

Oba Ewuare II @10: Benin palace unveils 14-event anniversary programme

OSAHENIRO MIRACLE OFUWENGBE
AND OLIVER IJIOGBE

BENIN CITY

The Benin Royal Palace has unveiled an elaborate 14-event programme to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the coronation of His Royal Majesty, Oba Ewuare II, Oba of Benin,

with a series of cultural, intellectual, sporting, economic and social activities scheduled to hold across Benin City, Edo State, from October 3 to 25, 2026.

The celebration marks a decade since Oba Ewuare II ascended the ancient throne of Benin as the 40th Oba of Benin on October 20, 2016.

The anniversary is expected to pro-

vide an opportunity to celebrate the rich history, enduring cultural heritage and global identity of the Benin Kingdom, while reflecting on significant developments and milestones recorded during the monarch's 10-year reign.

The programme will commence on October 3 with a grand cultural festival featuring traditional performances, music, masquerades and other

colourful displays of Edo heritage.

On October 4, attention will shift to a grand Durbar and royal procession, alongside the presentation of a documentary chronicling major moments and milestones of Oba Ewuare II's decade-long reign.



HIS ROYAL MAJESTY, OBA EWUARE II, OBA OF BENIN

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

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#200

Okpebholo explains Assembly Financial Autonomy Law amendment

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has explained that the recent amendment of the Edo State House of Assembly Financial Autonomy Law and the Judicial Autonomy Law was designed to strengthen transparency, accountability and due process in the management and utilisation of public funds.

The governor said the amendments were necessary to

● Says no constituency project executed since 2025

prevent public resources from being mismanaged or diverted, particularly funds appropriated for constituency projects.

Okpebholo made the clarification on Monday when he received traditional rulers from Esan South East Local Government Area, led by the Onojie of Ubiaja, His Royal Highness Curtis Iredia Eidinojie I, at the Government House, Benin City.

According to the governor,

no constituency project had been executed in the state since September 2025, despite funds being appropriated and released for such projects.

He stressed that the development underscored the need for stronger institutional checks and a clear separation of responsibilities among the three arms of government.

"We have three independent arms of government, and the

House is to appropriate funds and not to carry out the functions of the Executive by executing projects.

"Since last year, a lot of money was going there, but even the members were not seeing it. Since September last year, they have not carried out any constituency project, and money was going there.

"These are reasons why we cannot trust one individual with

due process without checks and balances," the governor said.

He explained that under the amended arrangement, constituency projects would no longer be handled outside the established government structures but would be domiciled in the appropriate ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).

The governor said the arrangement would enable lawmakers to monitor projects

approved for their constituencies without taking over the executive responsibility of implementing them.

"Now, their constituency projects will be domiciled in various MDAs and, once they appropriate funds for projects, they are able to track them through the ministries and ensure the projects are done

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

Benin wakes to brass, colour as Esama's 92nd birthday celebration begins in grand style



Chief Dr. GABRIEL
OSAWARU IGBINEDION
The Esama of Benin Kingdom

BENIN CITY

MATTHEW OKAGHA/
BENEDICT OKATE AND
IGUNBOR GODWIN

Benin City has come alive with music, colour and an atmosphere of celebration as activities marking the 92nd birthday anniversary of the Esama of Benin Kingdom, Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, got underway on Tuesday, September 1, 2026.

The celebration, which formally commenced on Tuesday, entered its second day on Wednesday with a colourful procession of goodwill, tributes and gestures of appreciation from individuals, organisations, friends and associates

of the celebrant.

The sound of music and the festive mood that greeted the commencement of the activities have added a special aura to the milestone, as family members, associates and well-wishers celebrate the life and legacy of one of Edo State's most prominent elder statesmen and entrepreneurs.

A major highlight of Wednesday's activities was the visit by the Advisory Board, management and staff of Independent Television and Radio (ITV/Radio) to the Esama at his residence in Benin City.

The delegation, representing the 250 members of staff of the media organisation, was led by the Managing Director of Inde-

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



COURTESY VISIT:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (4th left) with traditional rulers from Esan South East Local Government Area, led by the Onojie of Ubiaja, His Royal Highness Curtis Iredia Eidinojie I, during a visit by the traditional rulers to Government House yesterday.

Oshiomhole, Wike,
PDP, AAU, others
mourn Dan Orbih

—Pg 2

You're a trusted ally,
patriot, President
Bola Tinubu hails
Shettima @60

—Pg 4

Zelensky says airlines
should avoid Russian
airspace as Ukraine
escalates drone operations

—Pg 8

WAFU-B CAFWCLQ:
Edo Queens face
Burkina Faso's USFA in
semifinals battle

—Pg 11

NEWS

Okpebholo explains Assembly...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

according to specification, not one person determining what should be done.

"These are the things we are trying to correct, and thank God the members understand it and are insisting that their money is for the people and must follow due process," he said.

Okpebholo maintained that the objective of the amendment was not to deny the legislature its financial rights but to ensure that public funds appropriated for the benefit of constituents were properly accounted for and translated into tangible projects.

He said the new arrangement would also make it easier to identify who was responsible for a project at every stage of its execution, thereby reducing the possibility of abuse and ensuring that projects were delivered according to approved specifications.

The governor also appealed to the traditional rulers to use their influence in their respective communities to mobilise support for the administration of President Bola Tinubu.

He attributed the increased financial resources available to Edo State for development projects to the reforms of the Federal Government, stressing that continued support for the President was in the interest of the state.

"You know I have promised Mr. President 2.5 million votes. The people I have in mind to help me deliver it are you, the traditional rulers.

"You are the ones who talk to the common man in your communities. You know everybody, and they listen to you. I want you to please take this message home and let the people know that the promise to Mr. President is for the benefit of the state.

Oba Ewuare II @10: Benin palace...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Sports will occupy a prominent place in the anniversary programme, with international chess, lawn tennis and golf tournaments scheduled as part of the celebrations. Football and wrestling competitions will also feature, providing opportunities for sports enthusiasts and young talents to participate in the festivities.

The celebration will further showcase the rich culinary and creative traditions of the Benin people through a food festival, art exhibition and trade fair

designed to promote Edo cuisine, artistic expression, craftsmanship, entrepreneurship and business opportunities.

The intellectual dimension of the anniversary will feature the Oba Erediauwa Memorial Lecture, expected to bring scholars, historians, cultural experts and other stakeholders together to examine Benin history, culture and contemporary issues affecting the kingdom and its people.

Economic development and security will also take centre stage through the Benin Economic Summit and Benin Security Summit.

Benin wakes to brass, colour...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

pendent Television, Engineer Elvis Obaseki, who described Igbinedion as a rare personality whose vision and contributions have continued to make a positive impact on society.

Obaseki described the Esama as a man of vision whose accomplishments have inspired generations, saying the visit was an opportunity for the management and staff of ITV/Radio to celebrate their founder and express appreciation for the opportunity he had created for them to contribute to society through broadcasting.

In a remarkable gesture to commemorate the 92nd birthday, the ITV Managing Director disclosed that 55 members of staff of the organisation jointly constructed a multi-purpose hall at the premises of ITV/Radio, Communication Village, Oluku, Benin City.

He subsequently presented the keys to the newly constructed facility to the Esama, stressing that no funds from ITV/Radio were used for the project.

"We are here to celebrate our founder and to appreciate him for his vision and the opportunity he has given us to contribute to society through broadcasting," Obaseki said.

Responding, the Esama expressed appreciation to the management and staff of ITV/Radio for the birthday gesture and the facility presented in his honour.

He offered prayers for the staff and urged them to remain committed and dedicated to their duties, emphasising the importance of hard work, dedication and service.

The colourful ceremony reached another high point with the cutting of the 92nd birthday cake by the Esama alongside members of the ITV/Radio delegation, while a birthday card was also presented to him.

The Esama also received goodwill visits from delegations of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Edo State Zonal Command, the Edo State Market Women Association and other groups, as family, friends and associates continued to identify with the historic milestone.

The birthday activities have provided an opportunity for the people of Edo and beyond to reflect on the life and enduring contributions of Igbinedion, particularly in the areas of business, education, philanthropy, media and community development.

Oshiomhole, Wike, PDP, AAU, others mourn Dan Orbih

MATTHEW OKAGHA

BENIN CITY

Tributes have continued to pour in following the death of Chief Daniel Osi Orbih, a prominent Edo politician, businessman and community leader, with former Governor of Edo State and Senator representing Edo North, Adams Oshiomhole, describing his passing as a personal loss.

Orbih, who died on Monday, August 31, 2026, was mourned by family members, political associates, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Ambrose Alli University (AAU), former Edo Governor Godwin Obaseki and other stakeholders who described him as a principled politician, trusted friend, statesman and committed community leader.

In a statement announcing his death, the Orbih family said they received his passing with profound sadness and total submission to the will of Al-

mighty God.

The family described him as a beloved brother, husband, father and uncle, and said he was survived by his wife, Mrs. Florence Orbih; his children, Ms. Winifred Anwosiobor Orbih and Dr. Mildred Omonemi Orbih; as well as his brothers, sisters and other members of the extended family.

The family, in a statement signed by Francis Udukhomoi Orbih, Esq., appealed to relatives, friends and well-wishers to remember the family in their prayers as they mourned the loss.

Further details concerning the burial arrangements, the family said, would be announced in due course.

Reacting to the death, Oshiomhole said Orbih's passing had left him with a deep personal pain, describing the deceased as a brother and friend of more than 40 years.

The former governor said their relationship transcended politics, recalling years of shared

political engagements, friendship, laughter and reflection.

According to Oshiomhole, Orbih was "a man of many parts" and a respectable politician whose life reflected a genuine commitment to his faith, community and the advancement of his people.

"Dan came, he saw, he gave his best, and he has departed," Oshiomhole said, adding that what Orbih left behind was more enduring than material possessions — "a good name, cherished relationships and a legacy of service and contribution that will remain in the memories of those whose lives he touched."

Oshiomhole also recalled a recent meeting with Orbih and other friends during which they reminisced about the past and shared laughter.

"Little did I know that perhaps one of our last meetings was already upon us. That memory has now assumed a significance I could never have imagined," he said.

He noted that through his political engagements, business investments and extensive personal relationships, Orbih contributed significantly to the development of Afenmai land.

He described him as a man who believed in the potential of his people and deployed his resources, influence and goodwill to promote progress and strengthen community bonds.

Oshiomhole further praised Orbih for his principles and political courage, noting that although he stood firmly by his convictions, he was always willing to extend a hand of fellowship across political divides whenever the interest of his people was at stake.

At Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, the management, Governing Council, Senate, staff and students also expressed deep grief over the death of Orbih, who served as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the institution's Governing Council.



COURTESY VISIT:

Edo State Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo (centre) poses with spouses of members of the Edo State House of Assembly, led by the wife of the Speaker (6th left), after they paid a courtesy visit to Government House, Benin City, to congratulate the Governor on his birthday and presented a gift.

PHOTO: OKONDOH TALLE EBOSE

Edo Govt orders immediate crackdown on criminal activities at Ekosodin

OLIVER IJIIOGBE

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has extended its security operations to Ekosodin and adjoining communities in Benin City following growing concerns over criminal activities and attacks on students and residents.

The State Commissioner for Public Safety and Security, Rt. Hon. Festus Ebea, disclosed this in Benin City during an interactive security meeting with the Commissioner of Police, CP Patrick Daaor; Commander of the Edo State Security Corps, Mr. Richard Balogun; senior government officials; and representatives of students of the

University of Benin (UNIBEN).

Ebea expressed concern over reports of increasing criminal activities in Ekosodin and its environs, particularly those targeting students and other residents of the community.

He said Governor Monday Okpebholo had directed the strengthening of security operations in the area to protect lives and property and restore confidence among residents.

