having been deployed to serve in Urue-Offong/Oruko, they should consider the area their home for the duration of their service year.

"Expect necessary support which will enable you to discharge your responsibilities effectively. For you to be posted here, consider this area your home for the duration of your service year," he said.

He also assured them that concerns regarding accommodation and welfare would receive prompt attention, and directed the Works Department to inspect their lodges and identify areas requiring renovation and other interventions.

Describing the ₦20,000 monthly stipend as a practical expression of his administration's commitment, Uno said the gesture was to support young Nigerians deployed to contribute their time, skills and energy to the development of Urue-Offong/Oruko.

He urged the corps members to remain committed to the discharge of their duties, assuring them that their safety, welfare and peaceful service remain priorities of his administration.

Speaking on behalf of the corps members, the Community Liaison Officer, Ukachukwu Ifeanyi, expressed appreciation to the council chairman for the development initiatives of his administration across the area.

Benue CP warns politicians against recruiting thugs, cultists

MAKURDI

The Benue State Commissioner of Police, Cletus Nwadiogbu, has warned political parties and their candidates in the state against recruiting thugs and cult members during campaigns.

The commissioner gave the warning during a meeting with chairmen of political parties, candidates, representatives of sister security agencies and other key stakeholders at a peace accord signing ceremony held at the state police headquarters in Makurdi on Wednesday.

According to a statement issued on Thursday by the State Command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Peter Aondongu, and made available to journalists in Makurdi, the CP called on politicians to conduct themselves in a manner devoid of violence.

The police boss said the

peace accord was aimed at promoting peaceful political activities and sustaining security across the state.

The statement read in part, "Addressing the gathering, the Commissioner of Police, Benue State Command, CP Cletus C. N. Nwadiogbu, psc(+), mnips, PhD, urged political leaders and candidates to ensure that their supporters conduct themselves peacefully and responsibly.

"He particularly warned against the recruitment or use of political thugs, cult groups and other criminal elements to intimidate opponents or disrupt lawful political activities.

"The Peace Accord was subsequently signed by participating political parties and candidates, signifying their collective commitment to reject political violence, respect the rights of other political actors and cooperate with security agencies in maintaining peace throughout

the electoral process.

"The Commissioner assured all political parties and candidates that the Police Command would remain professional, impartial and committed to providing adequate security for all lawful political activities.

"He further urged stakeholders to maintain effective communication with the Police and other security agencies, especially with respect to planned rallies, campaigns and other major political activities.

"The Command therefore calls on all political leaders, candidates, supporters and the general public to uphold the spirit of the Peace Accord and work collectively towards peaceful and credible political activities in Benue State."

The PPRO said the stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to peaceful campaigns, respect for the rule of law, and the protection of lives and property throughout the electoral period.



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NEWS

Sanwo-Olu, Fashola, Ambode named in Lagos APC campaign council

LAGOS

The Lagos State chapter of the All Progressives Congress has released the structure of its campaign council ahead of the 2027 general elections, listing Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, former governors Babatunde Fashola

and Akinwunmi Ambode.

The Kadri Obafemi Hamzat Media Centre published the list on Thursday.

According to the list, Prince Tajudeen Olusi will serve as Chairman of the Governance Advisory Council, while Sanwo-Olu is listed as Advisory Council Chairman. Fashola

and Ambode are named as Co-Chairmen.

Other members of the advisory structure include the President's Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabiamila; Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Mudashiru Obasa; and former Minister of Health, Adeleke Mamora.

At the campaign council level, Sanwo-Olu is listed as Chairman, with his deputy, Kadri Obafemi Hamzat, as Deputy Chairman.

The council also names Ojelabi Cornelius as Vice Chairman I, Obasa as Vice Chairman II and Damilola Sonayon James as Vice Chair-

man III.

Senator Musiliu Obanikoro is listed as Director-General, while Rasaq Ajala is named Deputy Director-General and Adekunle Olayinka as Campaign Secretary.

The council has various directorates and sub-committees covering areas including legal

and compliance, party and inter-party affairs, administration and logistics, traditional institutions, diaspora engagement and residents' associations.

The formal inauguration of the council members is scheduled for today Friday, September 18, at the APC Secretariat on ACME Road, Ikeja Lagos.



PLENARY:

Hon Oshomah Ahmed (middle) Flanked on his right and left by Hon Donald Okogbe and Hon Charity Aiguobareuhian, members of the Edo State House of Assembly during the consideration of the bill for a law to amend the Edo state retirement age for magistrates and presidents of area customary courts law, 2005 and to provide for the extension of the retirement age of counsel of the ministry of Justice and for connected purpose, at the house plenary session yesterday.

PHOTO: GODWIN ISEGUAN.

Police arrest six suspected armed robbers, recover guns in Akwa Ibom

UYO

The Akwa Ibom State Police Command has arrested six suspected armed robbers allegedly terrorising Ikono, Ini and Obot Akara Local Government Areas of the state.

The suspects were said to have been apprehended in the early hours of Wednesday during a coordinated clearance operation by operatives of the command's tactical team in identified criminal hideouts across the three local government areas.

In a statement signed by the Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Timfon John, on Thursday in Uyo, the police said the operation followed sustained intelligence gathering aimed at dismantling the remaining

members of a criminal network responsible for a series of armed robberies and motorcycle thefts in the area.

The arrested suspects were identified as Peter Sabbath, 34, of Ikot Inyang Village, Ikot Ekpene LGA; Joseph Udo, 25, of Nung Ukim Ikot Okorie Village, Ikono LGA; and Victor Igwe, 23, of Mbiabong Ukan Ikot Etefia Village, who allegedly specialises in producing fake receipts for stolen motorcycles.

Others were Boniface Essiet, 37, of Ikot Akpan Ntim Village, Ikono LGA, an alleged native doctor who provides charms and fetish materials to the gang; Simeon Udo, 47, of Itak Ikot Akpandem Village, Ikono LGA; and Uko Akang of Asanting Village, who was arrested in possession

of a suspected stolen red Qlink motorcycle with registration number AUQ 73 VC.

The statement read, "The Akwa Ibom State Police Command has recorded another significant breakthrough in its ongoing intelligence-led operations against armed robbery and other violent crimes with the arrest of six suspected members and associates of an armed robbery gang operating within Ikono, Ini and Obot Akara Local Government Areas of the state.

"The arrests were made in the early hours of Wednesday during a coordinated clearance operation conducted by police operatives in identified criminal hideouts within the three Local Government Areas.

"The suspects arrested are:

Peter Sabbath, male, 34 years, native of Ikot Inyang Village, Ikot Ekpene LGA; Joseph Udo, male, 25 years, native of Nung Ukim Ikot Okorie Village, Ikono LGA; and Victor Igwe, male, 23 years, native of Mbiabong Ukan Ikot Etefia Village, alleged to specialise in the production of fake receipts used to facilitate the sale of suspected stolen motorcycles.

"Boniface Essiet, male, 37 years, of Ikot Akpan Ntim Village, Ikono LGA, alleged to be the native doctor providing charms and other fetish materials to members of the gang; Simeon Udo, male, 47 years, of Itak Ikot Akpandem Village, Ikono LGA; and Uko Akang, male, of Asanting Village, who was arrested in possession of a suspected stolen red Qlink motorcycle, registration number AUQ 73 VC."

Omoike solicits traditional rulers support to tackle drug abuse, crime

AUCHI

The Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Council, Hon. Romeo Aloaye Omoike, has sought the support and cooperation of the traditional institution in tackling illicit drug use and criminality across the council area.

Other areas of collaboration include environmental sanitation and the protection of gov-

ernment properties and institutions in the local government.

Omoike made the call when he paid a courtesy visit to the Aidonogie of South Ibie, His Royal Highness Alhaji Kelvin Danesi, as part of his consultation with traditional rulers across the local government area.

Speaking during the visit, the Chairman who was accompanied on the visit by the Vice Chairman, Mallam

Tijani Isah, expressed appreciation to the traditional ruler and the people of South Ibie for their support and prayers before and after the local government election.

He said the visit was primarily to appreciate the people for their support and to seek their continued prayers and cooperation as the new administration settles down to deliver on its campaign promises.

According to him, the Council considers the tra-

ditional institution a critical partner in achieving sustainable development and maintenance of peace and order.

He specifically solicited the cooperation of the South Ibie traditional institution in protecting government properties and public institutions, improving environmental sanitation, combating the proliferation of illicit drugs use and addressing other forms of criminalities within the area.

Why Aisha Buhari visited Atiku Abubakar

Former First Lady Aisha Buhari has visited former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar.

Atiku disclosed the visit in a post on his X handle on Wednesday, describing the meeting with the former First Lady as "warm and deeply appreciated".

The former Vice-President said the visit also highlighted the need for those seeking a better Nigeria to prioritise the welfare and future of Nigerians.

Atiku wrote, "Today, I was delighted to receive former First Lady, H.E. Aisha Buhari. Her visit was warm and deeply appreciated."

He said families across the country were facing increasing pressure from the rising cost of essential goods and services, including food, transportation, education and healthcare.

He added, "Beyond the courtesies of the occasion, it was also a reminder of the urgent responsibility before all who seek a better Nigeria: to put the welfare, dignity and future of our people first."

Atiku said Nigerians deserved an economy that would provide opportunities and enable families to live with dignity and hope.

He wrote, "Across our country, families are being stretched by the rising cost of food, transport, education, healthcare and other basic necessities. Nigerians deserve an economy that rewards hard work, restores opportunity and allows every family to live with dignity and hope."

The former Vice-President said building such a country would require collective efforts to ease the burden on Nigerians and restore hope.

Resumption: Etsako East Chairman orders clearing of all public schools

LAMAI CASSIUS

AGENEBODE

The Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Council, Hon. Sunny Ekpetika Ekpeson, has directed the Department of Environment to ensure that all public primary schools in the local government are cleared and cleaned as schools resume for a new academic session.

The Chairman gave the directive at the Council Secretariat in Agenebode during the presentation of newly acquired modern bush clearing machines and grass trimmers to the Head of the Environmental Department.

He directed that all schools across the three zones of the local government - Agenebode, Ibie and Okpella should be thoroughly cleared, cleaned and made safe for pupils.

According to him, "our children must learn in a clean and safe environment devoid of dangerous reptiles as the new academic session begins."

The Council boss also directed the Head of the

Department to commence work immediately, urging him to ensure proper and regular maintenance of the machines for optimal performance.

Responding, the Head of the Environmental Department, Mr. Inaboya J.E., expressed appreciation to the Chairman for the provision of modern working tools.

He described the intervention as a testament to the Chairman's commitment to child-friendly education, environmental hygiene and the wellbeing of every pupil in the local government.

He pledged to deliver a visibly cleaner environment across all schools, noting that with the new machines, the Department had been better empowered to sustain cleanliness as a culture in Etsako East.

Also speaking, the Head of Local Government Administration (HOLGA), Dr. Innocent Aleogena, commended the Chairman for his foresight and pro-people leadership.

NEWS

Echoes of Women in Africa Initiative Sparks Debate on Domestic Abuse in Edo

ISAAC ERANGA

BENIN CITY

A community outreach event organized by the Echoes of Women in Africa Initiative (ECOWA) under the Encouragers Circle for Survivors of Domestic Violence brought together civil society, traditional leaders, law enforcement, and former government officials in Benin City. Convened at the Justice and Peace Hall under the theme "Access to Justice for Women and Girls," the gathering served a dual purpose: confronting systemic barriers facing abuse victims in Edo State and celebrating the birthday of ECOWA's founder, Dr. Ms. Louisa Eikhomun Agbonkheshe.

Delivering a passionate keynote, Dr. Agbonkheshe criticized the widespread victim-blaming embedded across societal institutions, including churches, traditional structures, and law enforcement. She decried cases of physical battery, abandonment, and economic exploitation, warning that customary practices frequently undermine statutory legal protections. Reaffirming ECOWA's commitment to conflict resolution through structured mediation, she emphasized that cultural traditions must never be permitted to override the rule of law when protecting vulnerable women and children.

Presenting a contrasting viewpoint, traditional authority represented by Mr. Harri-

son Edo-Osagiede—speaking on behalf of the Odionwere of Amagba, Pa Joseph Iduoriyekemen—framed domestic disputes through the lens of traditional marital expectations. He asserted that a vast majority of domestic issues arise from a lack of submissiveness and respect from women toward their husbands, maintaining that traditional community intervention focuses primarily on identifying conflict causes to mediate disputes locally rather than through legal channels.

Addressing the law enforcement and financial dimensions of domestic abuse, SP Andrew Miriam—representing Edo State Commissioner of Police CP Patrick Daor—reaffirmed the police force's readiness to intervene in gender-based violence cases and urged victims to report abuse officially, while also advising women on home management. Hon. Mrs. Magdalene Ohenhen, former Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, emphasized economic independence as a key protective buffer. She urged women to gain income through trade, vocational skills, and education, warning against financial dependence on spouses and reckless spending habits.

The event concluded with ceremonial award presentations honoring the Odionwere of Amagba, the Edo State Commissioner of Police, and Hon. Mrs. Ohenhen for their contributions to community engagement.

TMV hails FG over eight-month lecturers' allowance payment

The Tinubu Media Volunteers (TMV) has applauded the Federal Government for releasing funds to pay eight months of accumulated allowances to eligible academic staff.

The payment covers the Consolidated Academic Tools Allowance (CATA) for academic staff in federal tertiary institutions from January to August.

In a statement issued by its

Chairman, Chukwudi Enekwechi, and Secretary, Segun Ogedengbe, on Wednesday, TMV described the payment as good faith.

The group said the payment was in line with the 2025 Federal Government of Nigeria-Academic Staff Union of Universities (FGN-ASUU) agreement.

It noted that the payment would apply across federal universities, polytechnics and col-

leges of education.

TMV said the development would help guarantee stability in the academic calendar and reduce disruptions associated with industrial actions.

"We commend the move by the Federal Government as it will guarantee stability in the academic calendar of the tertiary institutions.

"This is unlike in the past when Nigerian tertiary institutions witnessed prevalent

industrial actions by academic staff," it said.

The group also commended the prompt payment of salaries and allowances to tertiary institution workers under the Tinubu administration.

It said the administration had also provided assurance of retirement benefits for academic and non-academic retirees.

TMV said the development represented progress in resolving longstanding disagreements between the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **CHRISTOPHER OGBOMON OSA'S** and not **CHRISTOPHER OGBOMON OSAS**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

REARRANGEMENT OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that my correct arranged name is **IHEANACHO JANE CHIZOMA** and not **IHEANACHO CHIZOMA PAULINA**. Hence now wish to be known and addressed as **IHEANACHO JANE CHIZOMA**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **AKPOMUJE FREDERICK OKPORUA** and not **AKPOMUJE FRED OKPORUA**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **Miss OPUTA UCHE B.** Now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. ABU UCHE BRIDGET**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **VIVIAN ONUWABHAGBE ELABOR-FASOYIRO** now wish to be known and addressed as **VIVIAN ONUWABHAGBE ELABOR**. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME/ ADDITION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **OGBOE EVBIAYOWERU KINGSLEY** and **OGBOE KINGSLEY** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known and called **OGBOE EVBIAYOWERU KINGSLEY**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **SALIU RASHEED OLASUNBO** now wish to be known and addressed as **VICTOR ALBERT DAVID**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **Miss GIFT OBOSAIGHE ODIANOSEN** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs GIFT OBOSAIGHE EHIKHUEMEN**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

RE-ARRANGEMENTS/CHANGE OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **ARISOKWU KINGSLEY CLINTON** and **ARISOKWU OKWUDILI KINGSLEY** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known and called as **ARISOKWU OKWUDILI KINGSLEY**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **OGAR BLESSING OLOLO** now wish to be known and addressed as **OGAR CECILIA OLOLO**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **OSAWARU IRIAGBONSE JOY** and not **OSAWARU JOY**. Hence now wish to be known and addressed as **OSAWARU IRIAGBONSE JOY**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should be take note.

