

Edo Special Court to deliver first kidnapping verdict today

OUR REPORTER

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Special Criminal Court sitting in Benin City is set to deliver its first judgment in a kidnapping case today Tuesday, September 29, arising from the abduction of a woman at the Vegetable Market along Air-

port Road, Benin City.

The judgment is expected to be a major test of the state's newly established Special Criminal Court and its capacity to expedite the trial of kidnapping, cultism and other violent crime cases.

The woman was abducted in broad daylight on June 14, 2026, by gunmen who reportedly used an SUV during the

operation. The incident triggered a police investigation which subsequently led to the arrest of several suspects.

The Special Criminal Court was established in July 2026 following a directive by Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, to the Judiciary to accelerate the trial of kidnapping and cultism cases in the state.

Governor Okpebholo, during a visit to the Edo State Police Command where the suspects were paraded, vowed that anyone found guilty would face the full weight of the law.

The governor also said he would personally sign death warrants for convicted kidnappers where such punishment is prescribed by existing legislation.

One of the suspects, 32-year-old Marvelous Isaac, was arrested on June 18 during a gun duel with operatives of the Police Intelligence Response Team. Another suspected member of the gang, identified as Precious, was killed during the operation.

Further investigations led to the arrest of Gift Raphael, 27, Wisdom Michael and Rufus

Michael.

The abducted woman was subsequently released unharmed two days after her abduction.

During the investigation, the police reportedly traced a red Lexus RX 350 allegedly used in the operation and recovered a pump-action shotgun with live

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That The People May Know

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#200

Okpebholo pledges to deliver on Edo mandate

● seeks support for APC in 2027

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has assured the people of the state that his administration will remain focused on fulfilling the mandate given to it, while urging residents to sustain their support for the All Progressives Congress (APC) ahead of the 2027 general elec-

tions.

Okpebholo gave the assurance yesterday during mobilisation visits to Egor and Oredo Local Government Areas, where he interacted with party members and solicited their support for APC candidates in the forthcoming elections.

The governor, accompanied by APC leaders, the Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, and other top govern-

ment officials, visited various locations across the two local government areas, where party faithful gathered despite heavy rainfall to receive the delegation.

In Egor, the team visited the Ogida Barracks Police Training

School and the Textile Mill, with party members from the 10 wards participating in the engagement.

The delegation also visited Garrick Memorial College, Edokpolor Grammar School and Uwa Primary School in

Oredo Local Government Area.

Okpebholo thanked the people of Egor and Oredo for their support for the APC during the recently concluded local government elections, urging them to sustain the momentum in

the 2027 elections.

He specifically called on party members to vote for APC candidates contesting the National Assembly and Edo State House of Assembly seats across

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Tinubu in good health, returns this week

● Presidency assures Nigerians

EGHAREVBA OSARETIN/
IYALEKHUE GRACE

ABUJA

The Presidency has assured Nigerians that President Bola Tinubu is in good health and will return to the country this week after his working vacation and official engagements in the United Kingdom and France.

The Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Mr. Bayo Onanuga, gave the assurance in a statement posted on his official X handle on Sunday, saying the President remained fully engaged in official duties despite his absence from Abuja.

Onanuga said President

Tinubu was expected in Lagos to participate in activities marking Nigeria's 66th Independence Anniversary, as well as attend the premiere of a film commemorating the life and legacy of the late democracy activist and businessman, Chief MKO Abiola.

He disclosed that the President's engagements abroad included meetings with investors in France, adding that Tinubu also played a role in facilitating a \$7 billion deep-sea port project in Ogun Waterside, an initiative of the Ogun State Government.

According to him, the President's physical absence from Abuja had not impaired the discharge of his constitutional

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



MOBILISATION VISITS:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (Middle) acknowledging Cheers from party supporters and admirers during mobilisation visits to Egor and Oredo Local Government Areas yesterday.