The Commissioner urged residents, particularly students, to provide security agencies with credible, timely and useful information that could assist in preventing and tackling criminal activities.

According to him, effective security operations require the

active cooperation of members of the public, stressing that security agencies would be better positioned to respond promptly when residents provide accurate information about suspicious activities and individuals.

Also speaking, the Commissioner of Police, CP Patrick Daaor, called for stronger collaboration among students, residents and security agencies, noting that the fight against crime could not be won by the police and other security agencies alone.

Daaor urged students, who also reside in the Ekosodin community, to maintain regular engagement with the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) responsible for the area.

He assured residents of increased police visibility and regular patrols within Ekosodin and adjoining communities, while appealing to members of the public to provide credible information that could facilitate prompt security intervention.

Earlier, representatives of the National Association of University Students (NAUS) expressed concern over the security situation in Ekosodin, saying students and other residents had been living in fear of attacks by hoodlums during both the day and night.

The students said the situation had become particularly worrisome with the University of Benin currently on vacation, leaving many students and other residents concerned about their safety.

NEWS**Edo CP urges stakeholders to collaborate with police, condemns jungle justice**

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

The Commissioner of Police, Edo State, CP Patrick Daaor, has urged Stakeholders including the Edo State Special Security Squad (ESSSS), residents and community-based organisations in the state to collaborate with the police in maintaining peace, law and order.

Daaor spoke while addressing the specials security squad led by the Chief Security Officer (CSO), and the Principal Security Officer (PSO), who were on a courtesy visit in his office at the State Police Command.

The Commissioner of Police, Edo State, CP Patrick Daaor, has warned Edo residents against the act of jungle justice, mob action and other forms of unlawful punishment on any individual caught in the act of criminality across the State.

CP Daaor gave the warning when he received members of the Edo State Special Security Squad codenamed "Operation flush out Kidnappers and Cultists", led by the Chief Security Officer (CSO), and the Principal Security Officer (PSO), who were on a courtesy visit to his office at the Edo State Police Command.

He called on residents and community-based organisations in the State to collaborate with the police in maintaining peace, security and not in-

involved themselves in any form of jungle justice, mob action and other forms of unlawful punishment.

CP Daaor said private citizens could arrest suspects but hand them over to the police rather than engaged in any form of jungle justice, mob action and other forms of unlawful punishment.

According to him, the police frown at jungle justice, mob action and any other actions against the law but would continue to work with relevant stakeholders to ensure the safety of residents.

The commissioner said the command's overall objective was to keep Edo safe, stressing the need for continued cooperation between the police, sister security agencies and other groups established by the state government.

He charged them to work with the police and ensure that whatever they were doing was in line with what the state government had set them up to do.

CP Daaor assured the group of the command's readiness to sustain a cordial working relationship with them, noting that collaboration was essential to achieving effective security across the state.

He stressed the importance of respecting the rights and dignity of residents while carrying out security duties.

"We encourage you to ensure

that you treat the people of Edo State well, with respect and dignity.

"That is exactly what I have been doing since I took over here. Yes, we have a job to do, but doing that job does not mean you ride roughshod over people," he said.

Speaking on behalf of the squad, Noah Idemudia, said their aim was to officially present themselves to the new commissioner of police, who took over in August from his predecessor, Assistant Inspector General of police (AIG), Monday Agbonika.

day Agbonika.

According to him, Edo used to be a troublesome place when it came to the acts of cultism, but he thanked Gov. Monday Okpebholo for giving them the platform to operate.

"We would say we have

achieved a lot. We have been able to curb cultism to the barest minimum in Edo. Your predecessor has been cooperative with us, alongside other security agencies such as the Army, vigilantes, the NSCDC and others.

**VISIT:**

Edo State Commissioner of Police, CP Patrick Daaor (In Uniform) in a group photograph with members of the Edo State Special Security Squad, codenamed "Operation Flush out Kidnappers and cultists", led by the Chief Security Officer, CSO and Principal Security Officer, PSO during a courtesy visit to the Edo State Police Command yesterday.

Governors' resolve on CNG reflects Tinubu's advocacy for cheaper transport — TDF**ABUJA**

The Democratic Front (TDF) says the decision by state governors to invest in Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) is a direct result of President Bola Tinubu's sustained advocacy for cheaper transportation.

TDF said the decision demonstrates growing state-level support for Tinubu's commitment to developing CNG as a sustainable alternative to conventional petroleum products.

This is contained in a statement issued by its Chairman, Danjuma Muhammad, and Secretary, Wale Adedayo, on Wednesday in Abuja.

The pro-democracy think-tank described the governors' resolve as the clearest indication yet of the states' readiness to collaborate with the Federal Government to reduce transportation costs.

TDF recalled that Tinubu launched the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (PCNGI) in August 2023, following the removal of petroleum subsidy.

It said the initiative was introduced as a palliative measure to reduce energy and transportation costs for Nigerians.

The group said Tinubu had remained committed to developing CNG infrastructure

despite the challenges involved in establishing the facilities nationwide.

It said the initiative had resulted in 90 certified CNG filling stations, more than 450 conversion centres across 23 states and over 120,000 vehicle conversions.

TDF added that another 100,000 CNG conversion kits were currently being deployed across the country.

It noted that commercial transporters in Abuja, Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt and Enugu had migrated increasingly from Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) to CNG.

The group also said a significant number of heavy-duty interstate transporters previously dependent on Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) had adopted CNG as a cheaper alternative.

"This is a remarkable indication that the President's commitment to providing Nigerians with a cheaper alternative source of energy to cushion the biting effect of petroleum subsidy removal on the masses, has unwittingly triggered a positive transformation in the transportation sector."

TDF acknowledged that CNG penetration remained slow but expressed optimism that the governors' decision would accelerate its adoption nationwide.

ABUJA

Some economic experts have expressed mixed reactions to Nigeria's 4.43 per cent Q2 2026 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, with some saying it is yet to translate into improved living standards for most Nigerians.

The experts spoke with news in Abuja on Tuesday, while reacting to the latest GDP figures released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

The NBS had reported that Nigeria's real GDP grew by 4.43 per cent year-on-year in Q2 2026, higher than the 4.23 per cent recorded in quarter two of 2025.

The NBS report also showed that the agriculture sector grew by 4.39 per cent in Q2 2026, compared with 2.82 per cent in Q2 2025.

The industry sector, however, recorded a lower growth rate of 3.96 per cent, down from 7.46 per cent in Q2 2025, while the services sector grew by 4.60 per cent, com-

pared with 3.94 per cent in the corresponding period of 2025.

The services sector remained the largest contributor to GDP, accounting for 56.62 per cent of aggregate GDP in Q2 2026, slightly higher than its 56.53 per cent recorded in Q2 2025.

In nominal terms, aggregate GDP stood at N119.29 trillion in Q2 2026, compared with N100.73 trillion in Q2 2025, representing an 18.43 per cent year-on-year increase.

The experts agreed that the 4.43 per cent Q2 growth represented an expansion in economic activity but cautioned that it should not, on its own, be taken as evidence of a broad-based recovery.

They said stronger and more sustainable growth would require improved productivity in the real sector, greater job creation, lower production and transportation costs.

They said it would also require increased investment in human capital and measures

that would raise the purchasing power of households.

They stressed the need for policies capable of ensuring that growth is translated into better living conditions for the majority of Nigerians.

Prof. Ken Ife, a development economist, said although GDP growth remained an important measure of economic performance, it did not necessarily reflect the welfare of citizens.

Ife said GDP measured aggregate production and consumption but did not adequately capture poverty, income disparities, purchasing power and differences across sectors of the economy.

"The GDP growth does not reflect the state of the economy in respect to citizen welfare.

"It does not reflect poverty issues or disparities in the many sectors and subsectors of the economy," he said.

He expressed concern about the performance of the indus-

trial sector, particularly manufacturing, saying the sector was not growing strongly enough to drive employment creation.

"When you look at manufacturing, you see that it was pathetic, around 1.3 per cent to 1.5 per cent, while overall industry is 3.96 per cent, which is much lower than 4.43 per cent."

Ife said the development suggested that the real sector was not yet playing a sufficiently strong role in driving economic expansion.

"The real sector should be generating employment and creating jobs, but it is not driving growth," he said.

The economist also drew attention to the wide gap between nominal and real GDP growth.

He said that nominal GDP increased by 18.43 per cent largely because of prevailing prices, while real GDP growth of 4.43 per cent was calculated after adjusting for price changes through the GDP deflator.

APC chieftain hails Okpebholo on digital transformation award**BENIN CITY**

A member of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and former House of Assembly aspirant, Onaghise Ero, has lauded Gov. Monday Okpebholo on his emergence as recipient of the e-Government Governor of the Year – Digital Transformation Award 2026.

Ero, in a statement on Wednesday in Benin, described the recognition as a significant honour that reflected Okpeb-

holo's commitment to modern governance, innovation and the strategic deployment of technology in the administration of Edo.

The APC chieftain said the award went beyond recognising the governor's leadership, as it also underscored the growing importance of digital transformation in improving efficiency, transparency and public service delivery.

According to him, the recognition is an indication that efforts to build a more respon-

sive and technology-driven governance system are receiving wider acknowledgement.

Ero commended the Okpebholo administration for its initiatives aimed at strengthening digital governance.

He expressed optimism that the award would encourage the government to sustain policies that placed innovation, technology and effective service delivery at the centre of governance.

The former House of Representatives' aspirant urged the

administration to leverage the recognition to deepen digital initiatives, capable of improving access to government services and enhancing the welfare of residents.

"The award should inspire greater commitment to initiatives that improve the lives of Edo people and further strengthen the state's position in digital governance," Ero said.

He wished the governor continued wisdom and success in the service of the people of Edo.

NEWS**Customs revenue hits ₦1.38trn as smuggling seizures cross ₦61bn**FUNMILAYO MUYIDEEN
AND OSAHENIRO MIRACLE**ABUJA**

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) generated ₦1.38 trillion in revenue and intercepted smuggled goods valued at more than ₦61.3 billion between July and August 2026.

The National Public Relations Officer of the NCS, DCC Abdullahi Maiwada, disclosed this on Tuesday in Abuja at the Joint Security News Briefing involving security and law enforcement agencies.

Maiwada said the revenue comprised ₦784.66 billion collected in July and ₦595.58 billion generated in August.

He said the Apapa Area Command recorded ₦323 billion in revenue in July and later set a new single-day collection record of ₦28.1 billion on August 18.

According to him, the August 18 figure surpassed the previous daily record of ₦20.1 billion achieved in September 2025.

Maiwada disclosed that the service processed 90,985 Single Goods Declarations and 8,873 Pre-Arrival Assessment Reports during the two-month period.

He said the Customs Service also intensified enforcement operations against smuggling, arms trafficking, narcotics, money laundering, terrorism

financing and illegal wildlife trade.

He disclosed that seizures recorded by Area Commands and Federal Operations Units during the period were valued at more than ₦61.3 billion.

One of the major interceptions occurred on August 17 at the Tin Can Island Port, where Customs officials recovered 399 Joef pump-action rifles and 535 firearm components.

The recovered arms were handed over to the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons for further investigation, while two suspects linked to the consignment were remanded.

Maiwada also disclosed that 3,300 cartridges of explosives were intercepted at the Seme border and handed over to the Nigeria Police Force.

He added that the Kano/Jigawa Area Command recovered 827,800 Saudi Riyals, \$73,300 and £15,957 allegedly concealed inside footwear.

The recovered currencies and a suspect were subsequently handed over to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission for further investigation.

The Customs spokesman said the service would continue to deploy technology, intelligence gathering and inter-agency collaboration to strengthen border security while facilitating legitimate trade

**BIRTHDAY**

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (Right) in a handshake with Vice President Shettima on his 60th birthday

You're a trusted ally, patriot, President Bola Tinubu hails Shettima @60

AISHA MOMOH

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has congratulated Vice-President Kashim Shettima on his 60th birthday, describing him as a trusted ally, patriot and valued partner in governance.