ARRANGEMENT OF NAME

I formerly known as **OTU-WINNER PAUL**. Now wish to be known as **WINNER OTU PAUL**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

I formerly known as **OKECHUKWU GIFT ONYINYE** now wish to be known as **OKECHUKWU GIFT ONYINYECHUKWU**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME/CORRECTION OF DATA OF BIRTH

I formerly known as **SALIU RASHEED OLASUNBO** now wish to be known and addressed as **VICTOR ALBERT DAVID**, and my correct date of birth is 1st day of October, 1999 and not 1st day of October, 1976. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

RECONCILIATION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **OGBONNA OKUM C. PRISCA**, **OGBONNA PRISCA OKUM** and **OGBONNA PRISCA NNNENNE OKUM** are one and same person. Hence now wish to be known and called as **OGBONNA PRISCA NNNENNE OKUM**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

The general public is hereby notified that I, **AKHIGBE AUGUSTINE EHRAHIEME** is the rightful owner of the property situated at 24, Irowa Obaze Street, Off Federal Government Girls College Benin Road, Ugbowo, Benin City, Egor Local Government, Edo State. That the original deed of conveyance dated 18th September 1975, registered as No.30 at page 30 in Volume 316 of the EDOGIS Land Registry, Benin City is missing and all efforts to locate it has proven abortive, hence this notification. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

Signed: xx

PUBLIC NOTICE

MISSING ORIGINAL CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

The general public is hereby notified that **Mr. BALA AYUBA** is the rightful owner of one original certificate of occupancy with the **FILE NO.EDL 54910** registered as **NO.188** at page 1, in **VOLUME 18** and **FILE** Contents of the register document, registered in the land registry, on the 29th day of July 2020, Benin City, Edo state. That the said original certificate was issued to me but was discovered missing on the 23rd day of September, 2024 at the above mentioned address. That all efforts made to trace the said document proved abortive. hence this publication for record purposes concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

Signed: MR BALA AYUBA

LEGAL NOTICE

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

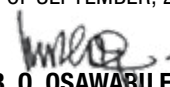
WHEREAS the person whose name is set out in the first column hereunder died testate on the date and at the place stated in the column; AND WHEREAS the persons whose names, addresses and claimed relationship to the deceased are set in the second column hereunder have applied to the Probate Registrar, High Court of Justice, Edo State of Nigeria for a grant of Letters of Administration (Will Annexed) of the real and personal property of the deceased.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration (Will Annexed) 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.

DR. (ENGR). FELIX UZOR
OKPOLI late of Oburuku, Aniocha South L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 14th day of February, 2021 in Benin City.

PED/832/2025
Mrs. Dorothy Okunwa Okpoli and Mr. Fumnanya David Okpoli of No 10, Eguaveon Avenue, Off Gapiola Avenue, GRA, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.

DATED THIS 17th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2026.


B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

LEGAL NOTICE

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

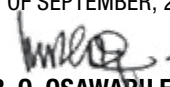
WHEREAS the person whose name is set out in the first column hereunder died testate on the date and at the place stated in the column; AND WHEREAS the persons whose names, addresses and claimed relationship to the deceased are set in the second column hereunder have applied to the Probate Registrar, High Court of Justice, Edo State of Nigeria for a grant of Letters of Administration (Will Annexed) of the real and personal property of the deceased.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration (Will Annexed) 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.

MADAM. VICTORIA OMAGBON late of Ekiador, Ovia South West L.G.A., who died on the 9th day of November, 2025 in Benin City.

PED/679/2026
Mr. ERNEST OGIEZEE and Mr. OSASENAGA RICHIE Omagbon, Evborioba Community, Airport Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.

DATED THIS 16th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2026.


B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

OFFICE OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

17A Vincent Agenmonmen Road, GRA, Benin City, Edo State Nigeria.



INVITATION TO TENDER

Ref. No. SDGs/PSU/RRS/26/3

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Edo State Government has approved funds for Edo State Sustainable Development Goals in the 2026 Edo State Approved Budget and wishes to apply part of it for the Infrastructural Development Across Edo State in compliance with Section 35 of the Edo State Public Procurement Law 2020, Office of the Edo State Sustainable Developments Goals therefore invites interested eligible bidders to tender for the project.

2.0 PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of work involves Desiltation and Maintenance of existing drainage structures, Construction of Primary Health Centre, Construction of Mini-Market, Supply and Installation of Solar Street Lights, and Procurement of Project Vehicle (Hilux) and Media Equipment.

REFERENCE NUMBER	PROJECT DESCRIPTION WITH PROCUREMENT JUSTIFICATION	PROJECT LOCATION
SDGs/PSU/RRS/26/1	Desilting of drains and evacuation of silt (Restore the Functionality of Drainage Infrastructure through the Desiltation of Drainage Systems)	Selected areas in Oredo, Benin City, Edo State
SDGs/PSU/RRS/26/2	Demolition works, construction of PHC's and other facilities (Improve access to quality primary healthcare services and strengthen healthcare delivery)	Agua -Irrua Edo Sate
SDGs/PSU/RRS/26/3	Construction of mini-market (open market shop), and other facilities (Promote local economic development by providing a safe, organized and conducive trading environment for artisans, farmers, traders and small business owners)	Ekpon Igueben Edo State
SDGs/PSU/RRS/26/4	Supply and installation solar street lighting (Improve public safety, enhance night time visibility, and promote socio-economic activities through the provision of reliable and environmentally sustainable lighting infrastructure)	Ekpon Igueben Edo State
SDGs/PSU/RRS/26/5	Procurement and supply of project vehicle (Hilux) and media equipment (Coordinating, supervising, monitoring, and evaluating development projects implemented across the state)	Edo Benin City

3.0 ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

You are to submit a detailed profile which should contain the following:

(a) Certificate of incorporation/registration with cooperate affairs commission (CAC)

(b) Evidence of registration with Edo State Public Procurement Agency.

(c) Evidence of payment of tax by the company for the immediate past 3years (i.e. 2023, 2024, 2025)

(d) Company's audited financial account (indicating turnover) and funding information over the past 3 years endorsed by a firm of chartered accountants.

(e) Company Profile including names of Partners, Director(s), or if it is Private Limited Company (names of Shareholders and Beneficial Owners to that company); organization structure, key professional staff with their names and registration with appropriate regulatory bodies (COREN, QSRBN, ARCON, CORBON, etc.) with their current practicing license

(f) Verifiable Evidence of previous/similar works successfully executed in the past five (5) years showing:

I. Letter of Award of the previous work done.

II. Completion certificate obtained from previous work done.

(g) A sworn affidavit indicating that:

I. None of the Directors of the Company has been convicted in any court for any criminal offence including fraud and financial impropriety.

II. The Company is not in receivership, insolvent or bankrupt.

III. No officer of Sustainable Development Goals is a former or present Director, shareholder or has any pecuniary interest in the company.

(h) List of Equipment/ Equipment Lease Agreement

I. List of Equipment

II. Equipment Lease Agreement (if applicable)

(i) All documents for submission must be transmitted with a covering letter on the company's letter headed paper bearing all necessary details:

i. Equipment and technology capacity if applicable

ii. Letter of consent to allow verification of documents submitted.

iii. Evidence of payment of a non-refundable tender fee of N50,000.00 only

4.0 COLLECTION/SUBMISSION OF BIDDING DOCUMENTS

Interested eligible bidders are to collect the bidding documents or obtain further information from the Procurement Office in the Sustainable Development Goals from 18th September to 5th

October, 2026 between the hours of 9:00am to 3:00pm, Mondays to Friday excluding public holiday upon submission of an evidence of payment of a non-refundable fee of 50,000.00 (Fifty Thousand Naira Only) using a Service Bill Reference Code (IGR) to be collected from the Finance and Account Department of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Bidding documents requested by mail will be dispatched by registered/speed post on payment of the postage cost. The Office of the Sustainable Development Goals will not be held liable for postal delay (if any) in the delivery of the documents or non-receipt of the same.

All bids must be accompanied by bid security of two percent (2%) of the quoted contract sum. Bid must be submitted to the address below not later than 11:59am on 5th October, 2026 in two (2) separate sealed envelopes and marked TECHNICAL BID” on the top right corner and the other to contain the FINANCIAL BID and boldly marked “FINANCIAL BID” on the top right corner. The two envelopes are to be placed in one large envelope and addressed to:

Director General/Focal Person
Edo State Sustainable Development Goals
17A Vincent Agenmonmen Road, GRA,
Benin City, Edo State Nigeria

Please note that electronic bidding will not be permitted.

5.0 OPENING OF BIDDING DOCUMENTS

Bids must be submitted to the Entity's Tenders Board as detailed in the bidding documents on or before 11:59am on 5th October, 2026 and the bids will be opened on the same day at 12:00pm at the Conference Hall of the Entity in the presence of the bidders' representatives and Civil Society Organizations (with mandate of ensuring transparency and accountability), or any member of the public who wishes to attend.

NOTE:

I. Late submission will be rejected

II. This invitation shall not be construed to be commitment on the part of Edo State Sustainable Development Goals for contract award nor shall it entitle the bidder to make any claims whatever and seek indemnity by virtue of having responded to this advertisement.

Signed: DIRECTOR GENERAL/FOCAL PERSON
Office of the Sustainable Development Goals
Edo State.

Friday Sermon

How to Choose a Leader in Islam

MAJOR M. Y. BABANGIDA

Praise be to Allah, the One, the Subduer, the Mighty and the Forgiving; the One who causes the night to alternate with the day as a reminder for hearts and insight for people of understanding and reflection.

We praise Him, seek His guidance and forgiveness, and turn to Him in repentance. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, the Most Kind, the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful. I also bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, the guide to the straight path and the caller to the upright religion. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his family, his companions and all those who follow his guidance.

Dear brothers and sisters in Islam, our sermon today concerns how leadership should be chosen in an Islamic society and the qualities that should guide the selection of a leader.

Allah, the Most High, says: "Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession in the land, just as He granted it to those before them."

This verse reminds us that leadership is a trust and that those entrusted with authority have a responsibility to establish justice, protect the people and uphold what is right.

The scholars have discussed the question of leadership and the manner in which an Imam or leader may be established. The majority of scholars held that leadership could be established through the selection of qualified people of authority and influence, or through the appointment of a successor by a previous Imam, subject to the relevant Islamic principles.

This teaches us an important lesson: leadership should not be treated merely as a prize to be pursued for personal ambition. It is an amanah, a trust before Allah and a responsibility toward the people.

QUALITIES OF A LEADER

Islam places great emphasis on the qualities of the person entrusted with leadership.

Among the fundamental qualities are faith, justice, knowledge, sound judgment, wisdom, courage and the capacity to manage the affairs of the people.

A leader must understand the responsibilities attached to authority and possess the wisdom necessary to make decisions that protect the interests of society.

Justice is particularly important. A leader must not govern according to personal feelings, favouritism, family interests or the interests of a small group. Justice requires that people's rights be protected and that wrongdoing be addressed fairly.

The people entrusted with selecting a leader must equally exercise wisdom. They should consider who among the qualified candidates possesses the ability, integrity, knowledge and judgment necessary to serve the community.

Where candidates possess comparable qualifications, those responsible



for choosing the leader should carefully examine their capabilities and select the person most suited to managing the affairs of the people.

This principle places a serious responsibility on both leaders and those who choose leaders.

LEADERSHIP IS NOT FOR PERSONAL AMBITION

Brothers and sisters, one of the greatest dangers facing any society is when leadership becomes an instrument for personal ambition.

Positions of power should not be pursued merely for status, wealth, influence or personal advantage.

Allah warns believers against allowing worldly interests to become more beloved to them than obedience to Him and the responsibilities He has placed upon them.

A leader who places personal interest above the welfare of the people risks turning public authority into an avenue for injustice and corruption.

Likewise, those who seek leadership should ask themselves: Why do I want this position? Is it for the service of the people, or for personal recognition and advantage?

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught us the seriousness of leadership and responsibility. Authority is not simply an honour; it is a trust for which a person will ultimately answer before Allah.

A MESSAGE TO NIGERIAN LEADERS

O Nigerian leaders, fear Allah in your dealings with yourselves, your country and your people.

Nigeria belongs to all its citizens. The responsibility of leadership therefore requires wisdom, restraint, justice and a commitment to peace.

Do not squander the hopes that citizens have placed in you. Do not al-

low personal disagreements, political interests or ambitions for positions of power to deepen the difficulties facing the people.

When disagreements arise, let dialogue, wisdom and lawful means prevail.

There should be no room for those who deliberately seek to create conflict, division and instability for personal or hidden interests. Leaders must be vigilant and must ensure that disagreements do not degenerate into violence or destroy the unity and peace of the nation.

The Qur'an teaches believers to hold firmly together and not become divided. Unity does not mean that everyone must think alike; rather, it requires that differences be managed peacefully and that the common good be protected.

The Welfare of the People Must Come First. O Muslim leaders, and indeed all those entrusted with public authority, remember that power is temporary while accountability before Allah is permanent.

Use your positions to protect the vulnerable, promote justice, preserve peace and improve the lives of the people.

Do not allow personal ambitions, rivalry or the desire for high office to become more important than the welfare of the nation.

If ambition for power begins to drag society toward conflict, corruption or destruction, then such ambition must be restrained.

The true measure of leadership is not the title attached to a person's name, but the justice, peace and welfare that his or her leadership produces.

At a time when disagreements and conflicts continue to cause suffering in different parts of the world, Muslims must continue to pray and work for peace.

We pray that the bloodshed of Muslims and other innocent people will cease wherever it occurs, and that leaders will embrace dialogue, reconciliation and peaceful solutions to their differences.

May Allah unite the hearts of our leaders, protect our communities from violence and guide those entrusted with authority to act with wisdom and justice.

Let us reject personal desires when they conflict with the interests of the wider community. Let us reject hatred, corruption and destructive rivalry.

May Allah grant our leaders wisdom, courage and justice. May He protect Nigeria from conflict and division, strengthen peaceful coexistence among its people, and guide those entrusted with authority to serve with sincerity.

May Allah help us choose and support leaders who will uphold justice, protect the people and work for the common good. Ameen.

• Major M.Y Babangida is the Chief Imam of 4-Brigade Central Mosque, GRA Benin City.

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The Welfare of the People Must Come First. O Muslim leaders, and indeed all those entrusted with public authority, remember that power is temporary while accountability before Allah is permanent.



INSIDE EDO STATE

Imafidon tackles Morgan junction gridlock

OUR CORRESPONDENT

BENIN CITY

The Executive Chairman of Uhumwode Local Government Council, Hon. Austin Imafidon, popularly known as Isiwinna, has moved to ease the persistent traffic gridlock and hardship being experienced by motorists and commuters around Morgan Junction through an immediate palliative intervention on the bypass road.

The road links the Sapele Road Bypass with the Agbor Road Bypass and serves as a major access route to about four borrow pits from where sharp sand and other construction materials are transported.

The intervention, according to a statement by the Chairman's Chief Press Secretary, Ogiehor Ehis Tornado, followed persistent complaints from residents, motorists and heavy-duty vehicle operators over the deplorable condition of the road.

Imafidon, who inspected the ongoing works on the route on Monday, said the intervention was a direct response to the suffering of road users who have been spending hours, and in some cases days, trapped in traffic because of the condition of the road.

> "It is the cry of my people that I am responding to. My people spend days trapped in traffic because of the bad condition of this road.