Petrol imports crash 26% as domestic supply rises

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UNGA: Shettima back in Nigeria after leading delegation

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Inside Yemen's front-line city as Houthis battle for control

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Bakare challenges the constitutional basis of NBBF Yola Congress

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NEWS



GRASSROOTS MOBILISATION:

2027: Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo begins Grassroots mobilisation for the All Progressives Congress APC and President Ahmed Bola Tinubu.

Pastor Chris Oyakhilome pays glowing tribute to mother, Deaconess Angel

OUR REPORTER

The President and Founder of LoveWorld Incorporated, popularly known as Christ Embassy, Rev. Dr. Chris Oyakhilome, has paid a glowing and deeply spiritual tribute to his late mother, Deaconess Angel Oyakhilome, describing her as a kind, wonderful and exceptional woman whose life was a gift of grace and whose greatest legacy was the Christian home she built for her children.

Pastor Oyakhilome, who spoke during a live broadcast on Broad TV Network over the weekend, formally confirmed the transition of his beloved mother, fondly known by many as “Big Mummy,” to glory.

According to the revered man of God, Deaconess Angel was not merely a mother by biological relationship, but a woman of faith whose life, character, prayers and devotion to God helped to shape the spiritual foundation of her

children.

He described her as a “kind, wonderful and one-of-a-kind woman,” whose love and motherly care left an indelible imprint on the lives of her children and all those who came in contact with her.

Pastor Oyakhilome said his mother gave him and his siblings a Christian home, nurturing them in the knowledge of God and laying a foundation upon which their lives and service to the Lord were built.

With evident affection and gratitude, he remembered her as a mother whose influence went beyond the walls of the family home, radiating through her compassion, godly values and unwavering commitment to the things of God.

Deaconess Angel, he disclosed, transitioned to glory in the early hours of Friday, September 25, 2026, leaving behind a legacy of faith, motherhood, sacrifice and love.

Her departure, though painful to the family and the wid-

er Christ Embassy family, has been received in the assurance of the Christian hope that those who live and die in Christ do not perish but pass from earthly service into eternal rest.

For Pastor Chris Oyakhilome and his siblings, the passing of their beloved mother represents the closing of a remarkable earthly chapter, but her voice of faith, motherly warmth, prayers and godly legacy will continue to speak across generations.

Indeed, the life of Deaconess Angel Oyakhilome stands as a testimony to the profound

influence of a praying mother—the kind of woman whose nurturing hands may raise children, but whose knees, prayers and example can shape destinies.

As the family mourns the departure of their beloved “Big Mummy,” they do so with gratitude for a life well lived, a faith faithfully expressed and a motherhood generously given.

May her gentle soul continue to rest in the bosom of the Lord, and may the comfort of the Holy Spirit strengthen Pastor Chris Oyakhilome, his siblings, grandchildren and the entire family at this sacred moment of transition.

Okpebholo pledges to deliver...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

the three senatorial districts.

“The turnout today in all the places visited in Egor and Oredo, despite the rain, speaks volumes of the love for the party and all our candidates in the general election, including President Bola Ahmed Tinubu,” the governor said.

He added: “We would continue to work according to the mandate Edo people gave to us. We would work for the growth and development of the State and the party.”

“I am standing in the gap for President Tinubu and know we are all committed to ensuring we deliver 2.5 million votes for his re-election in 2027.”

On the condition of roads across the state, the governor said his administration inherited several bad roads but was working to rehabilitate them and make roads across Edo motorable.

“The bad roads in the State didn’t happen today, but the roads have been there before we came to power. We are working to ensure all the bad roads are fixed. We would work to ensure

all roads in the State are motorable. This is the reason why you voted for us,” he said.

The Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, thanked party members for their continued support and urged them to remain committed to the APC ahead of the 2027 elections.

Edo APC Chairman, Mr. Jarrett Tenebe, also commended party members for their support, saying the party’s performance in the local government elections demonstrated its growing strength in the state.

Tenebe said the APC secured 2,158,600 votes in the local government elections, arguing that the figure showed that the governor’s target of 2.5 million votes for President Tinubu in 2027 was achievable.

“The governor is a party man and the party is doing well,” Tenebe said.