Tinubu conveyed the felicitation in a statement personally issued by him on Tuesday in Abuja, hailing Shettima's life of service, commitment and sacrifice to Nigeria.

"Today, I warmly congratulate Vice-President Kashim Shettima, my brother and partner in steering the ship of our state, on his 60th birthday on September 2."

Tinubu also felicitated Shettima's wife, Nana, his children, family members and political associates on the milestone, describing the birthday as an opportunity to celebrate his contributions to national development.

"Kashim is not just a trusted ally or a valued colleague, but also a patriot whose life has been defined by service, commitment and sacrifice for worthy causes."

The President commended Shettima's distinguished banking career and record of service as governor of Borno State and Vice-President of Nigeria, describing his public career as distinguished.

"In both capacities, Kashim has demonstrated courage, diligence, compassion and an abiding commitment to improving the lives of the people."

Tinubu acknowledged Shettima's loyalty to the All Progressives Congress (APC), support for the administration and dedication to the Renewed Hope Agenda of his government.

He highlighted Shettima's role as Chairman of the National Economic Council, commending his purposeful leadership in coordinating economic policies and promoting effective economic management.

The President said Shettima had also promoted collaboration between the Federal Government and sub-national governments in advancing national development and addressing challenges confronting Nigerians.

Tinubu further commended Shettima's respect for constitu-

tional governance, democratic institutions, dialogue and consultation, describing those qualities as essential to strengthening Nigeria's democracy.

"As a trusted partner, his loyalty, wisdom and sense of duty have remained invaluable to the administration."

The President thanked Shettima for his steadfast support as the administration continued to pursue its programmes and deliver on its promises to Nigerians.

"I must thank Vice-President Shettima for his steadfast

support and partnership as we continue to join hands in delivering the promises of Renewed Hope to Nigerians."

Tinubu expressed confidence that their partnership would continue to produce meaningful progress in building the Nigeria of their dreams and advancing the country's development.

He prayed that Allah would continue to guide, protect and strengthen Shettima, while granting him wisdom, good health and many more years of purposeful service to Nigeria.

Lagos records 33,009 domestic, sexual violence cases in 5yrs

DIVINE JOHN AND OJO HAPPY

LAGOS

The Lagos State Government through its Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) says it received 33,009 cases of domestic and sexual violence in five years.

The Attorney-General of Lagos State, Mr Lawal Pedro, disclosed this on Monday at Ikeja, at a media parley commemorating the 2026 Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness Month.

Pedro, the Commissioner for Justice, who was represented by the Executive Secretary of DSVA, Mrs Titilola Vivour-Adeniyi, said that the cases were received from Sept. 2021 to July 2026.

He said that the cases were received through physical walk-ins and the Virtual Referral and Response Service (VRRS), adding that the agency received an average of 300 clients monthly.

According to him, domestic violence remains the most frequently reported form of violence, with 13,515 cases recorded, followed by defilement with 1,171 cases, then child abuse and physical assault with 797 reports.

He said that the agency also recorded 420 rape cases, 428 sexual harassment issues; 100 sexual assault by penetration cases; 95 technology-facilitated sexual and gender-based violence cases; 323 threats to life and 79 attempted rape cases.

Pedro added that 1,861 family-related disputes, including custody, neglect, abduction and child labour, were also reported during the period.

The attorney-general described as "one of the most sobering findings" the fact that 10,613 children were identified as having suffered emotional abuse from exposure to domestic violence in their homes.

"These children may not have been direct targets of the violence, but exposure to violence can leave deep emotional scars," he said.

Pedro said that the development underscored the need for the state's response to extend beyond the immediate incident to supporting the psychological well-being of those affected.

"One of the significant findings from the period under review reveals that domestic violence and emotional violence have been the highest prevalence cases received," he said.

Unapproved textbooks: FG sets September deadline, threatens blacklistingFAVOUR OBADIGIE AND
OSAHEIRO MIRACLE**ABUJA**

The Federal Government has announced that schools, publishers and authors who use or distribute unapproved textbooks in public schools will face sanctions, including blacklisting, from September 2026.

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, disclosed this while unveiling the Federal Government's newly approved National Textbook Ranking System (NTRS), which will regulate the selection and use of instructional materials in public primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools nationwide.

Under the new system, obtaining a licence from the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) will no longer be sufficient for a textbook to be used in classrooms.

The Federal Ministry of Education said licensed textbooks must undergo a separate

national evaluation and ranking process, score at least 70 per cent and meet prescribed academic, pedagogical, technical and quality assurance standards before receiving final approval.

The ministry has also constituted a National Textbook Ranking and Selection Committee made up of representatives of relevant education agencies and qualified experts to oversee the evaluation process.

According to the new framework, the committee will work with NERDC and assess only textbooks that have already met the council's licensing requirements before recommending the highest-ranked titles for approval by the Minister of Education.

Alausa said the number of approved textbooks would be limited to between six and 10 titles per subject, depending on curriculum requirements, in order to ensure that only the best-performing materials are selected.

He explained that the reform

was intended to strengthen curriculum implementation, improve learning outcomes, eliminate substandard textbooks, promote access to quality instructional materials and restore confidence in the country's education system.

The minister also announced a reduction in the fees payable by publishers and authors for textbook assessment and ranking.

He said the assessment fee had been reduced from ₦2,000 to ₦1,500 per page, while the ranking fee was reduced from ₦1 million to ₦750,000 per title.

Publishers who had already paid the previous rates will receive refunds of the excess payments, with NERDC responsible for coordinating the reimbursement arrangements.

CORRECTION OF NAME

This is to inform the general public that my correct name is **AKHIMIE AIGBOBASIMI KINGSLEY** and not **AKHIMIE AIGBOBASIMI K. AKHIMIE AIGBOBASIMI, ADEBAYO KINGSLEY** or **AKHIMIE KINGSLEY** as were wrongly written in some of my documents. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

NEWS**ABUJA**

The Minister of Power, Joseph Tegbe, has stated that electricity grids should receive the same strategic attention traditionally accorded to fuel supplies in global energy security planning.

According to a statement by his media aide, Adeola Labzy, Tegbe made the call

while delivering a keynote address at the opening plenary of the Middle East Energy 2026 Leadership Summit in Dubai.

Speaking on the theme,

Power grid resilience key to energy security – FG

‘Energy Security and the Effect of Geopolitics’, at the 50th edition of the summit, the minister said the changing global energy landscape had made resilient electricity infrastructure critical to national and international security.

He argued that energy security could no longer be measured by the availability of hydrocarbon reserves alone, but should encompass the resilience of the entire energy sys-

tem, including critical mineral supply chains, grid infrastructure, capital and institutions.

According to him, the ability of countries to keep electricity flowing to homes, hospitals and industries during periods of geopolitical and economic stress should be regarded as a strategic priority.

He said Nigeria’s power sector reforms were aimed at creating the certainty required to attract investment, citing

regulatory certainty, contract sanctity and bankable offtake arrangements as essential to the success of the reforms.

“The minister set out four propositions for the summit’s delegates: that diversification, not diplomatic disengagement, is the surest form of strategic insurance; that grids now deserve the same strategic seriousness historically reserved for fuel supply; that affordability is itself a security issue; and

that the global energy transition must be orderly, just and responsive to the circumstances of individual nations,” the statement read partly.

He also identified affordability as a security issue and called for an orderly and just global energy transition that takes into account the circumstances of individual countries.

Tegbe pointed to Nigeria’s more than 200 trillion cubic feet of proven gas reserves and

its two-decade record of reliable LNG supply to Europe and Asia, positioning the country as an important player in the global energy security conversation.

He also described the Electricity Act 2023 as the most far-reaching reform of Nigeria’s power sector in a generation, noting that it ended the longstanding Federal Government monopoly and created 37 emerging electricity markets across the federation.

Cross River teenager nabbed for stabbing man to death

CALABAR

The Cross River State Police Command has arrested a 16-year-old boy for allegedly stabbing a 20-year-old man, Uwem Daniel Akpan, to death in the Akamkpa Local Government Area of the state.

The Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Sunday Eitokpah, disclosed this in a statement made available to journalists in Calabar on Tuesday.

According to the statement, the incident occurred at about 7:30pm on Sunday, August 31, 2026, following a misunderstanding at Peters Street, Awi community in Akamkpa LGA.

The victim was reportedly rushed to the Naval Reference Hospital, Calabar, where he was confirmed dead.

Remains were subsequently recovered by members of his family.

The statement partly read,

“The Cross River State Police Command has commenced investigation into the death of a 20-year-old male, Uwem Daniel Akpan, who was allegedly stabbed during a misunderstanding at Peters Street, Awi, Cross River, on 31 August 2026.

“A 16-year-old male suspect has been arrested in connection with the incident and is currently in police custody. The Command is investigating the circumstances surrounding the death and the alleged involvement of the suspect.”

The police said the case was being processed for transfer to the State Criminal Investigation Department in Calabar for further investigation and appropriate legal action.

Eitokpah urged members of the public to remain calm and refrain from taking the law into their own hands, assuring them that the incident would be thoroughly investigated.

Borno commissioner who threatened to flog opposition apologises

MAIDUGURI

The Borno State Commissioner for Poverty Alleviation, Youth and Sports Development, Sainna Buba, who threatened to “flog” opposition members who do not support the All Progressives Congress, has tendered an apology and retracted the comments.

Buba, in a now-circulating video, said, “The government is our government,” adding that whoever follows it will enjoy “the honey.”

He said, “We are now playing politics. Whoever shows us a finger, we will show him a finger. Whoever dares to show us a finger again, we will break his finger.”

“The government is our government. Those who follow us will enjoy the honey; if you refuse, then you will be flogged,” he added.

However, addressing journalists in Maiduguri on Wednesday, the commissioner said the remark was never intended to harm or violate

the fundamental rights of the people to freedom of choice and association.

He said, “In recent days, a comment I made during the empowerment programme organised by the City Boy Movement in Maiduguri has generated considerable concern within the public space.

“I wish to state, unequivocally, that my remark was never intended to harm or violate the fundamental rights of the people of our dear state to freedom of choice and association, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended),” he noted.

He said he had earlier provided clarification that the comment was not intended to be taken in its literal sense.

“However, in view of the concern it has continued to generate, I am using this medium to retract my earlier statement formally and to apologise to the entire people of Borno State and beyond for any offence it may have caused,” Buba added.

**NEWS CONFERENCE:**

Commissioner of Police, Rivers State Police Command, Olugbenga Adepoju (4th left) during a news conference on the suspected one chance syndicates and the dismissal of three police officers that killed a student of the University of Port Harcourt on Wednesday.

Kano APC chief abducted, two killed

KANO

Gunmen have killed two people and abducted the All Progressives Congress Chairman of Rogo Local Government Area of Kano State, Alhaji Abdullahi Fanka, in a fresh overnight attack on the community.

The latest attack came barely 24 hours after gunmen killed the APC Chairman of Rantan Ward in Bebeji Local Government Area, Alhaji Garba Buba, and another resident, Sulaiman Zunduma.

The Rogo attack reportedly occurred around 11pm on Monday when the gunmen invaded the area and opened

sporadic fire, sending residents fleeing for safety.

A resident, who spoke with newsmen on Tuesday on condition of anonymity for security reasons, said the attackers killed two people who attempted to prevent them from abducting Fanka.

“The two people killed couldn’t stop them from whisking away the party chairman because they were in possession of sophisticated weapons,” the resident said.

The incident has heightened concerns over the security situation in Kano, with suspected kidnappers and bandits carrying out a series of attacks in different communities in

the state within days.