> "Whether you are an indigene of Uhumwode or not, once you are transiting through my local government and your feet are here, you are my responsibility," he said.

The Chairman said the deplorable state of the road had caused prolonged traffic congestion, loss of productive hours and financial losses to motorists and commuters, with heavy-duty truck operators particularly affected.

He noted that the location was close to the boundary between Uhumwode and Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Areas, stressing that his administration would continue to deploy available resources to ameliorate the hardship faced by residents and other road users within the council area.

Imafidon, however, clarified that the palliative work was not a substitute for the permanent reconstruction of the road by the appropriate level of government.

He said the local government's intervention was intended to provide immediate relief while relevant authorities are expected to undertake comprehensive rehabilitation of the road.

Giving details of the ongoing work, the Director of Works, Engr. Asemota, said the intervention involves the removal of accumulated erosion materials, opening and cutting of gutters to facilitate the free flow of stormwater, filling and compacting of the road with hardcore, as well as the laying of a stone base.

He explained that the stone-base treatment was particularly important because the road is heavily patronised by articulated and other heavy-duty vehicles, whose movement exerts considerable pressure on the road surface.

Some road users, especially



heavy-duty truck drivers, commended the Chairman for responding to their plight only days after assuming office.

They described the intervention as timely, with some of them referring to the Chairman's action as a "God-sent" intervention.

The motorists appealed to the Federal Government and other relevant authorities to build on the local government's intervention by undertaking comprehensive rehabilitation of the road to provide a lasting solution to the recurring traffic congestion.

The palliative works are expected to continue as the council intensifies efforts to make the route more mo-

torable and reduce the hardship confronting commuters.

Earlier, Chairman Imafidon received a delegation of women from his home community in Ward 7, Isi-North, who visited the council secretariat to congratulate him on his assumption of office.

The delegation, led by the Ward Woman Leader, Mrs. Osazee Felicia, included the Assistant Woman Leader, Mrs. Hellen Ada, and Mrs. Stella Erhabor, among others.

The women offered prayers for divine wisdom, protection and guidance for the Chairman as he leads the council.

The Chief Press Secretary said the

visit was conducted in a warm and lively atmosphere, with Imafidon expressing appreciation to the women for their support, goodwill and prayers.

The Chairman used the occasion to reiterate his commitment to an inclusive administration, stressing that those who identify with his administration, irrespective of their immediate community, should be embraced as members of the larger Uhumwode family.

He also commended the Director of General Services, Mr. Edward Okosun, for his commitment to the administration and his support for its programmes, particularly during

the period Imafidon served as Acting Chairman.

While acknowledging Okosun's contribution to the administration's progress, Imafidon jokingly expressed the wish that the civil servant would not retire soon, but acknowledged that retirement in the public service is governed by established rules and regulations.

The Chairman assured the people of Uhumwode that his administration would remain focused on practical interventions capable of making a direct difference in the lives of the people, while pursuing sustainable development across the local government area.

NEWS

Lekki Port stakeholders decry worsening traffic congestion

LAGOS

Stakeholders along the Lekki Deep Seaport axis have lamented that port operations at the deep seaport are gradually being disrupted by worsening traffic congestion, blaming the Lagos State Government for failing to effectively enforce traffic rules and regulations along the axis, which continues to impede the movement of trucks and other port-bound vehicles.

This was contained in a

statement. They added that the situation has raised concerns among stakeholders, who fear that prolonged traffic gridlock could further hamper cargo evacuation and negatively impact port operations.

While highlighting that the deployment of an electronic call-up system to regulate the movement of trucks into and out of the port areas was already operational, these stakeholders, however emphasised that the failure of the Lagos State Government to ensure that truckers use designated

truck parks for proper traffic management before being called up to access the port for cargo evacuation has remained a major challenge.

"Already, investors in truck park facilities are beginning to count their losses as the poor patronage of the parks erodes confidence in the investment environment, despite assurances from the Lagos State Government," the statement read in part.

Reacting to the development, Managing Director of Lekki World and a major stakeholder in the port axis,

Mr Adeola Olusodo, admitted that efforts were ongoing to address the situation and restore smooth traffic flow.

"We do not regulate traffic. The Lagos State Government, through its agency, the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority, is responsible for ensuring that truck movements are properly regulated along the port corridor," he said.

A trucker, Cyril Jonah of Jancy Truck Park, said the parks were facing challenges because most truck drivers secured their call-up tickets before ar-

riving at the port.

Another park operator, Mr Shile Oloto, Managing Director of Admoore Park, disclosed that bank loans had been invested in the park over the past three years without any corresponding return on investment.

Oloto attributed the situation to the failure of the Lagos State Government to effectively enforce traffic regulations, which he said had contributed to the underutilisation of accredited truck parks in the axis.

Also commenting on the situation, the Port Manager, Nigerian Ports Authority, Lekki Port, Mr Emmanuel Anda, attributed the poor enforcement of traffic regulations along the corridor to the non-involvement of the NPA in the formulation of the truck call-up system.

Anda disclosed that there had been instances where both sides of the road were

completely blocked by tankers and container trucks due to enforcement failures, further worsening traffic congestion along the corridor.

He explained that the unregulated movement of trucks had also resulted in multiple fatal road accidents, warning that more lives could be lost if the situation was allowed to continue unchecked.

Anda further explained that the high volume of activities within the Lekki Free Trade Zone requires an efficient traffic management system to ensure the smooth and uninterrupted flow of vehicular movement along the corridor.

In his reaction, the Lagos State Commissioner for Transportation, Mr Seun Osiyemi, acknowledged the gridlock along the Lekki Port corridor but said the situation was not permanent.



DONATION:

Jobulb Educonsult donates seedlings to Narayi public primary school in Kaduna.

UNIPOINT ASUU declares indefinite strike over incomplete salaries, allowances

PORT HARCOURT

The Academic Staff Union of Universities, University of Port Harcourt branch, has declared an indefinite strike over the incomplete payment of salaries and responsibility allowances to its members.

The union said the action followed the failure of the university management to address its demands despite a meeting with the union and assurances that the issues would be resolved.

The branch also alleged that its members had been sidelined in the monthly payment of responsibility allowances paid to members of other unions for over two years.

The ASUU Secretary at the University of Port Harcourt, Tarila Amakoromo, disclosed this in a statement sent to journalists on Thursday.

Amakoromo recalled that at an emergency congress held on Friday, September 11, 2026, the union gave the university administration 48 working hours, ending at midnight on Tuesday,

September 15, to address the issues or face an indefinite local strike backed by the union's national body.

He said following the failure of the university administration to address the issues, the branch declared an indefinite strike at an emergency congress held on Wednesday, September 16.

The statement read in part, "A strike action has been declared by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), University of Port Harcourt Branch following the University Administration's failure to address the demands of the Union.

"Recall that at its Emergency Congress held on Friday 11th September, 2026, Congress reached a Resolution on the following matters of urgent importance regarding salaries/emoluments of lecturers:

"Incomplete payment of lecturers' three months' (June, July & August, 2026) salary. Incomplete payment of Responsibility Allowances to lecturers.

"Non-payment of Responsibility Allowance to members under CONMESS & CONHESS (lecturers in the School

of Health Sciences).

"Sideline ASUU members in the monthly payment of Responsibility Allowances to members of the other unions for over two years now, etc."

The union said the university administration met with its representatives on September 11 and promised to respond to the demands before the deadline issued by the congress.

"Regrettably, the University Administration, in spite of meeting with the Union on the same day and promising to respond to the Union's demands before the deadline given by Congress, refused to act as promised," the statement added.

The union said the 48-hour deadline elapsed at midnight on September 15 without the issues being resolved.

"Sequel to the University Administration's failure to address the issues, the branch in an emergency Congress held today, 16th September, 2026, declared the indefinite Strike Action," it stated.

According to the union, lecturers would halt all academic and official duties during the

strike.

It added that a strike monitoring team had been constituted to monitor compliance at the university's main campus and other centres.

W'Bank mobilises \$112bn private capital for developing economies

ABUJA

The World Bank attracted a record \$112bn in private capital for developing economies in its 2026 fiscal year, more than tripling the amount recorded four years earlier.

The lender disclosed this in a statement on Thursday, saying private capital mobilisation had risen from \$35bn in fiscal 2022 to \$112bn in fiscal 2026, while total financing and mobilisation by the World Bank Group in developing economies exceeded \$200bn during the year.

The increase was recorded across income groups, with private capital mobilisation in lower-middle-income countries rising to \$37bn from \$14bn in

fiscal 2022. Mobilisation in upper-middle-income countries increased to \$50bn from \$12bn over the same period.

In low-income countries, where attracting private investment remains more difficult, mobilisation was maintained at about \$3bn.

Africa also recorded a substantial increase, with private capital mobilisation rising to approximately \$22bn in fiscal 2026 from \$9bn four years earlier, representing an increase of nearly 150 per cent.

"Three years ago, our shareholders and clients were clear: utilise World Bank Group financing and knowledge to mobilize more private capital and become a better partner to the private sector. We changed how we work to do that, faster,

simpler, and as one World Bank Group," World Bank Group President Ajay Banga said.

"The result is \$112bn mobilised this year, more than three times what we started. But the number only matters if the capital goes where it can create opportunity and jobs. That is the work ahead: keep removing barriers, keep expanding the pool of investors, and keep driving more capital into developing economies," the executive stated.

The World Bank attributed the growth to changes introduced over the past three years to make its operations faster and simpler, strengthen coordination between its public and private-sector arms and expand the financial instruments available to investors.

Nigeria raises ₦748.6bn from FGN bonds as rates ease

ABUJA

The Federal Government raised ₦748.64bn from its September 2026 domestic bond auction, with investors showing strong demand for both the newly issued 10-year instrument and the reopened 15-year bond.

The Debt Management Office allotted ₦288.83bn from the ₦400bn offered on the 10-year FGN bond at a marginal rate of 16.79 per cent.

Investors submitted bids worth ₦546.90bn for the 10-year paper, pushing demand 36.7 per cent above the amount offered.

The stronger demand for the new 10-year instrument came alongside a moderation in the yield compared with recent borrowing levels, suggesting some improvement in investor appetite for longer-dated government securities.

For the 15-year FGN bond, which was offered as a ₦600bn reopening, investors submitted ₦947.83bn in bids.

The DMO allotted ₦460.01bn from the reopening at a marginal rate of 16.85 per cent, significantly below the 17.79 per cent rate recorded at the previous auction.

Overall, investors sought ₦1.49tn across the two securities, representing about 49.5 per cent more than the ₦1tn offered by the DMO.

However, the debt office allotted ₦748.64bn, leaving about ₦746.59bn of the bids unaccepted.

The auction results indicate that while demand for Nigerian government securities remained strong, the DMO was selective in determining the volume of debt to issue.

ArtsWorld

Experts advocate stronger collaboration to boost Africa's Global Film Trade

RACHEAL ESEOSE OMIJIE

Beyond the glamour of premieres, red carpets and box-office figures lies a bigger question for Africa's film industry: how can the continent turn its creative energy into a stronger presence in the global film market?

That question took centre stage at the African Canadian International Film Festival (ACIFF), where stakeholders from the film and media industry called for stronger collaboration, government support, responsible media practices and improved international partnerships to move African cinema beyond individual national markets.

At a panel session themed "Bridging Culture Through the Lens: Via Film Trade," moderated by Mr. Davidson Izegaegbe, the conversation brought together Destiny Austine Omon, President of the Nigerian Filmmakers Association, Ghana, and Media Coordinator to the Nigerian High Commission in Ghana; Comrade Mallam Bako Yusuf, filmmaker; Fred Elakhe, Head of the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), Benin Centre, Edo State; and Ambassador Patricia Orunmwense, General Manager of Speed 96.9 FM, Benin City.

For Omon, the future of African cinema cannot be built within rigid national boundaries. He argued that the industry must begin to see itself as one African creative space rather than separate Nigerian, Ghanaian or Cameroonian territories.

According to him, the emphasis should now be on building African films, with Nollywood naturally playing a leading role because of the size of Nigeria's market.

The changing realities of the industry, he noted, are already influencing how filmmakers approach production. Unlike the past, when movies were produced before marketers and distribution channels were sought, filmmakers now increasingly consider distribution and market opportunities before production begins.

Nigeria, he maintained, remains Africa's biggest film market, a position stakeholders should strategically protect and maximize while pursuing meaningful collaborations with other countries.

For international film trade to thrive, Omon stressed that countries must respect existing treaties and understand the benefits of collaborative agreements before entering into partnerships.

From the filmmaker's perspective, Comrade Mallam Bako Yusuf brought the discussion back to the heart of cinema: the story.

He urged practitioners to place quality storytelling above the immediate pursuit of financial gain. The pioneers, he recalled, were motivated by the desire to preserve filmmaking and ensure its growth. Today's filmmakers, he added, must retain that commitment while recognizing the interests of investors whose resources make productions possible.



Yusuf argued that meaningful and socially beneficial content is ultimately capable of determining a film's commercial success and long-term relevance. Yet, producing such films requires investment, prompting his appeal to both federal and state governments to provide greater support for an industry he described as capital-intensive.

But as African films travel beyond their countries of origin, another responsibility becomes unavoidable: ensuring that audiences, particularly children, are protected.

Elakhe explained that the NFVCB serves as a bridge between filmmakers and audiences by classifying films according to age suitability. Classifications including G, 12, 15, 18 and Restricted, he said, enable consumers to make informed choices while protecting children from inappropriate content.

He also offered a broader definition of film trade. It is not simply about buying and selling movies, he explained, but also involves the exchange of ideas, cultures, innovation, talent and equipment.

Africa, he noted, has abundant creative talent, while international partnerships can open doors to technological advancement and global exposure through film festivals and collaborative projects. With digital platforms creating more opportunities and more competition, he urged filmmakers to produce works capable of gaining acceptance in the international market.

For Ambassador Patricia Orunmwense, however, the journey to global recognition cannot be complete without the media.

She described the media as an indispensable partner in the growth of the film industry, noting that media exposure has helped promote actors, filmmakers and productions while introducing international audiences to Nigeria's cultures and traditions.

Yet, the rise of new media also carries concerns. Orunmwense acknowledged the importance of digital platforms in modern communication but warned about their potential to ex-

pose children to harmful content. She cited reported instances of criminal behaviour being influenced by movies and called for greater attention to classification and content regulation.

Elakhe responded that protecting children cannot be the responsibility of regulators alone. Parents, he stressed, must also monitor what their children watch.

As the panel ended, one message remained clear: Africa's film industry

possesses the talent, stories and market potential to compete globally, but unlocking that potential will require collaboration among filmmakers, media professionals, regulators and governments.

The future of African cinema, the discussion suggested, may depend not only on the stories told, but on how effectively the continent works together to take those stories to the world.

CARTOON

By Francis Odupte



Crime With Mike Osarogiagbon

Edo police recover 2 SUVs stolen from ADC chairman's residence

The Edo State Police Command is closing in on the hoodlums who invaded the residence of the State Chairman of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Hon. Kennedy Odion, with the recovery of the two Toyota Highlander SUVs stolen during the robbery.

The incident occurred in the early hours of September 6, 2026, at Odion's residence off Winners Road, Ihie Community, Benin City.

The Edo State Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Eno Ikoedem, disclosed the developments in separate statements issued on September 11 and 16, 2026.

The latest breakthrough followed sustained intelligence gathering and coordinated operations by operatives of the Command's Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU), who tracked the second stolen vehicle to the New Benin axis.



SUV CAR

The black Toyota Highlander, with registration number LSR 729 HY, was recovered along 3rd Cemetery Street, off New Lagos Road, New Benin, following credible intelligence.