The chairmen of Egor and Oredo Local Government Areas, Hon. Osaro Eribo and Hon. Gabriel Iduseri, respectively, also appealed to residents to sustain their support for the APC, its candidates and President Tinubu in the 2027 general elections.

Tinubu in good health...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

responsibilities, stressing that modern digital communication had enabled him to continue working remotely.

The presidential aide also explained that Vice-President Kashim Shettima represented Nigeria at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, while the President continued with his scheduled engagements abroad.

Onanuga further noted that the absence of other world leaders, including South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, from the UN General Assembly had not generated similar public debate.

He criticised former Anam-

bra State governor and presidential candidate, Peter Obi, over comments concerning President Tinubu’s whereabouts, maintaining that the Presidency had sufficiently communicated the President’s travel plans and official engagements.

President Tinubu left Nigeria on August 30 for London, with the Presidency initially announcing a three-week annual vacation. He subsequently proceeded to Paris, France, where he continued with official engagements, including meetings with investors.

The Presidency’s latest assurance is expected to put to rest speculations surrounding the President’s health and prolonged absence from the country.

Petrol imports crash 26% as domestic supply rises

OJO HAPPY / TALBORT HOPE

LAGOS

Nigeria’s average daily petrol imports fell by 26 per cent to 14.6 million litres in August 2026, from 19.7 million litres recorded in July, as domestic supplies continued to rise, latest data from the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) has shown.

The figures are contained in the Authority’s August 2026 State of the Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Sector Factsheet, which showed a significant shift towards locally refined petrol in the country’s supply chain.

According to the report, domestic Premium Motor Spirit

(PMS) receipts increased by 39 per cent, rising from 25.8 million litres per day in July to 35.9 million litres per day in August.

The development meant that domestic petrol receipts exceeded imported volumes by 21.3 million litres per day during the month.

The Dangote Petroleum Refinery accounted for a substantial portion of the domestic supply, delivering about 35.87 million litres of petrol daily to the domestic market in August.

The refinery recorded an average capacity utilisation of 105.21 per cent during the month, producing 41.94 million litres of petrol per day, while an average of 9.73 million litres was exported daily.

Overall, total petrol receipts increased by 11 per cent, from

45.5 million litres per day in July to 50.5 million litres per day in August.

Of the total receipts, domestic supplies accounted for about 71 per cent, while imports contributed the remaining 29 per cent.

The NMDPRA data, however, showed that petrol consumption declined by 14 per cent during the period, falling from 48.3 million litres per day in July to 41.5 million litres per day in August.

Meanwhile, crude oil receipts by domestic refineries rose by 17 per cent, from 585,000 barrels per day in July to 683,000 barrels per day in August.

The increase in domestic refining also contributed to a marginal improvement in petrol stock sufficiency, which

rose from 22.4 days in July to 22.9 days in August.

Despite the improvement in domestic refining, the three major state-owned refineries in Port Harcourt, Warri and Kaduna recorded no production during the month, according to the NMDPRA report.

The latest figures point to a changing pattern in Nigeria’s downstream petroleum sector, with locally refined products accounting for an increasingly larger share of petrol supply, while reliance on imported PMS continues to decline.

The development also underscores the growing contribution of domestic refining capacity, particularly the Dangote refinery, to Nigeria’s efforts to reduce dependence on imported petroleum products.



REV. DR. CHRIS OYAKHILOME AND DEACONESS ANGEL

NEWS

Entrepreneurship: FG to distribute 400,000 free digital devices

ABUJA

The Federal Government plans to distribute 400,000 digital devices to young Nigerians, students, artisans, entrepreneurs and vulnerable groups nationwide.

Dr Abiola Arogundade, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education (TVVE), disclosed this on Thursday in Abuja.

Arogundade said the initiative, implemented under

the National Digital Skills and Technical Empowerment Programme (NDSTEP), is aimed at widening access to digital skills, vocational training and entrepreneurship opportunities across the country.

She spoke while presenting tablets to 70 digital media personnel at a stakeholders' meeting with digital media managers.