Stop shifting online safety burden to children, parents – Osinbajo

On Sunday night, gunmen invaded Rantan community in Bebeji LGA, killing Buba, the APC ward chairman, and Zunduma. The Kano State Police Command has since launched an investigation into the incident and efforts to apprehend the perpetrators.

The Rantan attack occurred hours after suspected bandits attacked Chiromawa community in Garun Mallam LGA on Saturday night, where they abducted the Sarkin Noman Kano, Alhaji Yusuf Nadabo.

The traditional title holder

was, however, rescued by the police after security operatives and residents mounted a response to the attack. Three residents were reported injured during the incident.

The three incidents have occurred in neighbouring parts of Kano within about 72 hours, raising fresh concerns about the spread of kidnapping and armed attacks in the state.

The Minister of State for Defence, Bello Muhammad Matawalle, had on Monday announced that the Federal Government was developing a five-year defence and security plan following the recent attacks in Kano.

Kano NDC members may rejoin APC after visit to Gov Yusuf

KANO

The National Democratic Congress in Kano State is set to lose some of its prominent members as loyalists of its Kano Central senatorial candidate, Nasiru Yusuf Gawuna, plan to rejoin the All Progressives Congress.

The development emerged on Tuesday night after members of Gawuna’s political team paid a solidarity visit to Kano State Governor, Abba Yusuf, and his deputy, Murtala Garo, as part of consultations ahead of their planned return to the APC.

Gawuna, a former Kano State Deputy Governor during the administration of Abdullahi Ganduje, was the APC governorship candidate in the 2023 election.

He lost to Yusuf, who contested under the platform of the New Nigeria Peoples Party, before the result was challenged in court.

The delegation was led by a close ally of Gawuna, Muhammad Umar, and included the NDC Vice Chairman in Kano State, Ali Yako; Mansur Gawuna; and Uba Mijinyawa, also known as Uba Danzainab, as well as other prominent members of the team.

Others on the delegation were Aminu Faruk, Sani Jibrin, Salisu Muhammad, Musa Indabo, Muhammad Bala, Hassan Abdullahi and Abdurrahman Muhammad.

The visit was contained in a statement issued on Tuesday by the governor’s spokesman, Sunusi Dawakin Tofa.

Speaking during the visit, Umar, who led the delegation, said their decision to engage Yusuf and Garo was motivated by their desire to see Kano make further progress.

“We are here because of our passion for the development

and progress of Kano State. Our interest is in anything that will move Kano forward and improve the lives of its people,” Umar said.

He said the delegation’s consultations with the state leadership were intended to create an avenue for them to contribute to the development of Kano.

“Our consultations are aimed at engaging the leadership of the state and contributing our own quota to the development of Kano. We believe that by working together, we can support initiatives that will benefit the people of the state,” Umar said.

Tinubu defends reforms as Atiku faults economic policies

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has defended his administration's economic reforms as necessary steps towards building a \$1tn economy by 2030, as former Vice President Atiku Abubakar challenged the policies, asking why Nigerians had to endure years of hardship before the government began promising relief.

Tinubu, represented by the

National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, Prof Nentawe Yilwatda, at the second edition of the Asiwaju Scorecard Series and Policy Roundtable in Abuja, said the reforms had strengthened the foundation for economic stability and growth, citing improved foreign reserves, revenue mobilisation, trade and gross domestic product.

Atiku, however, said the administration's recent promises of cheaper transportation, in-

creased food production and relief for vulnerable Nigerians amounted to a belated response to a cost-of-living crisis it had allowed to persist for more than three years.

Atiku, the presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress, has continued to oppose the policies of the Tinubu administration as the 2027 general elections draw nearer, particularly its economic reforms and their impact on the cost of living.

Speaking at the event, Tinubu, represented by Yilwatda, said the economic reforms introduced by his administration had placed

Nigeria on the path to achieving a \$1tn economy by 2030.

He said the reforms had strengthened the foundation for economic stability, growth and prosperity.

The President said the removal of fuel subsidy and reforms in the foreign exchange market, alongside increased revenue mobilisation and investments in critical infrastructure, were necessary to move the country away from years of economic uncertainty and towards sustainable growth.

"When President Bola Ahmed Tinubu assumed office

on 29 May 2023, Nigeria faced a difficult economic inheritance. We had fuel subsidy distortions, multiple exchange-rate windows, weak revenue mobilisation, foreign-exchange shortages, rising debt-service pressures and years of inadequate investment in critical infrastructure.

"The President understood that Nigeria could not continue on that trajectory and therefore took difficult decisions, including the removal of the fuel subsidy and the reform of the foreign-exchange market.

"The evidence increasingly shows that the foundation is

strengthening. Nigeria's gross external reserves have risen to about \$52.7bn by August 2026.

"Consolidated non-oil revenue increased from approximately N13.63tn in 2023 to N16.4tn in the first two quarters of 2026, demonstrating the growing contribution of non-oil sources to government revenue.

"Our trade position has also improved dramatically: from a merchandise trade surplus of only about N44.8bn for the whole of 2023 to approximately N7.54tn in the first quarter of 2026 alone.

Oyo raises alarm over misuse of NGOs, crowdfunding for criminal activities

IBADAN

The Acting Governor of Oyo State, Bayo Lawal, has reiterated the administration's unwavering commitment to safeguarding lives and property by strengthening collaboration with security agencies and relevant stakeholders.

Represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Prof Musibau Babatunde, Lawal made this declaration at a capacity-building workshop on awareness, intelligence gathering, and institutional response to emerging threats linked to illicit financial flows.

The workshop, according to a statement issued by the Special Adviser to Governor Seyi Makinde on media, Sulaimon Olarenwaju, held at the Western Hall, Secretariat, Agodi in Ibadan, the state capital.

He emphasized that the government had intensified partnership with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commis-

sion to prevent the exploitation of humanitarian funding platforms and other financial channels for terrorism financing and criminal activities.

He noted that the evolving security situation in the South-West, particularly recent incidents of kidnapping, underscores the need for stakeholders to adopt stronger measures against unconventional threats.

According to him, "Criminal networks are increasingly deploying sophisticated methods to raise and move funds, including misuse of crowdfunding platforms, humanitarian interventions, NGOs, and informal financial systems.

"While humanitarian assistance remains critical to supporting vulnerable communities, there is a need for improved regulatory frameworks, proper documentation, and effective monitoring to ensure such platforms are not hijacked by individuals or groups with criminal intentions.

Police arrest five robbers in Cross River, recover stolen vehicles

CALABAR

The Cross River State Police Command has arrested five suspected members of a motorcycle and tricycle theft syndicate and recovered five vehicles in an intelligence-led operation in Calabar, the state capital.

The Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Sunday Eitokpah, disclosed this in a statement on Wednesday, saying operatives of the Violent Crime Response Unit of Satellite Town, Calabar, smashed the suspected network following credible intelligence.

According to the command, the operation began with the arrest of Effiong Archibong Sunday, 28, on August 31, 2026, at about 2pm, with one motorcycle suspected to have been stolen recovered from him.

The statement read, "The Cross River State Police Command has recorded another breakthrough in its ongoing efforts against criminal syndicates, following an intelligence-led operation by the Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU), Satellite Town, Calabar, which led to the

arrest of five suspects and the recovery of five vehicles suspected to be stolen.

"The operation reflects the sustained efforts of the Commissioner of Police, CP Ajo Geoffrey Ordue, to disrupt suspected criminal networks across the State."

According to the statement, during preliminary investigation, the suspect allegedly implicated himself and mentioned one "Elewe" as being connected to the network.

The suspect further alleged that Elewe steals motorcycles and tricycles from Akwa Ibom State and transfers them to one "Efefiong" in Cross River for onward sale.

The police said the allegations remained subject to further investigation and judicial determination.

"Acting on the information obtained during the investigation, VCRU operatives conducted a follow-up operation at about 0300hrs on 1 September 2026, leading to the arrest of four additional suspects allegedly connected with the suspected receiving and distribution network.



TEACHERS EMPOWERMENT:

A cross section of participants at the 2026 Seplat Teachers Empowerment Programme (STEP), onboarding workshop in Benin, Edo State recently.

UNIPORT graduate: Father alleges policemen left NBA duty post before son's killing

PORT HARCOURT

The family and friends of a 22-year-old University of Port Harcourt graduate, Anthony Obodo, have demanded justice over his alleged killing by policemen in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, with his father alleging that the officers involved had abandoned a duty post at the Nigerian Bar Association conference before the incident.

The demand came as protests over Obodo's death en-

tered their third day, with family members and friends staging another demonstration at the Ada George-Agip junction, where the incident occurred last Thursday.

Obodo was reportedly driving a private car when policemen at a checkpoint allegedly flagged him down for failing to stop.

The policemen were said to have chased the vehicle, after which one of the officers allegedly fired three shots in Obodo's direction. One of the bullets re-

portedly struck him inside the vehicle.

He was subsequently rushed to a hospital, where he was confirmed dead.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Blessing Agabe, had identified the alleged shooter as Corporal Alfred Louis, adding that the officer and other policemen involved in the incident had been arrested.

According to the police, youths attacked Louis after the shooting and took his rifle, but other operatives later rescued him and recovered the weapon.

During Tuesday's protest, the demonstrators carried placards with inscriptions including, "We are not safe anymore, Anthony Obodo was a friend, brother and son. Give us justice"; "The police can no longer protect us. They took Anthony's life"; and "Anthony was shot dead by the police. We need justice."

Speaking on behalf of the protesters, one of their leaders, Charles Chukwu, called on the Rivers State Government, the police authorities and the Chief Judge of the state to intervene in the matter.

Safeguarding Green Horizon: SCERA, National Park Service Convene Stakeholders for forest restoration strategy for Okomu landscape

ISAAC ERANGA

UDO

As the global climate crisis intensifies, stakeholders and conservationists in Edo State have taken a decisive step toward reclaiming the state's vanishing green canopies. Under the auspices of the Society for Sustainability and Conservation Education for Rural Areas (SCERA), in collaboration with the National Park Service and with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (UNDP-GEF SGP) and The Rufford

Foundation,

A pivotal workshop introducing the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) for the restoration of the Okomu Landscape, was hosted at the headquarters of the Okomu National Park in the historic Udo community.

The diagnostic gathering brought together communities and resource users in the Okomu Landscape, conservation officers, government representatives, and private sector giants to tackle the severe degradation threatening the Okomu ecological landscape.

Addressing the workshop, the Deputy Conservator of Park

(DCP), Matthias Enaberue, painted a sobering picture of the state of forestry in Nigeria.

"Forests are facing severe challenges worldwide," Enaberue warned. "In Nigeria, people are not taking forest conservation seriously because of a relentless drive for money."

He revealed a startling historical decline: Edo State once boasted 47 flourishing forest reserves, but today, the only preserved and conserved forest remaining is the Okomu National Park (ONP).

The Okomu landscape is increasingly fractured by rapid deforestation, agricultural expansion, aggressive illegal log-

ging, unsustainable resource use, bush burning, and a weak regulatory environment.

DCP Enaberue emphasized that the workshop was a critical intervention "to learn how to restore what we have depleted."

In his address, the Conservator of Park (CP), Lawrence Osazee, called on SCERA to establish dedicated local "gatekeepers" across all buffer-zone communities to actively protect the boundaries of the forest. Taking a leaf from global standards, Osazee urged Nigerians to emulate cities like London, where urban forestry is heavily integrated into development.

NEWS

'Don't spend a kobo on a gift for me,' Shettima shares lessons at 60

● *Shettima shares life lesson at 60, says don't spend a kobo on a gift for me*

ABUJA

Vice President Kashim Shettima has asked "Nigerians, friends, supporters and associates not to spend money on gifts or celebrations for his 60th birthday, urging them instead to channel such resources to charities, causes or people in need across the country."