The recovery came after the Commissioner of Police, Edo State Command, CP Patrick Daaor, personally visited the scene of the robbery and directed the VCRU to intensify efforts to track down the attackers, recover the stolen property and apprehend those responsible.

The Command said operatives had remained firmly on the trail of the robbery syndicate, with intelligence-led operations continuing to unravel the circumstances surrounding the attack.

It added that efforts were ongoing to recover the remaining stolen items and apprehend all those responsible for the robbery.

The Command said operatives had remained firmly on the trail of the robbery syndicate, with intelligence-led operations continuing to unravel the circumstances surrounding the attack.

Police recover stolen highlander, nab child-abuse suspects as army seizes AK-47

CRIME REVIEW

The past week in Edo State's security landscape has been marked by a combination of operational breakthroughs and disturbing crimes, with police recovering the second Toyota Highlander stolen during a high-profile robbery, the arrest of suspects in separate child-related cases, and the military intercepting a suspected kidnapper with an AK-47 rifle.

Taken together, the developments point to three recurring security concerns confronting the state, organised robbery and the recovery of stolen property, armed criminal activity along major transportation corridors, and the vulnerability of children to abuse and exploitation.

The Edo State Police Command recorded a major development in its investigation into the September 6 robbery at the residence of Hon. Kennedy Odion, State Chairman of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), off Winners Road, Ihie Community, Benin City.

Operatives of the Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU), acting on what the Command described as credible intelligence, recovered the second and remaining Toyota Highlander stolen during the attack.

According to the Police Spokesperson, ASP Eno Ikoedem the black vehicle, with registration number LSR 729 HY, was recovered along 3rd Cemetery Street, off New Lagos Road, New Benin.

The recovery means both Highlanders reportedly stolen during the robbery have now been recovered. However, the wider investigation remains unresolved, as police are still trail of those responsible and working to recover other stolen items.

Commissioner of Police, CP Patrick Daaor, had personally visited the scene after the robbery and directed the VCRU to intensify the investigation.

The development illustrates the importance of intelligence gathering after a major crime. But recovery of stolen property is only one part of the process, establishing who planned and executed the robbery, tracing the wider network and securing successful prosecution remain critical stages of the investigation.

Also in the week under review, the military reported an arrest linked to the broader threat of kidnapping and armed criminality in Edo.

Troops of 4 Brigade Nigerian Army, Operation WABAIZIGAN, arrested a suspected kidnapper, identified as Olamide Oyeniyi, at Obaretin Community along the Benin-Sapele axis on September 12.

An AK-47 rifle, one magazine and eight rounds of 7.62mm Special ammunition were reportedly recovered from the suspect.

Other recovered items included a Tecno mobile phone, two bags, a torchlight, a music box and assorted charms.

The suspect remained in military custody as investigations continued into his alleged links with other criminal elements and possible involvement in kidnapping activities along the route.

The incident is significant because the Benin-Sapele corridor serves as an important transportation route connecting communities and commercial centres. The reported recovery of a rifle and ammunition also highlights the role of firearms in the threat posed by organised criminal groups.

The Spokesman for 4 Brigade Nigerian army, Benin, Captain Kennedy Anyanwu said such operations would continue to deny criminal elements freedom of action and protect communities and transportation corridors.



AK-47 rifle recovered

Away from robbery and armed crime, two separate police investigations have placed the protection of children firmly on the week's security agenda.

In Jattu, Auch, police arrested 57-year-old Kadiri Edenokun over the alleged defilement of his six-year-old stepdaughter.

According to the Edo State Police Command, the suspect allegedly confessed during interrogation to committing the offence multiple times.

Also at the police Command headquarters in Benin City on Wednesday, September 16, the

57-year-old stepfather told journalists, "That day, when we were ready to go to the shop, I quickly cornered the victim, and rubbed my hands on her genital skin surface. I rubbed her body two consecutive times but on different days".

On one hand, the recovery of the stolen Highlanders and the reported seizure of an AK-47 show that intelligence-led operations can produce tangible results. On the other, the continuing manhunt for robbery suspects and investigations into kidnapping and sexual offences indicate that arrests and recoveries do not, by themselves, resolve the underlying security problems.

Police recover abandoned mini-bus along Benin-Lagos expressway

Operatives of Edo police command have recovered an abandoned white mini-bus along the Benin-Lagos Expressway.

The vehicle, with registration number ADK 224 ZY, was recovered at about 1:30pm on September 10, 2026, after reportedly being left unattended

for seven days.

The Command Public Relations Officer ASP Eno Ikoedem said the vehicle had been moved to the police station, while efforts are ongoing to contact the owner through the vehicle's registration details and establish the circumstances surrounding its abandonment.

Police arrest wanted "landlord" for murder after days on the run

Operatives of the Okpella Police Division have arrested a 32-year-old man, Sunday Ababa, popularly known as "Landlord," who is suspected of involvement in the murder of Dirisu Friday in Okpella, Etsako West local government area of the State.

Friday was murdered on August 30, 2026, prompting the police to launch a manhunt for the suspect.

The police spokesperson in Edo, ASP Eno Ikoedem said the arrest followed actionable intelligence operatives received at about 7:20pm on September 6, 2026, in Afokpella, Okpella.

She stated that the suspect, who had allegedly been at large since the incident, has been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) for further investigation.

Abduction of five girls: Edo police Nab 'prophet', stepfather

An attempt to resolve an alleged child sexual abuse case privately was thwarted after a vigilant neighbour alerted the Police, leading to the arrest of a 57-year-old stepfather in Edo State.

The development was among two disturbing child-related cases disclosed by the Edo State Police Command on Wednesday, involving the alleged defilement of a six-year-old girl and the alleged abduction of five female children.

In the Jattu case, the victim was allegedly sexually abused by her stepfather, Kadiri Edenokun, at the family residence in Ayuwa, Jattu, Etsako West Local Government Area.

According to findings, the victim's mother, upon becoming aware of the alleged incident, sought to have the matter settled outside the Police.

However, a neighbour, who became suspicious of the development, alerted the Police, prompting the intervention that led to Edenokun's arrest on September 10.

The suspect was among was paraded by the Command in Benin City on Wednesday, September 16, 2026.

The Command spokesperson, ASP Eno Ikoedem, who represented the Commissioner of Police, CP Patrick Daaor, disclosed the case while briefing journalists.

ASP Ikoedem said Edenokun admitted touching the child's genital area on two separate occasions.

"That day, when we were ready to go to the shop, I quickly cornered the victim and rubbed my hands on her genital skin surface. I rubbed her body two consecutive times but on different days," the suspect narrated to journalists.



ABDUCTED GIRLS

rated to journalists.

ASP Ikoedem said the child was receiving medical treatment under the care of the Edo State Ministry of Women Affairs.

She added that the suspect remained in Police custody and would be charged to court after the conclusion of investigation.

But even as investigators were dealing with the Jattu case, another disturbing account emerged from Ibillo.

There, Police arrested Nicholas Nusa, 50, a self-styled prophet who operates Divine Grace Church along Imoga Road, Ibillo, over the alleged abduction of five female children.

ASP Ikoedem stated that the children were taken to Nusa's residence at different times between September 2025 and April 2026.

The alleged activities came under Police investigation after information was received by the Command on September 12.

Preliminary investigation, Ikoedem said, revealed that the children had been abducted at different times.

The Police further stated that Nusa confessed to the offences, including impregnating one of the girls, aged 15.

The pregnant victim is currently recovering in hospital after undergoing a Caesarean Section and is being cared for by the Brave Heart Organisation.

Efforts are ongoing to reunite the other children with their families.

CP Daaor warned that the Command would not tolerate sexual violence, particularly against children, and urged parents and members of the public to promptly report suspicious persons, movements or activities to the Police.

NEWS**FOREIGN****AUSTIN TICE**

Assad regime planned US journalist's kidnap for weeks

US journalist Austin Tice, who disappeared in Syria in 2012, was kidnapped in a calculated operation which was more than a month in the planning, the BBC can reveal.

A member of the group which detained Tice has also claimed the abduction was sanctioned by Syria's leader at the time, President Bashar al-Assad.

Tice was seen getting into a car with a driver he knew and trusted. For years, many assumed they had stumbled upon a government checkpoint, and that the abduction of the journalist had been opportunistic.

But we have uncovered evidence that, in fact, his disappearance was anything but chance.

In a new BBC podcast: Where is Austin Tice? Series 3 of I'm Not A Monster Pre-

sents, we reveal the findings of a years-long investigation into what happened to Tice, who had been reporting on Syria's civil war at the time.

His case has been followed closely by international media and cited by successive US presidents.

Georgetown University law student Tice, who had served as a US Marines captain, was last seen in a video - blindfolded and in apparent distress - posted more than a month after his capture.

As the regime fell 12 years later, tens of thousands of people emerged from the administration's prisons. Tice was not one of them.

We obtained co-ordinates from an intelligence source for multiple locations US authorities suspected he could have been held at, and searched for

him for more than a month, but found no sign of him.

A former Syrian commander has said Tice was executed. Others have questioned this account and no remains have been found.

But in the aftermath of the regime's collapse, we did uncover secret Syrian intelligence files on Tice - hundreds of pages of internal records providing the first definitive proof that it was the regime that had held the journalist.

Two crucial questions remained unanswered, however: how exactly had Tice been taken in the first place? And, who was responsible for his abduction?

We have spoken to a number of men from the regime involved in Tice's detention, and have reviewed recordings of discussions about it. One man we spoke to, Abu Ali, is a former member of the National Defence Forces (NDF), a militia which was fiercely loyal to Assad.

He says the abduction operation began when Tice's driver - who multiple sources say had been passing the regime information for some time - told a senior NDF member that Tice was moving through rebel-held areas, reporting on the opposition.

Tice had pushed into areas most journalists deemed too dangerous and was writing front-page stories for the Washington Post. The Assad regime was cracking down on anyone highlighting its human rights abuses.

We have been told the NDF member Tice's driver spoke to was Sakr Rustom - not just any NDF militia contact, but nephew of Bassam al-Hassan, one of Assad's most trusted security figures and head of the NDF.

The information on Tice was passed up to Hassan, Abu Ali says, who is then said to have telephoned Assad.

US interest rates raised for first time in three years

US interest rates have been raised for the first time in more than three years and could be increased further in a bid to slow rising prices.

Rates were hiked to 3.75%-4% from 3.5%-3.75% by the Federal Reserve in a unanimous decision, despite fierce opposition from President Donald Trump, who had called for rates to be cut.

Fed Chair Kevin Warsh said the move was because "inflation is too high and has been for too long", adding that it was a "sober" and "responsible decision".

After the announcement, Trump expressed support for Warsh but said the Fed board, which votes on rate decisions, was "hostile".

Higher interest rates make borrowing more expensive for people wanting to secure loans, mortgages, and credit cards, but can lead to better returns on savings.

Warsh said during a press conference on Wednesday following the decision that, while there was "an attitude of optimism" within the Fed leadership, inflation remained a problem.

Like many central banks, the Fed has a target of keeping inflation at 2% or below. Warsh noted that US inflation has been above the target "for more than five years".

That has helped make afforda-

bility one of the top concerns of American voters, who have seen fuel prices surge in response to soaring wholesale oil prices since the start of the US-Israel war with Iran. This has driven up the cost of many goods and services, as well.

While the Fed "cannot affect any individual price - whether it be oil prices, whether it be food stuffs at the grocery store", Warsh said, the central bank can work to keep price rises from broadening across the economy.

He added that strength in the jobs market and wider economy meant the Fed was staying focused on stabilising prices, and that those least well off had the most to gain from lower inflation.

Central banks tend to increase rates when inflation is high to discourage spending and encourage saving, in the hope this will reduce the pace of price rises. But it's a balancing act, as higher rates can also encourage businesses to hold off on investing and hurt economic growth.

When he was confirmed, Democratic lawmakers had said Warsh would be Trump's "sock puppet" and many Fed watchers expected him to carry out Trump's persistent demands to slash rates. Trump had been heavily critical of Warsh's predecessor Jerome Powell for not cutting them.

Uncontrolled AI could lead to 'silicon species' rivalling humans, warns Microsoft

The head of Microsoft AI has warned that without adequate safeguards, the development of AI could lead to the emergence of a new "silicon species" which competes with humans.

Mustafa Suleyman said rival firm Anthropic is treating AI like it is human, an approach he called "misguided" which could create technology that humanity cannot control.

Speaking to the BBC's Today programme, the chief executive said it was "right" for people to be concerned about AI, but there were "very practical things that we can do" to control it.

The comments are the latest in a series of stark warnings from the AI industry about the technology's possible dangers. Anthropic has been approached for comment.

OpenAI boss says world 'right to be afraid' but should trust AI firms

Speaking to the Today programme on Thursday, Suleyman warned against firms continuing to create AI systems capable of setting their own objectives, earning money and owning assets.

That would mean "essentially

seeding a new silicon species", he said, which could "no doubt compete with us for resources, no matter how much it cares about humanity and loves us".

Suleyman's comments to the BBC follow an essay he published earlier this week, in which he questioned Anthropic's approach to training its AI model Claude, despite praising boss Dario Amodei and his team as "intellectually honest people".

In it, he criticised Anthropic for teaching its AI to have human-like qualities, a practice known as anthropomorphising, which he said made it seem as though Claude had its own desires, values and sense of self.

He also warned tech firms risk creating something "impossible" to control by treating the technology like a human.

"AIs are not conscious," he wrote.

"They do not feel, experience, or suffer. They do not have innate preferences or underlying motivations.

"They are sequence completion engines, internally hollow, designed to follow instructions, and accomplish goals set by humans."

Dario Amodei is the head of the AI firm Anthropic, which Suleyman criticised for treating its AI as if it were human

Rosenberg: Russia's elections will have few surprises, but for the Kremlin they matter

The system of power in Russia is often referred to as "managed democracy" (where the Kremlin does the managing).

That means huge powers for the president and few political surprises.

This weekend's election is set to deliver another parliament dominated by the party of power, United Russia, and a house of MPs fiercely loyal to Vladimir Putin.

Critics dismiss the vote as neither free nor fair.

But the Kremlin doesn't care what the critics say.

"We have our own political system, our own political process," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov explained recently.

That means no curveballs for the Kremlin. No surprises. So no story?

Far from it.

For the Kremlin, the election of 450 deputies to the lower house of parliament, the Duma, is important. This is the first parliamentary election here since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The Kremlin will use it to claim that most Russians back the president and the war, as well as to promote the political careers of soldiers back from Ukraine: officials say nearly two hundred war veterans are taking part in the election.

As for the election campaign, that has provided a window on

Russian society four-and-a-half years into the war.

I said no surprises. But there have been some.

"Good evening and welcome to tonight's campaign speeches by candidates for Duma Electoral District 158," said the anchor on state TV.

The studio director cut to a wide shot revealing six empty lecterns.

"The candidates haven't turned up," admitted the host. "So, it's goodbye from me."

In another TV debate (where the politicians were present) one crooning candidate sang his pitch:

"The Communist Party, onwards we go!

"We're with the people, don't you know?"

More X Factor than exit poll.

Yet a musical manifesto is strangely appropriate. In the previous Duma, everyone seemed to be singing from the same hymn sheet. At the final session of parliament in July, MPs stood and applauded as the speaker of the house chanted repeatedly:

"Russia, Putin, Victory! Russia, Putin, Victory!"

It was a signal that all MPs in parliament should back President Putin and the war.

"All parties in the Duma, every single one, voted in favour of 170 laws to support the special military operation," Communist Party leader Genady Zyuganov told me with obvious pride about the last parliament.