She said the devices would help beneficiaries access opportunities, find customers and convert vocational training into sustainable livelihoods.

"A phone or laptop is a tool to find new customers and turn training into certification," Arogundade said.

Arogundade said the Federal Government was taking digital devices and skills training to states to expand participation in digital and entrepreneurship economy.

She said millions of young Nigerians, artisans, trained professionals and small entrepreneurs possessed skills but lacked appropriate digital devices.

The presidential aide said the media had a critical role in ensuring government programmes reached communities and potential beneficiaries.

"The empowerment of media personnel is deliberate because you play a critical role in ensuring that government programmes reach communities," she said.

Arogundade said her office would engage print and broadcast media practitioners to broaden coverage of its grassroots information campaign.

She urged digital media personnel to deploy their tablets productively by amplifying government programmes and connecting potential beneficiaries with available opportunities.

"We cannot keep empowering technical people and forget the media. You are the people helping us pass this message," she said.

Arogundade also called for robust media coverage of the NPRGS Oyo State phase scheduled for Sept. 28 to Oct. 9.

She said the Oyo programme would provide vocational training in fashion design, artificial intelligence, graphics and makeup.

According to her, the programme is expected to expand across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones as part of the grassroots empowerment drive.

Arogundade said the initiative reflected the Federal Government's commitment to expanding access to vocational skills, digital tools and entrepreneurship opportunities.

**SCREENING:**

Hon Sunday Ojizele, majority leader, Edo State House of Assembly and Chairman house standing committee on rules business and Government house (right) presenting the report of his committee to Alhaji Yahaya Omogbai, Clerk of the house on the screening of Hon Obosa Jolly Ogbeide as a member of Oil and Gas producing Areas Development Commission (EDSOGPADEC) during the house plenary session recently.

Photo: Godwin Iseguan.

We prioritise critical victims in crash evacuation — FRSC

ABUJA

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) says its standard crash-response procedure prioritises saving lives, with critically injured victims evacuated ahead of less seriously injured casualties and deceased victims.

The Corps Public Education Officer (CPEO), Mr Osondu Ohaeri, disclosed this in an interview with newsmen on Friday in Abuja.

Ohaeri was responding to questions on the poor handling of accident victims and corpses by the FRSC.

He explained that FRSC personnel were trained to first secure crash scenes, control traffic, assess casualties according to the severity of their injuries and administer first aid where necessary.

He also said that victims in critical condition were given priority and evacuated without delay to the nearest appropriate hospital or health facility first.

According to him, the corps rescue procedures require critical victims to be moved first, while those with less serious injuries receive appropriate first aid pending evacuation.

He added that the FRSC oper-

ated an Emergency Ambulance Service Scheme (EASS), popularly known as Zebra, as well as roadside clinics to facilitate emergency response to crashes.

He further said that members of the public could report crashes and request emergency assistance through the corps toll-free 122 emergency line.

On how officers determine whether a crash victim was alive, critically injured or dead, the FRSC public education officer said personnel were trained to conduct an initial casualty assessment.

According to him, the assessment include checking a vic-

tim's responsiveness, airway and breathing, as well as identifying the severity of injuries.

He explained that the immediate objective was to identify victims requiring urgent life-saving intervention and ensuring that they received appropriate assistance.

He emphasised that FRSC personnel do not arbitrarily pronounce victims dead at crash scenes.

"Where there is uncertainty about a person's condition, the appropriate approach is to treat the person as requiring emergency medical attention and evacuate accordingly.

Army trains 380 personnel in specialised skills to boost operations

ABUJA

The Nigerian Army School of Supply and Transport (NASST) has trained 380 soldiers and officers in specialised logistics, driving, catering and safety skills to enhance operational efficiency.

The Commandant of NASST, Maj.-Gen. Samuel Adejimi, disclosed this on Friday in Benin at the graduation ceremony of the school's Third Quarter Courses 2026.

Adejimi said the training was designed to improve the technical capabilities of personnel and enable them to perform their responsibilities effectively in the field.