Shettima, who turns 60 on Wednesday, made the appeal in a statement posted on his X account on Tuesday night, saying he was "even more resolute" about his longstanding request as he reached the milestone age.

"Over the years, I have been deeply humbled by the affection, prayers and goodwill that have accompanied my birthdays.

"Such occasions leave one grateful for the friendships, fellowships and bonds accumulated across the years," he said.

"Yet there is one appeal I have consistently made to my friends, supporters, well-wishers, associates and admirers, far and near: please do not spend a kobo on a gift for me, nor undertake any venture of material consequence in my honour."

The Vice President said turning 60 had reinforced his view that the occasion should be marked through generosity rather than material celebrations.

"Sixty is an age at which our people expect a man to have exchanged impulse for reflection, vanity for gratitude, and the desire to accumulate for the

wisdom to give.

"It is an age that asks fewer questions about what one has gathered and far more searching questions about what one has contributed," Shettima said.

He therefore appealed to those wishing to celebrate him to redirect whatever they intended to spend on his birthday to people or causes that needed support.

"I therefore appeal once again to everyone who wishes me well not to spend money marking my day, but to channel whatever resources they may have intended for such gestures to a charity, cause or person of their choice anywhere in our country," he said.

Shettima said acts of kindness, regardless of their size, could make a difference to people in need.

ple in need.

"A nation is ennobled by the care it extends to those who need the strength of others. Our means may differ, but generosity is not measured only by the size of what we give.

"Sometimes the smallest kindness arrives at precisely the moment another person needs to be reminded that humanity has not forgotten them. For me, such an act is among the most eloquent prayers anyone can offer on my behalf," the vice president stated.

Reflecting on his journey to 60, the Vice President said individuals benefited from the support of others and had a responsibility to extend the same kindness to those who might never be able to repay them.

**PRESENTATION:**

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Amb. Sola Enikanolaiye (3rd L); Executive Chairman of Consultancy Support Service Limited, Mr Abdulhakeem Ajijola (M), and other officials, during the presentation of an appreciation plaque in the Minister's office in Abuja on Wednesday

FESTAC residents threaten FHA protest over demolished fence

LAGOS

Residents and stakeholders in FESTAC Town, Amuwo-Odofin, Lagos State, under the aegis of Bring Back FESTAC, have threatened to protest at the headquarters of the Federal Housing Authority in Abuja over the alleged demolition of part of a perimeter fence protecting a public reserve housing power infrastructure serving the estate and its environs.

The residents, through the Bring Back FESTAC platform, alleged that some persons believed to be officials of the FHA, accompanied by armed policemen, recently pulled down a large section of the fence and removed the estate's gateway.

They also alleged the removal of lights and other installations around the affected area, while expressing concerns over the alleged extortion of residents and the sale or allocation of public utility spaces.

The President of Bring Back Festac, Valentine Uduebo, told PUNCH Metro on Tuesday that the residents were planning a peaceful protest at the FHA headquarters in Abuja to demand explanations over the development.

Uduebo said, "Some persons alleged to be officials of the Federal Housing Authority, accompanied by armed policemen, recently pulled down a large section of the fence and removed the estate's gateway.

"It is not alarming to see FHA act in such a manner. We can assure ourselves that they have sold that portion of land at 3rd Avenue B Close roundabout. Let us remain calm and law-abiding. We shall propose a day to storm the FHA."

A resident, who spoke in a video obtained by PUNCH Metro showing the extent of the alleged demolition, said the officials also removed the estate's gateway, lights and other installations.

The resident disputed claims

that the demolished fence was recently constructed, insisting that it had existed for years.

He said, "They came here in numbers. I saw three buses, all filled with armed policemen and FHA officials. They broke almost 80 per cent of the wall.

"There was a fence here before. We didn't just put it up. It was an existing fence. Whatever way we need to act, we have talked and met several times. We need to act."

Lagos begins enforcement

of 2026 parking permits, warns defaulters

The residents also raised concerns over the alleged sale or allocation of public utility spaces and the approval of building plans within areas they described as reserved for public infrastructure.

They called for the FHA and other relevant authorities to clarify the status of the affected land and explain the circumstances surrounding the demolition.

OPay seeks DSS, police probe over shutdown rumour

Fintech company OPay has said it is working with the Department of State Services and the Nigeria Police Force to investigate the false information circulating on social media claiming that the company is shutting down its operations in Nigeria.

OPay's Chief Legal Counsel, Akinfolabi Rokosu, disclosed this on Wednesday during a press conference organised by the company and aired on its YouTube channel.

Rokosu said the DSS and police were among the law enforcement agencies investigating the circulation of the information, adding that the company had provided evidence to help identify those responsible.

"While the DSS and the Nigeria police, among the relevant law enforcement agencies, are currently and intensively investigating this matter, we are fully cooperating with the ongoing investigations being conducted and have provided the necessary evidence to identify those responsible for it.

"OPay is taking action against those responsible for creating and circulating this harmful information. We will

pursue them and will ensure that the law is fully enforced.

"Anyone who deliberately engages in similar conduct should expect decisive legal action and the full consequences provided by the law. This is not about silencing anyone. OPay is not going to be silenced," he said.

Also speaking, OPay's Chief Operating Officer and Chief Technical Officer, Dotun Adekunle, said the company remained operational and had no plan to shut down its Nigerian operations.

"OPay is here, OPay is operating, and OPay is going nowhere.

"The message that is circulating online is false. It did not come from OPay. There is no decision from OPay or by OPay to shut down its operations in Nigeria, and there is no indefinite leave. In fact, according to the false information itself, OPay was supposed to have shut down yesterday, September 1. It is September 2, and we are still here."

Adekunle urged customers not to make financial decisions based on messages circulated on social media or messaging platforms without first verifying their sources.

Yobe fixes LG elections, begins candidate screening

Damaturu: The Yobe State Independent Electoral Commission has commenced the screening of candidates contesting the chairmanship, vice-chairmanship and councillorship positions ahead of the local government elections in the state.

The Executive Chairman of the commission, Dr Ibrahim Yabani, disclosed this during a press briefing at the SIEC conference hall in Damaturu, where he outlined the schedule of activities leading to the polls.

Yabani said the screening exercise would run from September 1 to 7, 2026, in line with the commission's guidelines.

He explained that councillorship aspirants were being screened across the state's three designated zones, with Zone A in Damaturu, Zone B in Potiskum, and Zone C covering Bade and Nguru Local Government Areas.

He added that chairmanship and vice-chairmanship candidates were being screened at the SIEC headquarters in Damaturu.

The SIEC chairman stressed that the screening process was

being conducted strictly in accordance with constitutional provisions.

He said, "The screening guidelines are very clear; it is adopted from the Constitution. The 1999 Constitution as amended clearly gives us the qualifications of who is going to stand and qualify to stand for the election for Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Councillors in any of the Local Government Areas in Nigeria.

Yabani also announced that political parties would commence campaigns from September 18 to 25, 2026.

He said the commission had trained electoral officers across the state's 17 local government areas in preparation for the elections.

According to him, the officers had been equipped to effectively handle the electoral process.

He further disclosed that election materials were scheduled to be deployed on September 24, ahead of the polls.

The commission fixed September 26, 2026, for the conduct of the local government elections across the state.

Institutionalise SBCC as core government function, expert urges FG

KADUNA

Some Behavioural Change Experts say Nigeria needs to institutionalise Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) as a core government function, with dedicated staffing, sustainable financing and behavioural evidence integrated into routine planning.

The experts made the call

on Tuesday in Abuja at a post-SBCC Summit engagement organised by the Centre for Communication and Social Impact (CCSI).

The engagement followed the recently concluded 2026 International Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) Summit in Panama.

The engagement provided an opportunity for practitioners to reflect on lessons from

the summit and discuss how SBCC could be strengthened and contextualised within Nigeria's development and health systems.

Mrs Foyeke Oyedokun-Adebago, Population Council Expert, said Nigeria had already made progress toward institutionalising some SBCC activities and should build on existing government structures rather than starting from

scratch.

Oyedokun-Adebago said some government institutions already had units responsible for health education, health promotion and related communication functions.

She, however, said the existence of such units was not enough without the authority, staffing, technical resources and capabilities required to fulfil their mandates.

NEWS**FOREIGN**

Zelensky says airlines should avoid Russian airspace as Ukraine escalates drone operations

Volodymyr Zelensky says "the Russian sky is becoming completely dangerous"

Ukraine's president has told airlines that Russian airspace will be "effectively closing" as his country escalates its drone strikes.

"We want to warn every airline that uses Russian airspace, every insurer, everyone who still uses key Russian airports: the Russian sky is becoming completely dangerous," Volodymyr Zelensky said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin responded by saying that Zelensky's comments amounted to a "declaration of state terrorism". Russia, he added, would continue its attacks on Ukraine which have intensified in recent weeks.

Most Western commercial airlines do not fly over Russia as a consequence of the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, but carriers in countries such as Turkey and China do.

Explaining the elevated airspace risk in his nightly video address on Tuesday, Zelensky said that "Ukraine does not threaten civilian aviation as such - not a single civilian aircraft" and did not want the loss of innocent lives.

"There will simply be drones in Russia's skies on a scale that has to be taken into account," he said.

Zelensky directed the warning to airlines continuing to operate flights to Russian airports, especially in major cities like St Petersburg and Moscow.

Ukraine has targeted energy facilities deep inside Rus-

sian territory and there have been repeated attacks on depots belonging to Russia's two biggest online retailers, Wildberries and Ozon.

Its drone attacks have for months led to disruption at some of Russia's biggest airports, especially in Moscow where at times all four major airports have been forced to halt arrivals and departures.

Several cancellations were reported on Wednesday.

Ukraine does not have to target airports to cause disruption.

Under Russia's air defence "Kovyor" (carpet) plan, flights are suspended if a drone is detected in the relevant area.

Aviation risk advisory firm Osprey Flight Solutions said in an alert to clients that while the majority of Ukraine's drone and missile strikes were likely to occur within 300km (186 miles) of the border, daily attacks deeper inside Russia were almost certain to continue this year.

"There is also a realistic possibility that the frequency of Ukrainian strikes will continue to increase in the short term deep inside Russian territory," the alert added. "It is assessed that miscalculation and/or misidentification is likely in areas related to the Ukraine conflict."

Speaking to reporters at the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation summit in Kyrgyzstan, Putin said: "They are asking us to resume negotiations... but you don't negotiate with terrorists."

His comments come as Russia's attacks on Ukraine continue, with heavy strikes killing 12 people on Tuesday

and further attacks on Odesa, Sumy and Kyiv on Wednesday. Russia's military has said it is preparing to carry out "massive" strikes on Ukrainian power stations.

The Ukrainian capital and its surrounding region have come under attack for seven days in a row.

A few weeks ago, Zelensky said Russia was attacking Ukraine every day, and Ukraine's military had "begun the process of bringing the war back to Russia". At the weekend he said the same, that Russia had to feel the war was "returning to where it came from".

Putin acknowledged that Ukrainian strikes had damaged infrastructure inside Russia, while insisting that "only 10%" of oil refineries were left to repair.

Chinese, Turkish and Gulf state airlines are among those using Russian airspace, with savings in time and fuel on routes between Asia and Europe.

Other carriers have largely avoided the eastern European region since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion in February, 2022.

Ukraine has closed its airspace to civilian aircraft throughout that period.



VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY

Israel expanding positions in occupied Lebanese area

The drive on the highway by the Mediterranean in southern Lebanon, near the border with Israel, is scenic and, these days, desolate. Crops lie abandoned and buildings destroyed by Israeli air strikes, too many to count,

are in ruins.