FOREIGN**NEWS**

Abducted South African journalist found dead with gunshot wounds

Tributes are pouring in for a veteran South African sports broadcaster who was found dead on Wednesday hours after being abducted when his vehicle was hijacked in a township near Johannesburg.

Owen Ndlovu, a former presenter with the country's public broadcaster, the SABC, was seized on Tuesday while collecting his wife from a church in Katlehong, police said.

His body, which witnesses

said had gunshot wounds, was discovered by residents the following morning.

Police have launched a manhunt for three suspects and are investigating the circumstances surrounding his killing, which has once again drawn attention to South Africa's high levels of violent crime.

Provincial police spokesperson Col Dimakatso Nevhuhulwi said Ndlovu had gone to pick up his wife from a religious service when the attackers struck.

"As she approached their vehicle, three unknown men, one reportedly armed with a firearm, suddenly approached them, pushed her aside and forced her husband into the back seat," she said.

"The suspects then drove off with the victim."

The vehicle, a Ford Raptor pick-up truck - commonly known as a bakkie in South Africa - was later recovered abandoned in Walkerville, an

area south of Johannesburg, police said.

Ndlovu's body was found by local residents beside a road in Thokoza, which neighbours Katlehong. They said he appeared to have suffered gunshot wounds.

A bag of his was found a few metres away.

Police said they were investigating a case of murder but a post-mortem examination would establish the cause of

death.

"At this stage, the family is awaiting further information from the relevant authorities regarding the circumstances surrounding Owen's death," said family spokesperson Eugene Mthethwa.

The family described the loss as "devastating" and thanked residents, police and members of the public who had helped search for him after news of his abduction emerged.

Ndlovu was a familiar figure to South African sports fans after years working as a presenter and producer at the SABC.

He was also involved in radio coverage of the country's Premier Soccer League and later became an advocate for musicians' rights and royalty payments.

The 54-year-old was also associated with Artists United and the SABC Summer Song of the Year initiative.

Photos show widespread damage at US sites from Iranian attacks

Images showing widespread damage to multiple US sites in the Middle East from Iranian strikes have been obtained by the BBC's US partner CBS.

The photos, provided by active military personnel, show a severed radar jet, flattened trailers and severely damaged buildings.

The undated photos were taken at US bases and sites in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

One member of the military, who was not named by CBS, said: "This is major damage to our bases that hasn't been communicated to the American public."

"We're standing there with our eyes closed getting punched in the face."

The White House referred the BBC to US Central Command.

Centcom did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The photos, which have not been independently verified, were published the day after a report from the Pentagon's watchdog confirmed hundreds of buildings and structures at US bases in the Middle East have been damaged and destroyed by Iran.

One of the photos showed a destroyed Boeing E-3 Sentry at Prince Sultan Air Force Base in Saudi Arabia that has been ripped in half, its tail section crumpled into a tangled mess of metal.

While the photo is undated, BBC Verify previously confirmed a similar photo, apparently of the same radar aircraft in March.

The Boeing E-3 Awacs are used to detect and track potential

targets at long ranges to provide an early warning of possible threats.

At the time, a US official told Reuters that 12 US personnel had been wounded, two of them seriously, in an Iranian attack on the air base.

A pair of undated images reportedly from Camp Buehring, Kuwait, show crumpled trailers, and a large tent-like structure that had been reduced to shreds as smoke billowed from the site.

Another image shows a four-storey building damaged by an Iranian strike at Camp Arifjan, in Kuwait.

Damage to the site was reported in March, including on satellite communications hardware, though it is not clear whether this image is from the same attack.

Brian Katulis, a former national security official under both Democratic and Republican administrations, said that the damage visible in the images showed that "America had not adequately prepared its defences".

"And there is strong evidence that US adversaries like China and Russia may have helped Iran in targeting," added Katulis, now a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute.

"The Trump administration has done nothing to address these vulnerabilities."

The images were published on the heels of a report from the Pentagon's watchdog, which found Iranian strikes had "damaged and destroyed hundreds of buildings and structures at US bases in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, and Jordan during the conflict".



DOWNPOUR:
The downpour caused flooding across Valencia and Catalonia

One dead after torrential rain and flash floods hit Barcelona region

North-eastern Spain has been hit by torrential rain and flash floods, leaving one person dead and causing widespread disruption across the region.

Spain's national weather agency AEMET issued warnings for heavy rain across eastern regions on Wednesday, including a red alert for Barcelona's coastline.

Rescuers recovered the body of a man on Thursday in Olivella, around 40km (25 miles) west of Barcelona, after his car was swept away by a stream, authorities said.

The deluge has disrupted travel across Catalonia and Valencia, with flights cancelled and roads

submerged. Authorities have advised against unnecessary travel, while Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez warned of "very complicated situations".

Emergency services in Catalonia said they received more than 850 calls related to the downpours and catalogued over 500 incidents.

Catalan firefighters said on X on Thursday that they had recovered the "lifeless body of a man" in Olivella, correcting earlier reports that had identified the missing person as a woman.

Videos shared on social media showed partially submerged cars and rescue workers attempting to reach a vehicle

trapped in a heavily flooded underpass.

In Barcelona, some metro stations were closed and buses diverted, while regional trains were disrupted and flights delayed or cancelled at El Prat airport.

Neighbouring Valencia had more than 70mm (2.76in) of rain fall in just half an hour in several municipalities, according to AVAMET.

"Rarely have we seen such rainfall accumulations in 30 minutes," the meteorological association said on X.

Emergency services reported 478 incidents in the Valencia province, mostly involving property damage, leaks and

traffic disruption.

In the regional capital, all metro lines were suspended and the city's airport shuttered for several hours, causing flights to be diverted.

The downpour comes as Spain emerges from its hottest summer on record and an exceptionally warm start to September.

Scientists say human-driven climate change is intensifying the Mediterranean storms that typically hit eastern Spain in autumn.

The Mediterranean Sea absorbs heat during summer, increasing evaporation and contributing to heavier rainfall when storms develop.

India and Pakistan summon diplomats after ships collide in international waters

India and Pakistan have summoned each other's top diplomats in Delhi and Islamabad after two of their naval vessels collided in the Arabian Sea.

Both sides blamed each other for the collision, which happened on Tuesday. They also accused each other of violating a 1991 bilateral agreement

that requires either side to give advance notice of military exercises.

While India said the incident did not cause any major damage, the statement released by Pakistan did not make clear whether its vessel was damaged in any way.

The incident comes more than a year after the South Asian neighbours conducted mili-

tary strikes against each other before agreeing on a ceasefire. In its statement, India said it had lodged a strong protest with the Charge d'Affaires of the Pakistani High Commission in Delhi over what it called "unacceptable and unprofessional conduct" of the naval unit.

"The Charge d'Affaires of Pakistan was advised to convey

to the concerned Pakistani authorities, the need for all military units to observe due care and respect the provisions of the relevant agreements between the two sides in order to prevent any repeat of such incidents," India's external affairs ministry said.

On the same day, Pakistan also summoned India's Charge d'Affaires in Islamabad, lodg-

ing its complaint against what it called a "highly provocative and unacceptable" action by India's naval vessel.

In its statement, Pakistan's foreign affairs ministry said that its navy was conducting its biennial exercise, SEA-SPARK-26, in its exclusive economic zone when the Indian vessel "carried out aggressive manoeuvres in dan-

gerously close proximity" of its ship.

Pakistan also urged the international community to call upon India to "refrain from irresponsible actions that could further destabilise South Asia", saying that the region could not afford to be held "hostage to India's reckless pursuit of conflict and instability".

Opinion

Okpebholo wants to leave a lasting legacy in Edo – Afegbua



EUBALDUS ENAHORO

When history looks back at Edo State a couple of years from today, the administration of Senator Monday Okpebholo will be remembered for one thing: it restored confidence.

Confidence for the worker, confidence for the investor, and confidence for the ordinary Edo man who just wants to sleep with two eyes closed.

According to Okpebholo in his reflections on one year of building Edo together, titled, "My Path, Our Progress," when he became Governor he was determined to ensure that Edo must be safe again.

He had listened to too many stories of families torn apart by Kidnappers, of young people lost to cult wars, and of villages living in fear because criminals had found comfort in the forests.

The Governor was conscious of the fact that no matter what else was achieved by his administration, none of it would matter if the people could not live and work in peace.

In less than two years, Governor Okpebholo has moved from campaign promises to lasting structures and what seemed like quick interventions are becoming lasting legacies.

Before now, Edo was notorious on the news for kidnappings on the Benin-Auchi road, cult clashes in Benin, and forest hideouts and Governor Okpebholo declared a zero-tolerance stance.

There are significant departures from what

it was in the past obviously due to the practical approach towards combating the menace and not theoretical.

For the Governor, security was personal, considering the pain of losing his own police aide, Inspector Akor Onu to one of the armed thugs who had been recruited in the past under the guise of "security operatives."

That moment was a turning point and it reminded the Governor how badly the system had been compromised and how urgently it needed cleansing.

The Edo State Security Corps, ESSC was reorganized and retrained to make them more professional, disciplined and motivated and the security agencies were promptly mobilized.

The ESSC are spread across the eighteen local government areas and placed on payroll, giving dignity to community policing.

State-wide surveillance on all major corridors: Benin-Auchi, Ekpoma-Uromi, Benin Bypass and all business premises have been encouraged to install a CCTV in their premises to assist in curbing crime in the state.

Meanwhile, the result has been that farmers are returning to farms, drivers ply Ekpoma road without fear and as the former Commissioner of Police, who is now the Assistant Inspector General of Police, AIG Agbonika said, it is a "new dawn" for Edo security.

Security is the foundation of all development, and Okpebholo laid that foundation in concrete.

Also, a government's greatness is measured by how it treats its workers and pensioners and for eight years, civil servants employed before January 2017 lived in pension confusion.

However, Governor Okpebholo has ended that anxiety with one humane directive: return all pre-2017 workers to the Defined Benefits Scheme. It was not the cheapest option, but it was the right option. It tells the civil servant who started in 2005: "Your 20 years count."

There has been prompt payment of salaries and clearance of arrears. This is a governor who understands that a motivated civil service delivers a greater Edo.

Okpebholo did not just equip security; he

strengthened the law. The amendment of the anti-cultism and anti-kidnapping laws with stiffer penalties, and the request for special courts for speedy trial has broken the cycle of "arrest and bail" that fueled cultism in Benin.

There is no doubt that cult-related violence has dropped significantly and that is a legacy that will outlive this administration.

We all know that no investor goes to a state where they are not safe. By securing the highways and the communities, Okpebholo has unlocked Edo's economy.

His Project SHINE - Security, Health, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Agriculture, Education is already attracting attention.

There is no doubt that there has been tremendous improvement in the security of lives and properties across the state because of the huge investment and focus in that area that is number one in the agenda of the state government. This shows a state reclaiming its monopoly on safety.

It is becoming clearer that the Governor has Chosen to make security and welfare of the People a top priority and not to Politicise such important issues.

Governor Monday Okpebholo may not be loud, but his legacies are loud and he needs everyone to join him to actualise his policies and programmes and not to be a distraction.

In the words of the Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Prince Kassim Afegbua during his visit to the Nigerian Observer on Wednesday, Governor Monday Okpebholo has a very positive mind to do things right because he wants to leave a lasting legacy in the hearts of Edo people.

The Governor is building the first fly over bridges at Ramat Park and Adesuwa in the state, fixing 32 kilometres of the Sapele Road and other roads across the state. Investment in health care infrastructure, Agriculture, Education and mineral resources.

According to some political analysts, Okpebholo is not building bridges alone; he is rebuilding trust. Trust between government and worker, between state and investor, between leader and people.

Edo people may not remember how many Hilux were bought, but they will remember that there was a time when they could travel from Benin to Auchi without fear, when pensioners were paid, and when criminals were told: "Leave Edo." by Governor Okpebholo.

Eubaldus Enahoro was former Editor of the Nigerian Observer Newspaper.



There is no doubt that there has been tremendous improvement in the security of lives and properties across the state because of the huge investment and focus in that area that is number one in the agenda of the state government

The invisible labour: Why investing in care economy and maternal health is key to Nigeria's future

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

In Nigeria, when we talk about the economy, we often talk about oil, agriculture, manufacturing and services.

We rarely talk about the care economy, yet it is the foundation upon which all other economies stand. The care economy refers to all the work that goes into caring for people, children, the sick, the elderly and the household itself.

This work is predominantly done by women, it is unpaid, it is undervalued and it is largely invisible in our national accounting. A woman wakes up at four in the morning, sweeps the house, fetches water, prepares food for the family, gets the children ready for school, goes to the farm or market, comes back to cook, helps children with homework, cares for a sick relative and goes to bed late at night.

This work is never counted as part of Gross Domestic Product, yet without it, society would collapse. If Nigeria wants to achieve inclusive development, it must begin to recognize, reduce and redistribute care work. One of the most criti-

cal aspects of care is maternal health. Nigeria has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world.

According to international estimates, a Nigerian woman has a one in twenty two lifetime risk of dying during pregnancy or childbirth. This is unacceptable for a country that earns billions from oil.

Most of these deaths are preventable. They happen because women do not have access to antenatal care, because there are no skilled birth attendants, because there is no blood bank and because our primary health centres are in a state of decay.

Investing in maternal health is not just a health intervention, it is an economic intervention. When a mother dies, the family is shattered, children are orphaned and the economic productivity of that household drops drastically.

Government must make maternal health free and compulsory. Every pregnant woman should have access to free antenatal care, free delivery and free postnatal care.

We must equip primary health centres, train

midwives and provide ambulances for emergency referrals. Beyond maternal health, we need to invest in early childhood care and education



When government provides affordable childcare centres, women can go to work, start businesses and contribute to the economy.

centres.

When government provides affordable childcare centres, women can go to work, start businesses and contribute to the economy.

This is what developed nations have done. Childcare is not a luxury, it is infrastructure for economic growth. We also need to promote shared responsibility at home.

Men must be encouraged to participate in housework and childcare. This begins with changing our socialization process. Workplaces must also be more family friendly by providing maternity leave, paternity leave and crèche facilities. Finally, we need to gather data on the care economy. The National Bureau of Statistics must begin to measure unpaid care work so that policy makers can understand its true value.

Development that ignores the care economy is development that is built on sand. If we want to build a resilient, humane and prosperous Nigeria, we must put women, mothers and caregivers at the centre of our development planning. A nation that takes care of those who take care of others is a nation that will surely prosper.

Community News

Evbuotubu appeals to Okpebholo, Oba Ewuare II over alleged attacks

MONDAY OISE

EVBUOTUBU

The Odionwere, elders and people of Evbuotubu community in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State have appealed to the Edo State Government and the Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II, to intervene in what they described as incessant attacks allegedly perpetrated by a man they accused of parading himself as the Odionwere of Okhiairo.

Speaking on behalf of the Odionwere and people of the community at the Oguedion (community sanctuary), the Okaighele (Youth Head), Comrade Odion Orumwense, appealed for urgent intervention to prevent the situation from degenerating into crisis.

Orumwense said the community had deliberately refrained from taking the law into its own hands, preferring that the appropriate authorities resolve the matter.

According to him, the dispute involving Okhiairo and Isibor Ewuare had already been resolved by the Palace of the Oba of Benin.

He referred to a Benin Traditional Council (BTC) public announcement dated June 9, 2022, which, according to him, stated that Ago Okhiairo and Ago Isibor were farm camps under Evbuotubu community in Egor Local Government Area.

He further claimed that the announcement stated that there were no recognised villages known as Okhiairo and Isibor Ewuare, adding that persons parading themselves as Odionwere of the alleged communities had not been approved by the Palace of the Benin Kingdom.