Near the town of Naqoura, a Lebanese military checkpoint, painted in the white-and-red colours of the national flag, is the last visible sign of the state's presence. Soldiers are positioned behind concrete

walls, but the road is empty. A few minutes further south, around a dozen Israeli flags indicate the start of occupied territory. Unless authorised by Israel, no-one can enter.

This part of the country is the heartland of Lebanon's Shia Muslim community, from which Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed militia and political party, gets most of its support. It has seen three invasions by the Israeli military in wars against the group in the last two decades alone. The most recent started in March, after Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel following the killing of the Iranian supreme leader, at the start of the US and Israel's war against Iran.

Last month, a BBC team joined a humanitarian mission of the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, known as Unifil, which is one of the only ways to visit the area under Israeli control. There, as it did in Gaza, Israel has flattened entire villages, and air strikes and demolitions have continued even after a ceasefire was announced in June.

An Israeli soldier at a checkpoint established in a residential building near the Unifil headquarters in Naqoura

Led by Finnish troops who are part of Unifil, the convoy was escorting civilians to and from Christian villages near

the border. Those communities were spared from Israel's attacks and invasion during the war and, with the surrounding areas now under occupation, are now cut off from the rest of the country. Our presence was allowed by the Israeli military through a deconfliction mechanism with the UN.

The strip of land currently controlled by Israel constitutes around 5% of Lebanese territory and, in some places, extends 10km (six miles) from the border. Driving along the wall that separates the two countries, we saw service roads built by Israel after the invasion, intense movement of Israeli soldiers and residential buildings that were being used by them. Some were covered in netting to protect them from Hezbollah's explosive drones.

We also heard Israeli surveillance drones in the sky and explosions in the distance, possibly from demolitions being carried out by Israel in villages that are under occupation.

Israeli soldiers drive on a road along the wall separating Lebanon and Israel

In a visit to occupied southern Lebanon last month, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said he had instructed the military to "take all necessary steps to prepare for a long-term presence in the area".

Thousands still missing as Nepal-Tibet flood relief and recovery intensifies

Thousands of people remain missing after a catastrophic flash flood along the Nepal-Tibet border a week ago, as rescuers scramble to reach anyone who may be alive even as they turn to recovery.

At least 1,114 people have died in Nepal and nearly 4,000 more are missing, according to Nepal's disaster agency. On the Tibetan side, the death toll stands at 16, and more than 500 people are unaccounted for, Chinese state media reports.

The UN's humanitarian agency has said the response is entering a new phase, with authorities intensifying relief and recovery operations.

In Nepal, efforts continue to rescue workers, potentially in the hundreds, believed to be trapped in hydroelectric station tunnels.

A massive flash flood, be-

lieved to have been triggered by a glacial collapse, swept through a Himalayan valley last Wednesday, wiping out villages.

Nearly 12,000 people have since been rescued, according to Nepal's disaster management agency.

But thousands more, including hundreds of foreign nationals - from India, the UK, Australia, the US, Malaysia, and more - are still missing. A week on, fears are growing that the death toll will only rise.

Chinese state media has not reported any survivors on the Tibetan side of the border, but the search continues. Beijing, which annexed Tibet in the 1950s, tightly controls the region. All information comes from state media and foreign journalists cannot travel there without permission.

Rescuers using heavy machinery, working around the

clock, have been able to reopen the route to the Gyirong border crossing between Nepal and Tibet and clear the road of debris, which will accelerate the search for the missing, Chinese state media said.

Rescue operations continue in challenging conditions, and experts from China and India are helping build temporary bridges to reach remote areas. Drones are being deployed over hard-to reach areas to scan for survivors.

The UN's humanitarian agency said the main challenge is now access, with more than 40 bridges destroyed.

The most remote communities are relying on army helicopter flights for supplies, and villages are still struggling for fuel and electricity.

The full impact of the flood in Tibet is unclear. China has released information through state media outlets showing the devastation around the border, but has given few de-

tails about the victims or the impact on local villagers.

In Nepal, nearly 3,500 people have been left homeless and displaced in 27 sites - mostly schools, which disrupts education - across the districts of Nuwakot and Rasuwa.

The priority for them now is "receiving humanitarian assistance, recovering and identifying the remains of the loved ones, tracing missing relatives and reunifying separated children, and accessing psychosocial support", the UN's humanitarian agency said.

People packed into overcrowded shelters, contaminated water and damaged health facilities are putting the population at greater risk of disease in the middle of the monsoon season, the agency added.

Nepal's prime minister, Balendra Shah, said there was a renewed emphasis on protecting the lives of survivors, providing medical treatment and psychological counselling.

FOREIGN

NEWS

US sailors arrive in Thailand's Pattaya after record 250 days at sea

After a record 250 days at sea without a port stop, the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln has docked in Thailand, giving its nearly 5,000 crew members a much-needed break.

The ship is docking close to the beach resort of Pattaya, known for its raucous nightlife and for sex tourism. For the US it also carries strong historical echoes.

When the weary sailors walk into the city's bars and restaurants, they will literally be treading in the footsteps of the hundreds of thousands of US troops who came here for R&R – rest and relaxation – during the Vietnam War.

They transformed it from a sleepy fishing village to one of the world's most famous and frenetic party towns.

Today the neon-lit alleys running down to the beach are much quieter than usual. The bars in the city's famous Walking Street still screen videos on their walls of pole-dancing women, trying to lure customers inside.

But there are not many of those customers, and most

seem to be family groups from the Middle East more interested in the Turkish ice-cream vendor than the go-go bars.

The Iran War, which has affected tourism and consumer spending, has hit businesses hard here. The prospect of thousands of American sailors, with nine months of salary unspent while at sea, offers a rare opportunity to local businesses.

The US carrier left San Diego last November on what was supposed to be a six-month assignment in the Pacific and South China Sea.

However, the ship was diverted to the Gulf after the US and Israel began military operations against Iran in late February.

Recently some members of Congress raised concern about reports of food shortages, broken toilets and mental stress among the crew. The US Navy acknowledged that working conditions have been tough, but said the crew were sufficiently well-supported. It would not, however, comment to the BBC on the carrier docking at Pattaya, citing operational security.

Despite its close relationship with China, Thailand is a trea-

ty ally of the US, and port visits by US Navy ships are a familiar occurrence.

But this is probably the largest number of US military personnel coming straight from a war zone to Pattaya since the fall of Saigon in 1975.

"This visit could be our best hope," said Anon Saiteer, who sells gems in a shop near Walking Street, which has put up a large sign welcoming the US sailors and marines and offering them a special discount. "We have nothing to lose – we just hope they will spend some money here."

But US and Thai officials are trying to ensure this happens without any of the salacious headlines for which Pattaya has become known.

The Thai authorities have said there are a few places where the US servicemen and women will not be allowed to go. One of them is Soi 6, which runs down to the main beach, and is known for its concentration of racy go-go bars.

While the Thai police have reminded their US visitors that prostitution is technically illegal in Thailand, there are actually

thought to be 25,000 to 50,000 sex workers in the city. Many of them work in Soi 6, where they stand outside the bars imploring men to come inside.

The many cannabis shops in Pattaya are also off-limits to US crew members, along with sea-sports like paragliding and jet-skis.

"It is their decision," Mayor Poramase Ngampiches told the BBC. "The US military have done their homework."

US Naval Attache Kristopher Robinson rebuffed questions from the BBC about activities that soldiers were banned from doing.

Instead, he said the US troops would "conduct themselves in accordance with US law, US naval regulations, and the laws of Thailand".

"We're trying to give the sailors as much opportunity for rest as they can," he said.

The US Navy has organised shuttle buses from the port into Pattaya running from 5am to 2am every day the carrier is here in Thailand. Two hotels have been designated suitable for those US crew members who want to splash out on a night onshore.

Bus crash on Egypt's Red Sea coast kills 22

At least 22 people have been killed in a bus crash in eastern Egypt, the country's health ministry has said.

Another 28 people were injured on the road between Red Sea towns of Dahab and Nuweiba in the South Sinai governorate on Wednesday morning.

Reports in Egyptian and Jordanian media say as many as 10 Jordanian nationals were among those killed in the accident.

The cause of the crash remains unknown.

The area is a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors from around the world.

It is unclear how many people were on board at the time of the crash.

In a statement, the Egyptian health ministry said all the injured people were being treated in three different hospitals.

Deadly road accidents are common across Egypt, with the authorities reporting nearly 6,000 fatalities in 2025.

Such accidents are often blamed on reckless driving and poor road maintenance.

Last month, 18 people were killed and 30 injured when two lorries collided in the north-eastern Ismailia governorate.

Guinea-Bissau referendum approves new constitution that expands president's powers

Voters in Guinea-Bissau have approved a new constitution that significantly expands presidential powers ahead of a general election later this year.

The referendum was organised by the military government that seized power in the West African nation last November following a disputed election.

Voters have agreed to sweeping reforms allowing the president to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and cabinet, create or abolish ministries and dissolve parliament in the event of a grave political crisis.

The main opposition party boycotted the vote, saying the process lacked adequate political and institutional safeguards and threatened the country's transition back to democracy.

Guinea-Bissau, one of the poorest countries in the world, has experienced at least nine attempted and successful coups since gaining independence from Portugal in 1974.

The UN has dubbed the

country a "narco-state" – its coastline has many uninhabited islands, making it ideal for drug traffickers.

Provisional results announced by the country's electoral commission showed that 70% of voters backed the changes in Sunday's referendum, while 30% voted against them. Turnout was reported at nearly 60%.

The new constitution strengthens the presidency at the expense of the prime minister, altering the balance of power under Guinea-Bissau's semi-presidential system.

Previously, Guinea-Bissau's legislature appointed a prime minister from the parliamentary majority, who then formed a cabinet – an arrangement the ruling military authorities said had contributed to political instability.

The changes now give the president greater authority over the government.

However, the five-year presidential term and two-term limit have been retained.



Transitional President, Gen Horta N'Tam's.

South Korea jails care home head for sexually assaulting disabled residents

A South Korean court has jailed the former head of a disabled care home for sexually assaulting multiple residents, in a case that shocked the nation.

The man, surnamed Kim, was handed a 15-year prison term for abusing three residents at the Saekdongwon facility in Incheon City, west of Seoul. The ruling is subject to appeal.

Police started investigating Kim after one of his victims, a woman with a severe intellec-

tual disability, came forward in February last year.

The case has prompted the government to inspect 1,507 care facilities for disabled people across the country, where 33 cases of suspected abuse were found.

South Korean Prime Minister Kim Min-seok had described the abuse at Saekdongwon as "a grave matter that calls into question the very reason for the state's existence".

An in-depth assessment of

residents commissioned by Ganghwa County found that 20 current and former female residents may have experienced sexual abuse.

Many in South Korea have asked how such a case could still occur, especially after laws were strengthened in 2011 to protect people with disabilities from sexual assault.

Some have also raised questions on how the director's actions could have gone undetected for so long.

Ganghwa County has ordered Saekdongwon to close, while Incheon City officials revoked the licence of the foundation that operated it.

However, the closure has been deferred until the remaining residents have been relocated and arrangements for independent living have been completed.

The foundation has filed an administrative lawsuit challenging the revocation of its licence.

River water smashed into tunnel and chased me for 20 minutes, Nepal worker tells BBC

Nepalese hydropower workers have told the BBC about the catastrophic moment water from the Trishuli River crashed into their tunnel as the region was inundated by deadly flash floods last week.

It started with a sudden, strong gust of air, says Pemba Dundu Tamang, whose team of about 30 was constructing the tunnel's concrete lining.

The blast of wind sent plywood flying through the air and dislodged heavy machinery. Just outside, houses had already been swept away.

"I ran towards the tunnel entrance," he said. "The water was chasing behind me and I was running ahead of it."

Tamang lost several family members who were at home at the time. Nepal's death toll

has exceeded 1,000 after last week's devastating floods, and officials say about 4,000 are missing.