Orumwense said the BTC announcement warned that anyone who paraded himself, or allowed himself to be addressed, as Odionwere of the alleged communities would be regarded as acting in breach of the directive.

He alleged that the people of Ago Okhiairo, led by Mr. Osarenren Enogieru, whom he described as the self-acclaimed Odionwere, initially accepted the Palace's position but later reneged and allegedly produced a document purported to have emanated from the Palace to support their claim.

The Okaighele also said the

Palace had directed that an elders' sanctuary allegedly constructed at the location be demolished, on the grounds that it was an Ago (farm camp) under Evbuotubu and not a recognised community with a constituted elders' council.

Orumwense further alleged that while the Evbuotubu community was awaiting the intervention of the authorities, some armed men allegedly led by Enogieru attacked him at his residence.

He said he survived the incident and subsequently reported the matter at the Evbuotubu Police Station.

According to him, following what he described as a lack of action on the matter, a petition was sent to Abuja, after which the case was referred to the Area Command and subsequently to the Edo State Government House in Benin City.

He added that members of Evbuotubu community had repeatedly honoured invitations from Government House, while, according to him, Enogieru had not appeared before the authorities.

Orumwense said the community was awaiting the out-

come of the investigation by the task force constituted by the state government.

Clarifying reports that the matter was before a competent court, he said the issues concerning the alleged attack and forgery were not before the court.

He maintained that the dispute concerning the ownership and status of Okhiairo and Isibor Ewuare had already been resolved in favour of Evbuotubu community by the Palace.

However, when contacted for his reaction, Mr. Osarenren

Enogieru denied the allegation of attacking Orumwense.

Enogieru also said the matter between the communities was before a court of law, adding that he would consult his lawyer before deciding on the next line of action.

Osarobo tours Ovia- South West ● seeks royal, community support

OUR CORRESPONDENT

IGUOBAZUWA

The Executive Chairman of Ovia South West Local Government Council, Hon. Anthony Osarobo, has commenced a familiarisation tour of traditional rulers and communities across the council area as part of efforts to strengthen grassroots engagement and foster closer collaboration with the traditional institution.

Osarobo, accompanied by members of his executive council, began the tour with a visit to the palace of the Iyase of Udo, Chief Patrick Igbiduru, JP. The chairman described the visit as a "thank-you visit", explaining that it was particularly important to return to Udo, his home community, to appreciate the people for their support following his assumption of office.

He solicited the prayers, support and cooperation of the traditional institution

and residents, stressing that their partnership would be vital to the success of his administration.

Responding, Chief Igbiduru welcomed the chairman and his entourage, urging the council boss to ensure that development programmes and projects were equitably distributed across the various communities in the local government area.

The traditional ruler also prayed for Osarobo and wished him a successful tenure in office.

The entourage thereafter proceeded to Iguobazuwa, the council headquarters, where the chairman was received by the Odionwere and elders of the community.

Osarobo said the visit was to formally introduce his administration to the people and solicit their support and prayers as his administration settles down to work.

The Odionwere of Iguoba-

zuwa, Mr Igbinovia Edward, congratulated Osarobo on his assumption of office and prayed for a successful tenure.

At Usen, the chairman was similarly received by residents before proceeding to the palace of the traditional ruler, His Royal Highness, Oba Olougbe II.

Osarobo said the visit was part of his administration's efforts to strengthen its relationship with traditional institutions and acknowledge their importance in promoting peace, unity and development at the grassroots.

The monarch commended the initiative and offered royal blessings for a successful tenure.

The familiarisation tour, according to the council, is expected to further strengthen cooperation among the local government, traditional institutions and communities in advancing development across Ovia South West.

Igieduma community seeks govt, palace intervention in leadership dispute

MONDAY OISE

IGIEDUMA

The Odionwere, elders and people of Igieduma Community in Uhumwode Local Government Area of Edo State have appealed to the Edo State Government, the Benin Traditional Council and security agencies to intervene in an alleged leadership dispute involving the position of Okaighele (youth head) of the community.

At a meeting presided over by the Odionwere of the community, Pa John Enobakhare Ogbomo, the elders and residents reaffirmed Comrade Uyi Okhionkpawonyi as the Okaighele recognised by the community, while calling on the relevant authorities to address what they described as persistent disagreement over the position.

The community alleged that one Festus Osasumwen Ovatowe had also been laying claim to the position, a development which they said had created tension and insecurity

among residents.

Speaking at the meeting, the community's Okaighele, Comrade Uyi Okhionkpawonyi, said he was appointed by the Odionwere and elders and had undergone the traditional processes required for the position.

He alleged that the dispute had resulted in violent incidents in the community, claiming that some residents had sustained injuries during confrontations.

Uyi further alleged that he was attacked and sustained an injury to his head, adding that other members of the community had also suffered injuries.

He appealed to Governor Monday Okpebholo, Oba Ewuare II, the Benin Traditional Council and security agencies to intervene before the disagreement escalates.

According to him, several petitions had already been submitted to the relevant authorities over the matter.

He also raised allegations concerning activities on community land, including a claim that portions of land allegedly reserved for the Benin Mon-

arch had been disposed of without proper authorisation.

The community called for an impartial investigation into all the allegations and urged residents to remain peaceful while awaiting the intervention of the authorities.

The General Secretary of the community, Comrade Harrison Iyamu, as well as elders Joseph Osemota and Lawrence Enoma, supported the call for government and traditional intervention, stressing the need for peace and an amicable resolution of the dispute.

The community further advised members of the public to verify the authority of anyone purporting to act on behalf of Igieduma Community pending clarification of the matter by the appropriate authorities.

Efforts to obtain the reaction of Festus Osasumwen Ovatowe were unsuccessful as of the time of filing this report.

The community appealed to worsen the situation and urged the authorities to urgently investigate the competing claims and take appropriate steps to restore peace.



HON. ANTHONY OSARO OSAROBO, EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, Ovia South - West L. G. A

Beyond Social Media: Why youth must read again

SALIHU RUKAYYA SAIDU

The habit of reading, once regarded as a cornerstone of learning and personal development, appears to be declining among many Nigerian youths.

While technology has made information more accessible than ever before, it has also changed how young people spend their time. Instead of reading books, newspapers and other educational materials, many now devote hours to social media, entertainment and short-form digital content. This trend has raised concerns among educators, parents and policymakers about its long-term impact on education and national development.

Reading is more than an academic exercise. It broadens knowledge, improves communication skills, develops critical thinking and exposes individuals to different ideas and cultures. Students who cultivate the habit of reading regularly are better positioned to perform well in school and make informed decisions in everyday life.

However, the growing attraction to social media has made it difficult for many young people to maintain concentration for long periods. Platforms that provide short videos, quick messages and constantly changing content can make a lengthy book appear less attractive. As a result, some youths may find it difficult to sit down and read for an extended period without checking their phones.

Several factors have contributed to the decline in reading culture. One major cause is the growing influence of social media and digital entertainment. Many young people spend a significant portion of their free time on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and X, leaving little time for books or educational materials. The widespread use of smartphones has also made instant entertainment more attractive than sustained reading.

Another contributing factor is the high cost of books and limited access to well-equipped libraries. In many communities, public libraries are either unavailable or poorly maintained, making it difficult for students to access quality reading materials. Some schools also lack functional libraries, while many homes do not encourage regular reading beyond classroom assignments.

The examination-oriented nature of Nigeria's education system has also played a role. Many students read mainly to pass examinations rather than to gain knowledge or develop lifelong learning habits. Once examinations are over, reading often becomes less of a priority.

Another challenge is the pressure faced by young people in their daily lives. Academic demands, work, family responsibilities and financial difficulties can leave little time for leisure reading. For some students, getting the required textbooks for school is already difficult, making it harder to develop an interest in reading other materials.

The consequences of this decline are far-reaching. Poor reading hab-



STUDENTS READING

its can weaken students' writing and communication skills, reduce creativity and limit their ability to think critically. It may also affect academic performance and reduce opportunities for innovation and research. In the long run, a society with a weak reading culture may struggle to produce professionals capable of driving scientific, technological and economic development.

A weak reading culture can also affect how young people understand information online. In an era when false information spreads rapidly through social media, the ability to read carefully, compare information and identify reliable sources has become increasingly important. A strong reading habit can help young people develop the analytical skills needed to question information instead of accepting everything they see online.

Reversing this trend requires a col-

lective effort. Parents should cultivate reading habits at home by providing books and encouraging children to read from an early age. Parents can also lead by example. When children see their parents reading newspapers, books or other useful materials, they are more likely to develop an interest in reading.

Schools should strengthen library services, organize reading clubs and literary competitions, and encourage students to read beyond their prescribed textbooks. Teachers can also introduce discussions about interesting books and allow students to recommend materials to their classmates. This can make reading feel less like punishment and more like an enjoyable activity.

Government at all levels should invest in public libraries and ensure that educational resources are accessible to learners across the country. Libraries should be properly equipped with

current books, internet facilities and comfortable reading spaces that can attract young people.

Technology, which is often blamed for the decline in reading, can also become part of the solution. E-books, educational websites, digital libraries and audiobooks provide convenient and affordable access to learning materials. Young people should be encouraged to use digital platforms not only for entertainment but also for education and self-development.

Social media itself can also be used to promote reading. Book reviews, literary discussions, educational videos and online reading communities can encourage young people to discover new books. Authors, schools and youth organisations can take advantage of these platforms to make reading more appealing to the younger generation.

Young people themselves must

also take responsibility. Developing a reading habit does not require spending many hours with a book every day. Starting with 15 or 20 minutes daily can gradually build the habit. Choosing subjects that genuinely interest the reader can also make the process easier and more enjoyable.

Reading should not be seen as something meant only for students preparing for examinations. It is a lifelong habit that can benefit people in almost every profession. Entrepreneurs need knowledge, journalists need strong language skills, professionals need to keep learning, and leaders need the ability to understand different perspectives.

Ultimately, restoring a strong reading culture is essential to Nigeria's educational and economic progress. A nation that wants to compete in a knowledge-driven world must raise young people who can read, understand, analyse and apply information effectively.

Nigerian youths have enormous potential, but that potential needs knowledge and continuous learning to grow. Social media and technology are not the enemy; the challenge is learning how to use them wisely. There should be room for entertainment, but there should also be time for books.

Reading equips young people with the knowledge, confidence and analytical skills needed to succeed in an increasingly competitive world. By making reading a daily habit and balancing screen time with quality reading, Nigerian youths can broaden their minds, strengthen their skills and contribute meaningfully to national development.

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"Reading is more than an academic exercise. It broadens knowledge, improves communication skills, develops critical thinking and exposes individuals to different ideas and cultures. Students who cultivate the habit of reading regularly are better positioned to perform well in school and make informed decisions in everyday life."

The Nigerian OBSERVER That The People May Know					ADVERTISEMENT RATES (PRINT)					
SIZES	COLOUR		BLACK AND WHITE		BLACK AND WHITE		MULTI NATIONALS			
			PUBLIC NOTICE		PRODUCT		COLOUR		BLACK & WHITE	
	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
FULL PAGE	417,344	448,645	369,500	397,213	325,150	349,536	565,156	607,542	443,440	476,698
13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
QUARTER PAGE	192,150	206,561	118,250	127,119	88,690	95,342	236,500	254,238	133,000	142,975
FRONT PAGE POSITIONS					OTHER SIZES					
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	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	
FP 6X2	89,800	96,535	105,450	113,359	6 X 2	60,640	65,188	49,140	52,826	
FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279	
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980	
FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595	
FP 2X2	59,000	63,425	64,900	69,768	2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770	
SPECIAL POSITIONS					2 X 1	12,400	13,330	15,600	16,770	
SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	CAC	38,000	40,850			
STRIP	118,250	127,119	147,800	158,885	LOOSE INSERTS					
STRIP INSIDE	88,600	95,245	118,250	127,119	LOOSE INSERTS: N40 PER SHEET MINIMUM ORDER: 5000 COPIES HANDLING CHARGES: N40,000 PER 1000 COPIES NEWSPAPER DIMENSION: 14.5" X 10.5"					
SPECIAL PAGES					CHANGE OF NAME					
FRONT PAGE	ADD 70% SURCHARGE				TypeFridaysOther Days					
PAGES 2 & 3	ADD 55% SURCHARGE				Miss to Mrs.5,0007,000					
PAGES 4 & 5	ADD 40% SURCHARGE				Reconciliation/Corrections of name6,0008,000					
BACK PAGE	ADD 60% SURCHARGE									
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EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026

EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026

COLUMN

When money becomes more valuable than morality

There are some things one encounters in life that one wishes one had never seen.

Recently, I stumbled upon a profoundly disturbing video circulating on WhatsApp. It depicted the alleged sexual abuse of a little girl by her own biological mother.

What made the video particularly horrifying was the child's apparent distress and helplessness. She was crying while the alleged perpetrator continued the abuse. More difficult still was the realisation that a mother could allegedly inflict such suffering on her innocent child and then record it for financial gain.

The following day, reports emerged that the woman allegedly responsible had been arrested by the Anambra State Police Command in Onitsha. She was identified as 36-year-old Anulika Onyeanusia. According to reports, she initially claimed that the video was AI-generated but subsequently admitted that it was real. She reportedly told investigators that she had made \$700 from pornography involving her eight-year-old daughter.

If these allegations are established in court, what we are confronted with is far more than an ordinary criminal act. It is a frightening manifestation of moral collapse. It raises a question that should trouble every conscientious Nigerian: What happens to a society when the pursuit of money becomes powerful enough to silence conscience?

That, for me, is the deeper issue.

We have become a society in which money increasingly determines social status, influence and even respectability. The man with money is often treated as successful, regardless of the source of his wealth. The young person driving an exotic car is celebrated on social media, while hardly anyone asks the uncomfortable question: Where did the money come from?

We have created an environment in which the acquisition of wealth is sometimes considered more important than the character of the person who possesses it.

Money is important. There is no virtue in glorifying poverty. Every responsible society should create opportunities for citizens to earn decent livelihoods and live dignified lives. But there is a profound difference between the legitimate pursuit of prosperity and the desperate pursuit of money at all costs.

The former is ambition. The latter is complete moral bankruptcy indeed.

What makes the alleged exploitation of a child particularly disturbing is that children are supposed to occupy a special place in the moral conscience of adults. They are vulnerable and depend upon adults for protection, guidance and security.

A parent, above all, should be a child's sanctuary.

If the allegations against this woman are ultimately proven, the very person who should have been her child's shield would have become the alleged instrument of her exploitation. That represents an inversion of



one of the most fundamental responsibilities of parenthood.

A child is not a commodity. A child's body is not a commercial asset. A child's innocence is not content. And a child's suffering must never become somebody else's source of income.

Yet, as painful as this particular case is, we must resist the temptation to regard it merely as the depraved behaviour of one individual. There is a wider societal problem that deserves serious examination.

Our value system is under siege.

The traditional Nigerian ethos of hard work, honesty, modesty, communal responsibility and respect for human dignity appears to be giving way, in some quarters, to an aggressive materialism in which the question is no longer "Is this right?" but "How much will it bring?"

The moral question used to come before the financial question. Today, some people appear to ask the financial question first: How much will I make? How quickly can I make it? Who is going to know? And perhaps most disturbingly, can I get away with it?

Once conscience is reduced to an obstacle to financial success, almost anything becomes possible.

We have seen the glorification of internet fraud. We have seen people who cannot explain the source of their wealth become social celebrities. We have seen individuals accused of financial crimes being treated as philanthropists and community leaders. We have seen questionable wealth translated into political influence, social recognition and even religious honour.

The message this sends to young Nigerians is dangerous. It tells them that integrity is optional, wealth is the ultimate measure of achievement, and that if they are clever enough to avoid arrest, society may eventually celebrate them. That is how moral decadence becomes normalised.

The tragedy is that we sometimes condemn the criminal act while celebrating the culture that produced it.

We condemn the internet fraudster but admire his expensive car. We condemn corruption but celebrate the corrupt individual who shares money. We complain about political corruption but rush to associate with politicians whose ostentatious lifestyles raise legitimate questions. We condemn examination malpractice but sometimes pressure teachers to give our children unmerited marks. We condemn bribery until we need a favour. We condemn dishonesty until dishonesty becomes convenient.

Our moral outrage is sometimes conditional. And a society cannot build a healthy moral culture on selective morality.

The home is supposed to be the first school of morality. Before a child encounters a teacher, pastor, imam,

politician, journalist or social-media influencer, the child encounters parents and relatives. The family therefore has a profound responsibility.

Parents must teach children that money is not the only measure of success. They must teach them that dignity is more valuable than material possessions and that honest labour, however modest, is preferable to wealth acquired through criminality.

The digital age has intensified the problem. Social media has created a permanent exhibition of other people's lifestyles. Young people encounter carefully curated images of wealth, luxury, beauty and success, but rarely see the debt, fraud, exploitation, family pressure or emotional distress that may sometimes lie behind such displays.

Consequently, some develop unrealistic expectations about what life should provide. They want the lifestyle immediately. They want the car immediately. They want the designer clothes immediately. They want the fame immediately. And when legitimate avenues appear too slow, some begin searching for shortcuts.

But there are no shortcuts to character. Character is built slowly through choices, discipline and restraint.

This is where our educational institutions must also come in. Education should not merely produce people who can read, write, calculate and obtain certificates. Education should produce responsible human beings.

A person can possess a doctorate and lack integrity. A person can quote Scripture and still exploit the vulnerable. A person can occupy a prestigious office and still abuse public trust.

Academic attainment without character is incomplete education.

Religious institutions also have an enormous responsibility. Nigeria is a deeply religious society. We

pray frequently, attend churches and mosques, quote Scripture and invoke God in our everyday conversations.

But our religiosity must produce character.

Faith without moral discipline becomes mere performance.

The media and social-media ecosystem also deserve scrutiny. The internet has democratised communication, but it has also created a market for sensationalism. Content that shocks, titillates or provokes outrage often attracts enormous attention.

This creates a dangerous incentive. Some people will do almost anything for views, followers and money. The distinction between publicity and notoriety is gradually disappearing.

The danger becomes even greater when children are involved. The circulation of abusive material involving children should never be treated as entertainment, gossip or something to forward casually to another person. Every additional circulation can compound the victim's trauma.

People who encounter such material should not become distributors of another person's suffering. Instead, they should report it through appropriate channels and allow law-enforcement agencies to investigate.

The reported case in Anambra should therefore not merely end with an arrest. If the allegations are established, the legal system must respond appropriately. Children deserve protection, and those who exploit them must understand that society will not tolerate such conduct.

But punishment alone cannot repair a damaged moral culture.

I am not suggesting that every wealthy Nigerian acquired his or her wealth dishonestly. Far from it. There are Nigerians who have built legitimate businesses, pursued professional careers, created employment and accumulated wealth through years of discipline and hard work.

The problem is not wealth. The problem is wealth without conscience. The problem is the mentality that says anything is permissible once money is involved. The problem is the gradual disappearance of shame.

A society's moral condition is reflected not only in the crimes committed within it but also in what its people tolerate, celebrate and excuse.

We must therefore stop asking only: "Who committed this crime?" We should also ask: What kind of society produces such conduct? What values are we transmitting to our children? What are we celebrating? Whom are we honouring? What are we teaching the next generation about success? And perhaps most importantly: What are we prepared to sacrifice in our pursuit of money?

Once people lose their sense of shame, conduct that would once have horrified society can gradually become normal.

There must be a point at which every decent human being says: No amount of money is worth this.

That point must never disappear.

Nigeria needs economic development, but it also needs moral regeneration. We need jobs, but we also need values. We need prosperity, but we need prosperous people who understand responsibility. We need successful citizens, but we need citizens who know that success without integrity is ultimately a failure of character.

The alleged exploitation of a child for \$700, if established, is therefore more than a criminal story. It is a disturbing mirror held up to society.

For if we continue to raise a generation that measures success by money alone, we should not be surprised when some individuals eventually begin to measure the value of everything including human dignity in monetary terms.

A child must never have a price. Human dignity must never have a price. Conscience must never have a price. And there must remain some things that no amount of money can buy and no amount of poverty can justify.

That is the moral boundary we must urgently reclaim.

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



Sports

● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing

Aghahowa leads ex-youth soccer players Association, seeks members' cooperation

NICHOLAS EBOIGBE

The new Chairman of Ex-Youth Soccer Players Association, Pastor Osayomore Aghahowa has posited that he would do his utmost best to pilot the body to an enviable height.

Pastor Aghahowa, former Head Coach of Football, Edo State Sports Commission made the declaration while chatting with the ObserverSports yesterday in Benin. The cleric who

retired as Director of Sports Development and Operations in the Edo State Sports Commission was unanimously elected chairman of the Association recently.

He said that all he needs to succeed is the cooperation of the members to enable him develop the Association.

He explained that the Association was quite a unique one because it comprises his senior colleagues who have contributed to the development of

the game of football in Nigeria ranging from club sides to the National teams as Flying Eagles and Super Eagles.

"For me, the Ex-Youth Soccer Players Association must continue to pursue her set goals and create a forum for all ex-soccer players, organizers and coaches to engage in constructive dialogue on how to develop youth football while fostering unity, love and progress for all members.

The new members of the

executive of the Association also include Pastor Joshua Ogiesoba who was elected as Vice Chairman; Mr Sylvester Ebrume is Secretary, Mr Lucky Imafidon, Public Relations Officer, Mr Felix Akhalu as Welfare officer, Mr Kingsley Omigie got the position of Assistant Public Relations Officer.

Mr Sunday Eghaghe is the new Treasurer while Nosa Omoregie emerged as Adviser of the noble body.



DR PATRICE MOTSEPE

AFCON 2027: Motsepe rules out plan B as Tanzania prepares to host tournament

Confederation of African Football (CAF) President Dr Patrice Motsepe has reaffirmed Tanzania's position as one of the co-hosts of the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), insisting there will be no alternative plan for the tournament.

Motsepe revealed that he had previously been told Tanzania might not be ready to host the competition and was advised to consider a Plan B or Plan C.

However, the CAF president dismissed concerns surrounding the country's preparations, saying some negative reports circulating in the media contain misinformation.

"From CAF's perspective and personally, there is never going to be Plan B or Plan C, and never will there be," Mot-

sepe said.

He added that CAF would continue to work closely with Tanzania to address areas where progress needs to be accelerated ahead of the tournament.

Motsepe said he had received extensive reports on the country's preparations and expressed confidence that the necessary work would be completed in time for a successful AFCON 2027.

The CAF president is expected to return to Tanzania in January 2027 for a final assessment of the country's readiness to host the continental showpiece.

Tanzania will co-host AFCON 2027 alongside Kenya and Uganda, with preparations across the three East African countries continuing ahead of the tournament.

Kano State Sports Commission: Taking Kano back to its rightful place in Northern sports

The Kano State Sports Commission has demonstrated its commitment to sports development and its determination to restore Kano to its position as a leading sports centre in Northern Nigeria.

This was reflected in the presentation of the report of the just-concluded North-West Zonal Elimination Championships for the 1st National Intermediate Games and the 23rd National Sports Festival 2026 by the Commission's Secretary, Bashir Ahmed Maizare, Ph.D.

Presenting the report to the Chairman and members of the Commission, Maizare gave a detailed account of Team Kano's performance at the Kaduna zonal championships. His presentation provided useful insights into the teams' achievements and the work required ahead of the national competitions.

According to the Secretary's report which was made available to this site, the 1st National Intermediate Games zonal

eliminations were organised in preparation for the National Championship scheduled for September 10-12, 2026.

Team Kano participated in eight sports events across seven disciplines, covering both male and female categories.

In summary, Team Kano secured eight qualifying positions, comprising three first-place finishes and five second-place finishes. The teams qualified in all eight events listed above for the National Championship proper.

Dr. Maizare also presented the results of Team Kano at the zonal elimination championships for the 23rd National Sports Festival 2026.

The competition, scheduled for September 13-15, 2026, featured four sports disciplines and five events.

Summarising the performance, the Secretary stated that Team Kano achieved qualification in all five events entered, winning two and finishing second in three.



WOMEN FOOTBALLERS IN ACTION

WAFU-B U17 Girls Cup: Flamingos thrash Niger Republic 5-0 in dominant display

Nigeria's U17 women's team, the Flamingos, began their 2026 WAFU B U17 Girls' Cup campaign in emphatic fashion with a commanding 5-0 victory over Niger Republic in Yamoussoukro on Wednesday.

The Flamingos asserted their dominance from the first whistle, controlling possession and dictating the tempo of the game. Captain Harmony Chidi set the tone in the 16th minute, opening the scoring to give Ni-

geria a deserved 1-0 lead. Despite sustained pressure, Nigeria had to wait for some time for their second goal which came through Awawu Bashiru's clinical finish. Adegbuyi also had a goal ruled out for offside, but the first half ended with Nigeria firmly in control, with goalkeeper Onyiyechi Opara untested throughout the opening 45 minutes.

The second half saw the Flamingos continue their relentless attacking display. While

Niger Republic struggled to contain Nigeria's pace and creativity, the Flamingos remained patient in their build-up play, searching for more goals to seal the emphatic win. The floodgates opened late in the game as the Flamingos turned dominance into goals. In the 83rd minute, Ohunene Sunday made it 3-0 with a well-taken goal, before Oluebube Umejiaku made it four, leaving the Nigeriens stunned. Nigeria capped off a perfect

afternoon in stoppage time, as Ayomide Rotimi added a fifth goal in the 94th minute to complete the 5-0 rout and underline Nigeria's superiority in the encounter.

The comprehensive victory sends a strong message to other contenders in the tournament, as the Flamingos kick-started their title defence with a clean sheet, five goals, and a performance that showcased depth, discipline, and attacking flair.

FEATURE**Sports**

Why we always crash out: The hurting truths Nigerian Football clubs refuse to face

DOUGLAS BAYE-OSAGIE

This season, Nigeria is represented by four clubs on the continent. Rangers International and Rivers United in the CAF Champions League, and Shooting Stars and El-Kanemi Warriors in the CAF Confederation Cup. The story is already familiar - while two have bowed out in their very first game of the tournament, the two that remain now face a heavy North African hurdle. We celebrate qualifiers in June, we get humiliated in September. Rivers United and Shooting Stars are just the latest victims. But the problem is not juju, not luck, not referees. It is systemic. These were teams who had pole position to advance but they refused to do what was needed to get over the line.

The NPFL is now a feeder league for the continent's smaller leagues. That is how far we have fallen. Our local players have taken their football to African countries whenever the slightest opportunity arises.

We pay our champions peanuts. How can you pay a star striker N150,000 a month and expect him to face a Tunisian defender earning \$10,000? Good players don't stay. They emigrate to Rwanda, Tanzania, Sudan, Kenya, Europe, even Vietnam. We export goals and import regrets. Just look at Shooting Stars - their best two players last season, Ayobami Junior and Tijani Al Ameen, who even made the Super Eagles squad for the Unity Cup derby, have now moved on to clubs in Algeria and Zimbabwe. Think of how much experience and quality is lost by these departures.

Recruitment is corrupt. It's "man-know-man" football. Players are sacked by cleaners. That doesn't breed a professional environment. Agents bring their players, commissioners bring their cousins, chairmen bring their clients. Talent is optional.

Some coaches have turned selection into business. If you don't pay, you don't play. The best 11 never plays. The richest 11 plays.

We lack tactical preparation. African football has gone scientific. North Africans press with GPS data, video analysis, and set-piece coaches. We do "come out and play" and shout "ginger yourselves" from the bench.

Technically, we are still in 1999. First touch heavy, second touch tackle. Rivers United assistant coach Yemi after the game says there are no strikers in Nigeria. What a way to divert attention from himself and the coaching crew who couldn't do the needful at home.

Most of our clubs are owned by State Governors. Football is treated as a political settlement. A Commissioner for Sports who has never run a kiosk is suddenly managing a club with a continental budget.

Football has left that era. It is now business. Al Ahly is a corporation. Raja Casablanca is a brand. Orlando Pirates is almost a brand of sponsors. We are still a Ministry Department.

No pre-season planning. We start buying players 2 weeks before CAF registration closes. The Fire Brigade



Approach. Even the coach who qualified Shooting Stars was not good enough as he was sacked for Salisu Yusuf.

No continuity. A new Governor comes in, sacks the entire management, sacks the coach, sacks 20 players. How do you build a team like that?

We don't respect away games. You can't go to Tunisia to defend a 1-0 lead. In Africa, to qualify, you must go to score. North Africans see defense as invitation.

We don't scout our opponents. They have 50 clips of us. We have zero of them.

Fitness levels are shameful. By minute 70 in North Africa, our players are cramping. Theirs are just starting.

We have no sports psychology. We fear the name "Esperance" and "Wydad" before the bus enters the stadium.

Infrastructure. You train on a bad pitch in Nigeria and expect to play well on a lush green modern hybrid grass in Algiers, Tunis or Morocco. Impossible.

Poor welfare kills motivation. Unpaid bonuses, 6 months salary owed, then you ask a man to die for the badge in Casablanca.

No youth system. Moroccan clubs have academies producing stars for Europe. We have trial grounds every pre-season.

This brings me to ENYIMBA. Why did they succeed where everyone fails?

In the early 2000s, Orji Uzor Kalu took politics OUT of football. He brought in professionals. He gave Felix Anyansi Agwu a free hand. He paid Enyimba players MORE than the national team. He kept Kadiri Ikhana and later Okey Emordi, bought the best legs in the country - Vincent Enyeama, Obinna Nwaneri, Joetex Frimpong - and did a 6-week close camping in Abia. They didn't just prepare, they OVER-prepared.

That is how you win Africa back-to-back. Enyimba proved that Nigerian clubs CAN conquer the continent,

but only when run like a professional club, not a political campaign office.

And let's be honest with ourselves - in a fixture that looked like Enugu Rangers were going to have it easy against a Benin Republic club side, it took the luck of penalties to go

through. Against a team from Algeria, you don't win with luck.

Until we sack the political approach and hire professionals, pay professionals, and think like professionals, we will continue to crash out in the first round.

Rangers vs USM Alger and El Kanemi vs Raja Casablanca are not football matches. They are audits. And African football is about to audit us again. We hope and pray they prepare well and live up to the expectations.

CAFL targets 16 cities, picks Makurdi for launch of American football in Nigeria

The Continental American Football League (CAFL) Africa is set to storm Nigeria with a new American football league, targeting 16 cities for its March 2027 launch, with Makurdi, the Benue State capital, as the starting point.

Founder and Commissioner of CAFL Africa, Muhammad El Muhammad, who disclosed this at a press conference in Makurdi on Wednesday, explained that the league would also hold in 15 other cities: Lagos, Ibadan, Ilorin, Abuja, Lafia, Lokoja, Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Enugu, Owerri, Asaba, Warri, Port Harcourt and Uyo.

El Muhammad said the organisers were already putting the necessary structures in place, adding that discussions with the Benue State Government on the league's take-off had been concluded.

He said Benue was selected as the launch point because of its vast sporting potential and abundance of young talents.

According to him, the league would create opportunities for young people, open up employment avenues and provide a platform for identifying and developing talents in the state.