A number of the missing – potentially in the hundreds – are labourers like Tamang, working in a vast network of tunnels at hydropower sites along the river. Engineers have been pumping air into these tunnels as part of a huge rescue operation.

"We are focused on search-and-rescue efforts at the tunnels, our work is continuing," Nepal Army spokesman Raja Ram Basnet told AFP news agency.

"Our soldiers are also deployed to collect bodies and prevent the spread of disease."

The army said 119 people had been rescued on Tuesday.

"I was almost unconscious with shock. I could not think clearly."

FEATURES

ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Life Humbles Us on Its Own Terms

BAGUDU MOHAMMED

One of my daughters is very fair in complexion, the other unmistakably dark, both atypical in a way that breaks the family pattern. The dark one is not "black" by any harsh measure, yet she doesn't fit the expected shade, so the siblings tease her as the only black person in the house while telling the fair one she doesn't know whose blood she resembles. It sounds like harmless banter, but it is how families rehearse a much older story: that every home carries a deviation it cannot explain away.

In my community there is a sarcastic adage we pass around like folklore, that every family has its own "weird" side, its dark horse, its outlier. The saying is unscientific, yet sociology has long observed the same truth. Émile Durkheim wrote about the way groups create norms only to be unsettled by the individuals who refuse to fit them, and family systems theory reminds us that no household is a monoculture. A family is a system of different gifts, temperaments, and scripts running in parallel.

That is why the most decorated homes still surprise us. I look to my brother for initiative, strength, guidance, tradition, and the art of human connection, everything except books. And we all know the examples that circulate in public life: celebrated lawyers, surgeons, and engineers whose siblings never finished school,

or whose parents themselves never held a degree or a title.

Research on achievement and sibling differentiation, from Alfred Adler's early work on birth order to more recent studies in behavioral genetics, suggests that sameness is not inherited as a package. Children in the same house often diverge precisely to claim their own space. Life seems to insist on it. I call this life's way of humbling us, its quiet refusal to let consistency become entitlement. It is the force that trains emotional maturity, because it forces us to live with variance instead of demanding uniformity.

We are rarely ready for that variance. A wealthy man assumes only wealth can court his daughter. A doctor assumes a doctor. Families with big names treat scandal like a classified file, sealed and never to be opened. We invent proverbs to cover the gap, "what God cannot do does not exist," and then we doubt them the moment a life in front of us refuses to add up neatly. We assume, for instance, that poverty or the almajiri child is the likeliest path to drug abuse, and we perform public grief when someone or family we respected is linked to cocaine. Then the news turns: the children raised under us, in elite schools, with every privilege, begin accusing one another in public of the same thing. That is the humbling.

Psychologists call it cognitive dissonance, the discomfort of holding two truths at once, the image we curated and the reality that contradicts

it. The tragedy is not the contradiction itself. The tragedy is our refusal to tolerate it.

History teaches the same lesson at scale. The Babangidas, Atikus, Obasanjos, Jonathans, Buharis, no name in power is exempt from a stark side. If we believed divorce belonged only to the poor, or that public disgrace belonged only to ordinary families, then these houses that have become symbols of discipline and honor would have to be immune. They are not. Time will not sustain any era without a record being broken, a champion being beaten, a script being rewritten.

And now social media accelerates the humbling. Fame and pride once had private rooms to breathe in. Today they are staged for public validation, and the pressure to defend everything instantly turns a small crack into a collapse.

The strength, I have come to be-

lieve, is in embracing the other side. The uncle who is not polished. The sibling who chose a different path. The neighbor, the classmate, the nephew who will never fit the family brochure. Great biographies are full of this. Leaders, artists, and founders have all been humbled at some point by the need to live with a deviant, naughty, or simply different child, with a choice they did not make.

In my language we have a proverb: we give birth to children, we do not birth their character. That is not resignation. It is an invitation to empathy, sympathy, tolerance, and a forgiveness that starts with ourselves.

Life also humbles us in chemistry. We cannot match-make everything. Trust, fate, interest, and alliance do not obey a family plan. The same people we stood for yesterday, defended in public, marketed as friends, can become the ones who hunt us tomorrow.

Isn't that humbling?

Think of politics. El-Rufai once described Tinubu's victory and Uba Sani's in Kaduna as a great relief. He is only human. And yet the same currents that shift between Abba Yusuf and Kwankwaso, between Uba Sani and El-Rufai, remind us that interest is rarely a straight line. We have to be inside another person's situation to understand that survival and self-preservation will reorder their loyalties before ideology does. Why do we assume we can transfer hate, enmity, and the inheritance of values without resistance, and expect time not to humble us for it?

In the end, life writes us a different script than the one we drafted for our earned identity. It disappoints, not to break us, but to teach us. The test of any family, any generation, is not to escape the possible dark side. It is to be humbled by the possibility, and to



AFRICAN FEMALE JOURNALISTS

XX

GENDER ISSUES

Beyond the Newsroom: The Silent Battles of Women Journalists in Nigeria

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

At 6:30am in Benin City, Blessing, a TV reporter, is already checking her car battery. Not because she has a morning show, but because her editor just called: "There's a protest at Kings Square. Go and get reaction from women traders." She grabs her mic, her ID card, and says a silent prayer. Not for safety from the protest. But for safety from the "are you married yet?" and "who sent you?" questions she will face from male security officers at the scene.

This is the reality for thousands of women journalists across Nigeria in 2026. They are the ones breaking stories on GBV, politics, and the economy. Yet behind the bylines and the bright lights, many are fighting a second job: the battle to be taken seriously in a profession still shaped by patriarchy.

The Nigeria Association of Women Journalists, NAWOJ, has over 5,000 members nationwide. Led by National Chairperson Aisha Ibrahim, NAWOJ has spent the last year pushing one message: "Our voices matter, and our safety matters."

There is progress, no doubt. Twenty years ago, the idea of a woman anchoring the 9pm news or heading a state NUJ council or chapel was rare. Today, women are Bureau Chiefs,

Editors, Station Managers, and TV Presenters across the country.

In Edo State, women now lead coverage on politics and governance. In the National Assembly press corps, women journalists ask the toughest questions during ministerial briefings. Digital media has also opened doors. A 24-year-old with a phone and data can now run an investigative podcast that gets 2 million views.

Organizations like WANEP-NIGERIA and NAWOJ have also trained women journalists on WPS and YPS principles. The result? More stories on peacebuilding, on women in IDP camps, on how the 46.8 million women voters will shape 2027.

There are however some unseen challenges.

But the progress has a shadow.

Consider Safety on the Field.

For male reporters, a night assignment is "part of the job." For women, it's a risk assessment. Will there be transport back? Will the police station take her statement seriously if something happens? During the 2023 elections, the International Press Centre documented over 40 cases of harassment of female journalists at polling units. Most went unreported because "it's normal."

There is still the Glass Ceiling in Management. Women make up nearly 45% of

journalists in Nigeria. Yet less than 18% are in top editorial or management positions according to a 2025 UNESCO report. The reason often given is "experience" or "availability." But many women say the real reason is bias. "They assume once you marry or have children, you can't do breaking news again," says a senior reporter in Lagos.

Permutations are still on Online Harassment.

The comment section has become the new newsroom threat. Women journalists who report on politics or gender issues face coordinated attacks, threats of rape, and doxxing. A feature writer who published an article on child marriage received 3,000 abusive comments in 48 hours. Most media houses have no policy to protect staff from this.

WORK-LIFE AND PAY GAP

Many women journalists are also primary caregivers. But newsrooms still run on a 1990s model: be in the office 12 hours, or you're "not serious." This pushes talented women out. There's also the pay gap. A male reporter and female reporter with the same beat and experience often do not earn the same.

THE NEWSROOM LACKS GENDER-SENSITIVE REPORTING TOOLS

How do you report on GBV with-

out re-traumatizing the survivor? How do you report on maternal health without using stigmatizing language? Many journalists were never trained on this. So stories get done, but they reinforce stereotypes instead of changing them.



There are however some unseen challenges. But the progress has a shadow. Consider Safety on the Field. For male reporters, a night assignment is "part of the job." For women, it's a risk assessment. Will there be transport back?

LET'S HEAR THE VOICES FROM THE FIELD

"I was covering a community crisis in the North," says Aisha, a print journalist. "A community leader told me, 'Go and cook for your husband. This is men's work.' I had to smile and still get the interview."

Another broadcaster in Abuja shared: "After my program on teenage pregnancy, a caller asked me on air if I was a prostitute. The producer laughed it off. But it hurt."

These are not isolated cases. They are patterns.

NAWOJ AND STAKEHOLDERS ARE DOING THINGS

Under Aisha Ibrahim, NAWOJ has launched 3 key interventions:

Safety Protocols*: Training women on digital security, field safety, and legal rights.

Mentorship*: Pairing young women reporters with editors and senior journalists.

Advocacy*: Pushing media houses to adopt gender policies and sexual harassment policies.

Civil society groups are also stepping in. WANEP-NIGERIA fellows are now deliberately reporting on how women in communities are faring in patriarchal systems. The goal is to shift the narrative from "women as victims" to "women as solutions."

Sports

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

WAFU-B CAFWCLQ: Edo Queens face Burkina Faso's USFA in semifinals battle

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Reigning Champions of the Nigeria Women Football League NWFL, Edo Queens FC will take on USFA FC of Burkina Faso on Wednesday, September 2nd in the semi-finals of the CAF

Women's Champions League qualifying tournament in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

The match is scheduled to hold at Stade 4AOUT Stadium Ouagadougou Burkina Faso. Kickoff time is 4pm.

Edo Queens secured qualification to this stage after re-

cording a comprehensive 7-0 thrashing of AS Garde Nationale of Niger Republic and 3-1 beating of Asec Mimosas 3-1 in their first and second group B matches.

The Benin based team fell to Ampem Darkoa Ladies FC of Ghana 2-1 on Sunday evening at the Stade Municipal 4AOUT Stadium in the last Group B game of the Qualifiers.

With that defeat, Ampem Darkoa now finished top in Group B with 9 points while Edo Queens are second with 6 points. Both teams are in the semi final stage.

Despite the slim defeat, the Benin girls remain the highest goal scoring side in the WAFU-B tournament.

The coach Kennedy Boboye-led girls will be counting on the brilliance and attacking prowess of Chioma Moses and... as they are expected to put in

their all as they tackle USFA FC of Burkina Faso in a game that has been described by football pundits as battle royale.

At the end of tomorrow's semifinals, two teams that qualify will advance to the finals and a step closer to qualifying for the CAF Women's Champions League proper.

Speaking ahead of the clash, Edo Queens interim handler Coach Kennedy Boboye said that the girls have put the last group B match loss behind them and are ready to fight for what they want in Burkina Faso.

He said that they are mentally ready and positive ahead of the game.

According to him, irrespective of the home fans' support their opponents are going to enjoy, the Nigeria girls are physically, mentally and psychologically ready to give them a run for their money.



EDO QUEENS

Ardova PLC extends sponsorship of Nigeria Handball Premier League for one year

Ardova PLC (AP) and the Handball Federation of Nigeria (HFN) have agreed to extend their partnership for the sponsorship of the Nigeria Handball Premier League.

Under the agreement, the country's premier domestic handball competition will continue to be known as the Ardova Handball Premier League, reinforcing AP's commitment to the growth and development of handball in Nigeria.

The agreement follows the conclusion of the initial three-year sponsorship agreement between AP and HFN, with both organisations working together to support the development of the league while supporting the development of players, coaches, officials, and other stakeholders within the Nigerian handball ecosystem.

Speaking on the agreement, the Chairman of AP, Dr. Sowami said the company was delighted to continue its support for Nigerian handball and its athletes.