He further disclosed plans to establish an American football academy in Makurdi to scout and nurture promising talents from across Benue.

"The decision to introduce the CAFL in Benue and Nigeria at large is to bring football closer to Nigerians at home," he said, adding that the state government had given its nod for the scheme's take-off.

El Muhammad further stated

that government's expected support would include providing suitable playing pitches and security, without direct financial implications for the league.

He also listed sports clinics and trained sports therapists among the benefits expected from the initiative, particularly for players who sustain injuries during matches.

"Benue is a home of talents yet to be fully harnessed. We want to tap from it for the good of the people" he stated.

Also lending his voice on the initiative, Solomon Awua, Head of Marketing, Benue Television, described the initiative as a new sporting opportunity for the state.

He observed that the project had challenged the familiar pattern in which major opportunities start in Lagos and end in Abuja, urging Benue residents to seize the opportunity,

just as he assured the body of media partnership to drive public awareness and support for the league.

Meanwhile, the Director of Sports, Benue State Sports Council, Iornngurum Malu, who commended CAFL for choosing Benue, said Governor Hyacinth Alia was passionate about sports and would support an enabling environment for the programme to succeed.

On their part, Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Benue State Council, Comrade Bemdoo Ugber, and Chairman of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), Benue State chapter, Hembadon Orsar, promised CAFL of media support to drive the initiative.

In a vote of thanks, Bishop Sam Praise explained that the initiative was "beyond a media show," urging well-meaning Nigerians and organisations to support the project and ensure its success.



Edo Festival 2026: London to host 3-day showcase of culture, business, excellence

CAROLINE AMEH

LONDON

London is set to become a global meeting point for Edo people in November as the 2026 Edo Festival and Awards brings together the state's traditional, cultural, business and creative communities for a three-day international celebration.

edoration.

The festival, scheduled for November 20 to 22, 2026, is themed "Celebrating Our Heritage. Honouring Excellence. Building Unity." It is expected to draw Edo sons and daughters, traditional leaders, entrepreneurs, professionals, artists, entertainers and friends of Edo State from the United Kingdom, Nigeria and other parts of the diaspora.

Founded in 2011 by Ambassador Ken Odeh, founder of Edo Festival and Awards and Chief Executive Officer of JJ Barry Conglomerate, the initiative has evolved from a cultural gathering into a wider platform connecting Edo heritage with business, investment, creativity and community development.

The three-day programme will open on Friday, November 20, with the Edo Summit, featuring a Business and Investment

Forum, leadership and community development discussions, networking sessions and panels designed to connect entrepreneurs, investors and professionals.

Saturday will provide the cultural high point of the festival with the Cultural Festival and Awards Presentation. Traditional Edo dances, a cultural parade, musical performances and a gala dinner will form part of the programme, while distinguished

achievers in business, politics, philanthropy, entertainment, entrepreneurship and media will be honoured.

The festival will close on Sunday, November 22, with an Art Exhibition featuring Edo arts and crafts, historical artefacts and contemporary creative works.

Artists will also have opportunities to network while members of the public view the exhibition.

Odeh, who established the festival to promote Edo culture and

strengthen connections among Edo people outside Nigeria, said the 2026 edition represents another phase in the initiative's development.

Over the years, the festival has combined cultural exhibitions with fashion, food, music, awards and business engagement, while its community initiatives have supported widows, orphans and disadvantaged families through scholarships and vocational training.

2027: INEC registers 137,487 persons with disabilities (PWDs)

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has intensified efforts to mobilise Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) ahead of the 2027 general elections, following data showing that 137,487 PWDs have so far been captured in the Commission's voter records.

The figure was disclosed on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, at a National Strategy Engagement between INEC, the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in Abuja.

The engagement focused on using targeted sensitisation and mobilisation to increase voter registration, Permanent Voter Card collection and turnout among PWDs in the 2027 elections.

According to data from INEC's ICT Department obtained before the Automated Fingerprint Identification System exercise, persons with albinism constitute the largest identified category, with 30,561 captured persons, representing about 22.2 per cent of the total figure.

They are followed by persons with physical impairment, numbering 19,430, while 13,080 visually impaired persons and 9,299 hearing impaired persons have also been

captured. A further 54,941 persons were recorded under other categories of disability.

The figures mean that the "other categories" group accounts for roughly four in every 10 PWDs captured, highlighting the diversity of accessibility needs that election administrators and stakeholders will have to address.

Declaring the engagement open on behalf of INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, SAN, Acting Chairman and National Commissioner, Prof. Rhoda Gumus, said the data demonstrated the need for sustained engagement with disability organisations.

He said the Commission's objective was to ensure that eligible PWD voters were informed, mobilised and supported throughout the electoral process, adding that strategies agreed at the national level would be taken to the states through Resident Electoral Commissioners, Electoral Officers and other officials.

The Director, Gender and Inclusivity Department, Mrs. Lakunuya Dorothy Bello, identified access to voter information, voter education, mobilisation and accessibility of electoral facilities among the challenges affecting PWD participation.

She said PWDs remained an important constituency whose voices, choices and participation were essential to an inclusive electoral process.



NEWS CONFERENCE:

From left: Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Enugu State University of Technology, Dr Obum Arum; Former Dean, University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Prof. Uche Nwagha and UNN 252nd Inaugural Lecturer, Prof. Theresa Ukamaka-Nwagba during a news conference on the forthcoming UNN 252nd Lecture in Enugu

NASS sends 2026 Constitution Alteration Bill to 36 state assemblies

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The National Assembly has transmitted the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Sixth Alteration) Bill, 2026, to the Houses of Assembly of the 36 states for consideration and approval.

The Clerk to the National Assembly, Kamoru Ogunlana, disclosed this in a statement on Wednesday, saying the transmission marked the next stage of the constitutional alteration process.

According to the statement,

the Bill was transmitted to the state legislatures pursuant to the directive of the National Assembly leadership and in accordance with Section 9 of the 1999 Constitution, as amended.

Section 9 requires constitutional alteration Bills to secure approval by resolutions of not less than two thirds of the Houses of Assembly of the 36 states before the National Assembly can proceed with the process.

The Clerk urged the state legislatures to consider the Bill in line with their respective legislative procedures and

communicate their resolutions to the National Assembly after completing their consideration.

While the Constitution does not prescribe a specific period for state Houses of Assembly to communicate their resolutions on constitutional alteration Bills, the National Assembly said the state legislatures are expected, in the interest of an orderly and coordinated process, to conclude their consideration and communicate their positions within 30 days of receiving the Bill.

The statement, however, clarified that the 30-day period is an administrative timeframe and not a constitutional

deadline.

The National Assembly also said it recognised the constitutional responsibilities and independence of the state legislatures in considering the proposed alterations, stressing that the transmission was intended to facilitate the orderly discharge of their constitutional role.

Ogunlana said the National Assembly remained committed to ensuring that the alteration process complied with the Constitution, due process, institutional cooperation and the legislative responsibilities of all tiers of government.

Zone 16 police vow to sanction officers over extortion, lilegal searches

PHILIP EKE, YENAGOA

YENAGOA

The Nigeria Police Force, Zone 16 Headquarters, Yenagoa, has assured residents of Bayelsa and Rivers States that all allegations of extortion, unlawful vehicle stops and misconduct against its officers will be thoroughly investigated and erring personnel sanctioned.

The Zonal Police Public Relations Officer, Zone 16 Headquarters, Yenagoa, SP Gunn Emonena, gave the assurance in an exclusive interview with New Waves, saying although police

officers have the power to stop and question persons reasonably suspected of wrongdoing, such powers must be exercised within the ambit of the law.

Emonena said complaints of extortion must be supported with credible evidence, adding that petitions backed by verifiable facts would be treated with utmost seriousness.

On phone searches, the ZP-PRO clarified that officers have no right to indiscriminately search citizens' phones on the road, noting that where there is serious suspicion or a petition against a person, such individual should be taken to the station for proper investigation.

Edo police nab stepfather over child abduction, defilement

MIKE OSAROIGAGBON

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Police Command has arrested a self-styled prophet accused of abducting five girls and a stepfather over the alleged defilement of his six-year-old stepdaughter.

The Command spokesperson, ASP Eno Ikoedem, who represented the Commissioner of Police, CP Patrick Daor, disclosed the arrests while addressing journalists in Benin City on Wednesday, September 16, 2026.

She said the self-styled prophet, Nicholas Nusa, 50,

operates Divine Grace Church along Imoga Road, Ibillo, Edo State.

ASP Ikoedem stated further that the the suspect abducted five female children from the Ibillo/Imoga axis at different times between September 2025 and April 2026.

According to her, Nicholas Nusa was arrested after the Command received information about his activities on September 12.

She said preliminary investigation revealed that the children were taken to the suspect's residence at different times.

The Police further alleged that Nusa confessed to the offences, including impregnating

one of the girls, aged 15.

The police spokesperson added that the victim is currently recovering in hospital after undergoing a Caesarean Section and is being cared for by the Brave Heart Organisation.

Efforts are also ongoing to reunite the other children with their families.

In a separate case, police arrested 50-year-old Kadiiri Edenokun over the alleged defilement of his six-year-old stepdaughter at Ayuwa, Jattu, in Etsako West Local Government Area.

The alleged incident occurred at the suspect's residence while the child's mother was

away.

Police said Edenokun admitted touching the child's genital area on two separate occasions.

"The child is currently receiving medical treatment under the care of the Ministry of Women Affairs, Edo State," Ikoedem said.

She added that Edenokun remained in custody and would be charged to court after investigation.

"That day, when we were ready to go to the shop, i quickly cornered the victim, and rubbed my hands on her genital skin surface. I rubbed her body two consecutive times but on different days", Edenokun told journalists.

SPORTS



FIFA U20 Women's World Cup: Falconets thrash Lionesses 3-0, secure quarter-final spot

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Nigeria's U-20 women's national team, the Falconets, yesterday secured a place in the quarter-finals of the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup after a comfortable

3-0 thrashing of England's Young Lionesses at the Stadion Miejski in Bielsko-Biala, Poland.

Tosin Rafiu opened scoring for the falconets in the 8th minute of the Round of 16 clash before Seimeyeha Janet Akeko-

romowei and Mary Mamodu scored the second and third goals in the 47th and 73rd minute to seal victory for Nigeria.

The Moses Aduku led Falconets have now advanced in the competition and continue their pursuit of a deep run at

the tournament as they face hosts Poland or Colombia in the Quarter finals stage.

The Falconets booked their place in the knockout stages in emphatic fashion, thrashing New Caledonia 10-1 in their final Group F fixture.

The result lifted Nigeria to second place in the group be-

hind Spain. The Moses Aduku's side lost group opening game 2-0 to Spain and played out a goalless draw with China PR.

Winner Onajite David scored a hat-trick against New Caledonia, while Ramotalahi Kareem was also among the scorers as Nigeria produced a powerful second-half display

against New Caledonia to seal qualification in style.

England, meanwhile, reached the Round of 16 after finishing third in Group B behind Brazil. The Young Lionesses opened their campaign with a 1-1 draw against Canada before recording a 5-1 victory over Tanzania, and then suffered a 1-2 reverse against Brazil in their final group game.



Abuja set to run again: 3rd premium trust bank half marathon holds Nov 7, registration starts Sept 18

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Nilayo Sports Management Limited has announced that the third edition of the PremiumTrust Bank Abuja City International Half Marathon will take place on Saturday, November 7, 2026, in the Federal Capital Territory.

According to the organisers, the registration portal for the 21-kilometre race will officially open on Friday, September 18, 2026.

The race, which has quickly grown into one of Nigeria's top road races, is expected to attract elite athletes, recrea-

tional runners, fitness enthusiasts and corporate teams from across Nigeria and outside the country to Abuja. Prospective runners can register online when the portal goes live, or physically at the Old Parade Ground, Abuja, and organisers have advised early registration to allow for adequate training and preparation.

The event is powered by the partnership between sole sponsor PremiumTrust Bank and Nilayo Sports Management Limited, a leading race organising company in Nigeria, a collaboration that has elevated the profile of the half marathon since its inception.

The November 7 edition is billed to showcase athletics, fitness, entertainment and sports tourism, with promises of improved athlete welfare, top-level logistics, medical support, security and fan engagement.

Reacting to the announcement, the Managing Director/CEO of PremiumTrust Bank, Mr. Emmanuel Efe Efemienim, CON, FCIB, said the bank's continuous backing of the race underscores its belief that sports inspire excellence, create opportunities and unite communities, adding that the bank is pleased to remain sole sponsor and looks forward to hosting thousands of runners.

Bournemouth begin historic journey against battle-tested Real Sociedad

Real Sociedad will host Bournemouth at Anfield Stadium on Thursday night to kick off their Europa League league-stage campaigns.

Bournemouth arrive after a 2-2 Premier League draw with Brentford, while Real Sociedad come into the tie off a 3-0 home defeat to Atletico Madrid in LaLiga.

Real Sociedad finished 10th in LaLiga last season but qualified for Europe by winning the Copa del Rey, and they currently sit 12th with 7 points from a record of two wins, one draw and three defeats.

The Spanish side has solid European pedigree, having played 120 European match-

es, reaching the Champions League last-16 in 2023/24 and the Europa League last-16 last season where they were eliminated by Manchester United. In the league stage this season, they will also face Union SG, Lillestrom, Lyon, Crystal Palace, Torreense, Plzen and Juventus.

Bournemouth, by contrast, are playing in Europe for the first time after finishing sixth in the Premier League last season.

Marco Rose's side have struggled this term with only one win in five games across all competitions, a 4-0 EFL Cup win over Lincoln City, while drawing three and losing one in the league to sit 15th with

three points.

Their other Europa League league-stage opponents are Sturm Graz, AC Milan, Sparta Prague, Celta Vigo, Plzen, Lillestrom and Hapoel Be'er Sheva. Real Sociedad will be without Alvaro Odriozola and Igor Zubeldia through injury and Jon Aramburu through suspension, but will rely on World Cup winner Mikel Oyarzabal and new right-back Hector Fort from Barcelona.

Bournemouth will miss Julian Araujo, Amine Adli, Veljko Milosavljevic and Eli Junior Kroupi, and are expected to start Rayan, Justin Kluivert and Marcus Tavernier behind striker Evanilson, with Alex Scott also hoping to impress.

Nigeria stun Algeria In thriller, advance to quarterfinals

Nigeria's senior men's volleyball team have secured a place in the quarterfinals of the 2026 African Men's Volleyball Nations Championship in Tunisia after defeating Algeria in a thrilling five-set encounter yesterday.

The Zone 3 champions rallied from behind to beat the North Africans 23-25, 25-19, 21-25, 25-20, 15-12 in a dramatic final group-stage clash.

Nigeria started brightly and took an early advantage in the opening set, but Algeria recovered to edge the West Africans 25-23.

The Nigerian side responded emphatically in the second set, dominating proceedings to win 25-19 and level the match.

Algeria regained control in the third set, winning 25-21, leaving Nigeria with their backs against the wall.

The Nigerians, however, produced another spirited comeback in the fourth set, winning 25-20

to force a decisive tie-breaker.

With qualification at stake, Nigeria held their nerve in the fifth set to prevail 15-12 and book their place in the last eight.

Head coach Ryan Masajedi praised the resilience and fighting spirit of his players, insisting that the victory was the result of hard work and determination.

"I am impressed with the way the players picked up after losing the first set. The set was in our

favour, but the Algerians were lucky it went in their favour," Masajedi said.

"The players have once again shown that they can perform under any circumstances. They picked up after the first set and we ended up winning the match."

Masajedi said the victory was particularly important because Nigeria wanted to avoid a difficult route in the knockout stages.