"At AP, we believe that sports play an important role in shaping individuals, building communities and inspiring the next generation

"Our support for the Handball Federation of Nigeria reflects our belief in the potential of Nigerian handball and our commitment to supporting platforms that create opportunities for our young people.

"We are pleased with the progress recorded by the Ardova Handball Premier League and look forward to supporting another competitive and im-

pactful season."

The Managing Director of AP, Dr. Babatunde-Ojo, noted that the sponsorship goes beyond commercial sponsorship, stressing that it represents an investment in the future of Nigerian sports.

"The Ardova Handball Premier League has continued to provide a platform for talented Nigerian athletes to compete, develop and showcase their abilities.



Ex-NFF General Secretary calls for two-term limit, broader representation in NFF congress

Former Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) Ethics Committee member Ambassador Fanny Amun (MON) has called for fundamental reforms to the federation's statutes, urging the opening of the system to credible, experienced and knowledgeable football stakeholders to restore confidence in Nigerian football.

Amun made the call in Abuja on Monday while briefing journalists following the

submission of the committee's report on Nigeria's recent disappointing performances in international football.

The six-member committee, chaired by Amun, was constituted against the backdrop of the Super Falcons' disappointing campaign at the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco, where Nigeria's failure to reach the latter stages ultimately contributed to the country

missing out on qualification for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Brazil.

The committee reviewed several critical areas of Nigerian football, including governance, financial management, technical development, grassroots football, player welfare, national team administration and league management.

Its findings identified a number of challenges affecting the effectiveness of the national teams, including difficulties surrounding player release and communication, inadequate team preparation, medical and injury management concerns, camp administration and technical coordination.

The committee also advocated greater use of technology and improved data management, including stronger age-verification systems, while calling for enhanced regulations and closer monitoring of the national teams.



FANNY AMUN



KAYINSOLA AJAYI

Kayinsola Ajayi set for Diamond League final in Brussels

Nigerian sprint sensation Kayinsola Ajayi has secured a place in the men's 100m lineup for the Diamond League Final in Brussels, Belgium, on September 4.

Ajayi earned his spot following an impressive season on the Diamond League circuit, highlighted by victories in the men's 100m at the London Diamond League and the Prefontaine

Classic.

The Nigerian sprinter has established himself as one of the leading 100m athletes this season and will now battle the world's best in Brussels as he looks to cap his campaign with another major victory.

Ajayi's inclusion in the prestigious final further underlines his growing status on the international athletics stage.

Eric Chelle appoints two Nigerian Assistant Coaches for Olympic Eagles

Super Eagles Head Coach, Eric Chelle has appointed the duo of Bright Osehai Ozebagbe and Deniran Ortega as his two assistant coaches for the Nigerian Olympic Team.

Nilayo Sports Management Appreciates Enugu Government, Sponsors, Residents For Successful 2nd Enugu City International Marathon

2026 NSF: "Coal City Games Will Showcase Nation-Building, Inclusivity and Sporting Excellence" – NSC DG, Hon. Bukola Olopade

Nilayo Sports Management Limited Shifts Focus to Great Abeokuta 10KM Race After Enugu City Marathon Success

Eric Chelle who doubles as the gaffer of the Nigeria Olympic Eagles, says Ortega and Bright are some of the brightest

young coaches in Nigeria with very impressive profiles and he is very happy to work with them in the Olympic team.

Coach Bright Ozebagbe is currently the Technical Adviser of Premier League side Ikorodu City who narrowly missed a continental ticket on the final day of last season while Coach Ortega is a Uefa licensed coach, trained by the Scottish Football Association. He is currently one of the assistant coaches with the Nigeria Flying Eagles Team.

Eric Chelle who has already briefed the leadership of the National Sports Commission on his plans and preparations towards securing qualification for the Olympic games, will open camping soon in Abuja ahead of the team's qualifiers slated for the month of November 2026.



ERIC CHELLE

SPORTS



Total overhaul as NFF halts September elections ● *Disbands Electoral Committee on Tinubu's reforms orders*

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The fallout from the mass resignation of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) Executive Committee has triggered a complete systemic reset process as the NFF has officially canceled its upcoming September 27 Elective Congress.

The interim management of the football governing body subsequently disbanded the Electoral Committee, and announced plans for a FIFA-backed Normalization Committee following direct intervention from President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

In an official letter dated August 28, 2026, the Acting General Secretary of the NFF, Dr. Emmanuel Ikpeme, formally directed the temporary NFF Electoral Committee to stand down.

While praising the committee for their diligence and sacrifice in attempting to midwife the now-aborted elections, Ikpeme confirmed that all previously scheduled electoral processes have come to an immediate halt.

A PRESIDENTIAL MANDATE FOR GRASSROOTS REFORM:

The sweeping changes are the direct result of a mandate from President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who has ordered structural and

institutional reforms to rescue the nation's football ecosystem.

According to the official communication, the existing Congress of Nigeria Football has been effectively dissolved. Instead of proceeding with a top-level national election, the presidential directive mandates that the rebuilding process must start from the ground up. Future electoral processes will only commence after deep-rooted structural reforms, starting at the Local Council level.

FIFA NORMALIZATION COMMITTEE LOOMS

With the Gusau-led board completely out of the picture, an interim administration is currently managing the day-to-day affairs at the NFF Secretariat in Abuja. However, this is strictly a stopgap measure.

Dr. Ikpeme confirmed that the NFF is preparing to formally engage with the world football-governing body, FIFA, and the Confederation of African Football (CAF) in the coming days. These consultations will lead to the installation of a Normalization Committee — a standard FIFA intervention mechanism used to stabilize crisis-hit federations, rewrite statutes, and organize fresh, transparent elections.



ZAIDU SANUSI

AFCON 2027 Qualifier: injury uules Super Eagles defender Zaidu Sanusi out

Super Eagles defender Zaidu Sanusi is set to spend around two months on the sidelines after medical tests confirmed an adductor injury to his right leg.

The 29-year-old sustained the injury during FC Porto's 3-0 victory over Académico de Viseu on Saturday.

Sanusi was forced off in the 17th minute after picking up the injury while attempting to play the ball. Despite receiving treatment, the left-footed defender was unable to continue, with Martim Fernandes coming on as his replacement.

Medical tests conducted on Sunday confirmed the extent of the injury, with Portuguese pub-

lication O Jogo reporting that Sanusi is expected to return after the next international break.

Porto had earlier confirmed that the Nigerian defender was added to the club's medical report and would undergo further diagnostic examinations.

The injury is a major setback for Nigeria as Sanusi is now expected to miss the Super Eagles' opening matches in the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying campaign, scheduled to begin in September.

Sanusi has remained an important option at left-back for the Super Eagles and his absence will leave the technical crew with the task of finding a suitable replacement for the upcoming qualifiers.

NPFL 2026/27: Ex-Super Eagles keeper support Goalkeepers with ₦500,000 reward

Former Super Eagles goalkeeper Ikechukwu Ezenwa has renewed his commitment to supporting Nigeria's home-based goalkeepers, pledging ₦500,000 towards the Elite Goalkeeper Platform as the 2026/27 Nigeria Premier Football League season gets underway, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The initiative, founded three years ago by a group of coaches and former players led by former Super Eagles and Shooting Stars goalkeeper Coach John Dosu, has emerged as a consistent player-welfare and recognition platform for goalkeepers in the domestic league. AFCON tournament coverage

Ezenwa, who previously featured for clubs including Enyimba and Heartland, has remained the principal sponsor of the initiative, providing financial rewards aimed at motivating goalkeepers and recognising their contributions to Nigerian football.

The latest pledge comes as all 20 NPFL clubs prepare for the opening round of the 2026/27 campaign this weekend.

According to Dosu, Ezenwa's support has been instrumental in sustaining the initiative since its establishment.

"We started this thing just three years ago, coming together as one, just to encourage our home-based goalkeepers," Dosu said.

"Ezenwa has been the one sponsoring. May God Almighty continue to bless him abundantly."



IKECHUKWU EZENWA

FIFA accepts mass resignations at NFF as engagements continue on comprehensive reforms' roadmap

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

World football-ruling body, FIFA, yesterday accepted the resignations of principal officers of the Nigeria Football Federation, and pledged to continue the engagement with the Government of Nigeria, the NFF administration and the Confederation of African Football on a new roadmap for comprehensive reforms of Nigeria football.

At a meeting inside FIFA House in Zurich, Switzerland attended by FIFA, CAF, CAF advisors, NSC and

NFF Administration, it was agreed to proceed with engagements and interactions to fine-tune a roadmap that will ensure the delivery of the expected reforms both in the short, medium and long term, and to ensure that an inclusive new NFF emerges going forward and with the enabling environment, peaceful and stable to be in position to deliver success both on and off the pitch for the benefit and growth of Nigeria Football.

Chairman of the National Sports Commission, Mallam Shehu Dikko led the Nigeria delegation, which

also included the DG of the NSC, Hon. Bukola Olopade; former NFF President and ex-FIFA Council Member Amaju Pinnick OFR (who attended the meeting in his official capacity as Special Advisor to the CAF President and Deputy Chairman of the FIFA Men's National Teams' Competitions Committee; NFF Ag. General Secretary, Dr. Emmanuel Ikpeme and; NFF's Director of Legal Services, Okey Obi Esq. CAF 2nd Vice President Kurt Okraku and FIFA's Director of Member Associations (Africa), Gelson Fernandes.

"Mutual engagement among the National Sports Commission, the NFF administration and the Confederation of African Football is ongoing with FIFA on the comprehensive reforms of Nigeria football, including agreeing a roadmap going forward in accordance with the relevant rules, regulations and Statutes, and indeed there is no doubt Nigeria Football will emerge much better and properly-structured after the conclusion of this process," stated NSC Chairman, Mallam Shehu Dikko.

WAFU-B: Nigeria's Ambassador, community host Edo Queens, Enabulele in Burkina Faso

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

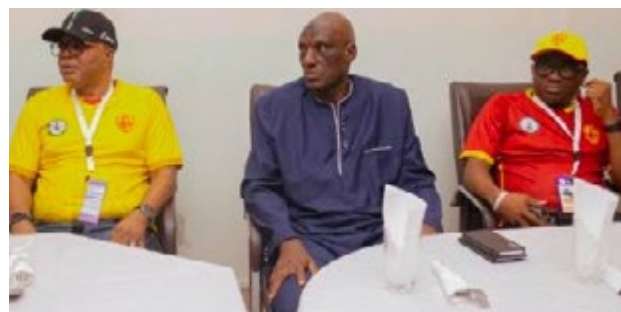
Nigeria's Ambassador to Burkina Faso, Ambassador Syndolph Paebi Endoni, alongside members of the Nigerian community in the Ouagadougou on Monday evening played host to Edo Queens FC, Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, and leader of Edo State government delegation Emperor Jarrett Tenebe in a mount watering special dinner at the Nigerian Embassy in Burkina Faso.

Edo Queens are currently in Burkina Faso representing Nigeria at the 2026 WAFU-B Women's

Champions League qualifiers, where they are pursuing West African football glory and a place in the CAF Women's Champions League.

The dinner provided an opportunity for Ambassador Endoni and the Nigerian community delegation to interact with the Edo Queens and government delegation where he offered words of encouragement and support to the team ahead of their crucial Semi-finals fixtures on Wednesday.

He said, "You are in Burkina Faso representing Nigeria and not only Edo state. So, we have the courtesy to receive you as a contingent representing our country Nigeria." He said.



Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele (right) with Nigeria's Ambassador



NSC, Shehu Dikko, (3rd right), DG of the NSC, Hon. Bukola Olopade (2nd left); former NFF President and ex-FIFA Council Member Amaju Pinnick OFR (2nd right) and FIFA President Gianni Infantino (3rd left) at a meeting inside FIFA House in Zurich, Switzerland attended by FIFA, CAF, CAF advisors, NSC and NFF Administration.