He said eight courses commenced on July 3, but seven were completed during the quarter, while the eighth, a six-month course, would be completed in the fourth quarter.

According to him, the graduating courses included the Fire and Safety Officers' Course, Driver Upgrading (B2) Course, Driver Basic (B3) Course and Supply/Storeman Upgrading (B2) Course.

Others were the Fire and Safety Upgrading (X2) Course, Supply and Transport Combat Cook (X1) Course and Catering Basic (B3) Course.

"They have undergone rigorous training in line with Army

Headquarters Training Directives.

"The students are willing to support their respective units with the lessons learnt from their various training programmes," he said.

Adejimi expressed confidence that the graduating personnel were equipped to support troops and effectively carry out their responsibilities in the field.

The commandant commended the Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Waidi Shaibu, and the Commander, Corps of Supply and Transport, Maj.-Gen. ND Shagaya, for their support and guidance.

The Special Guest of Honour, Maj.-Gen. A.A Fadayiro, said sustained training was essential for the Army to respond effectively to emerging security challenges.

"Training is the most important need in the circumstances that we have in the country involving security challenges, and the military must train to meet these contemporary challenges," he said.

Fadayiro said NASST played an important role in developing manpower in driving, catering, safety operations and combat supply.

"When we train personnel, we perfect techniques and procedures to make the military better, fight better and get good results," he said.

ICPC to challenge A'Court ruling on jurisdiction in ex-UNICAL dean's case

ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) says it will challenge the Court of Appeal's decision on jurisdiction in the case of former University of Calabar Law Dean, Cyril Ndifon.

Its Spokesperson, John Odey, said this in a statement on Friday in Abuja.

Odey said that the commission considered the jurisdictional question arising from count two of the charge to be a matter requiring further judicial determination before a superior court.

He said that the Court of Appeal, Abuja Division, however, affirmed the conviction of Ndifon, a Professor of law and former Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Calabar on count one.

According to him, Ndifon was

convicted on Nov. 17, 2025, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment on count one for soliciting pornographic, indecent and obscene photographs from a female student.

Odey stated that the professor was also committed to five years imprisonment on count two, without the option of a fine on the two-count, while the sentences were ordered to run concurrently.

"While affirming the conviction on count one, the Court of Appeal held that the Federal High Court lacked jurisdiction to entertain count two.

"Count two borders on conferment of undue advantage contrary to Section 19 of the Corrupt Practices Act, 2000.

"The appellate court, therefore, ordered retrial and directed that prosecution on count two should commence before the High Court of Cross River State."

How judicial interventions fuel Nigeria's voter apathy crisis — Prof. Yadudu

LAGOS

A constitutional scholar, Prof. Auwalu Yadudu, has identified the country's legal architecture and overreaching judicial decisions as drivers of Nigeria's declining voter turnout and growing cynicism towards the democratic process.

The Bayero University Kano (BUK) scholar argued that the development consistently override the popular will expressed at the ballot box.

Yadudu stated this in a paper titled "Democracy without Participation: Understanding the Threat

of Voter Apathy", delivered at the All Nigeria Editors Conference (ANEC) 2026 in Enugu, organised by the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE).

He warned that the erosion of legitimacy in Nigerian elections threatens the foundation of representative democracy.

The scholar acknowledged that social scientists measure apathy using quantitative metrics, analysing factors such as governance failure, electoral violence, religious dynamics, and the incompetence of election managers.

He said that his focus as a constitutional scholar and legal

observer lies in how public perception of judicial overreach disenfranchises the electorate.

According to him, democracy is about representative leadership whose legitimacy derives from votes freely given to determine the choice of the electorate.

He argued that when courtrooms replace polling booths as the ultimate decider of elections, voters naturally question the utility of their participation.

To demonstrate how court rulings subvert voter intent, the constitutional scholar highlighted several landmark electoral disputes and court judgments that

shocked the Nigerian political space.

He, however, acknowledged that judges were often forced into certain positions by an unbridled, litigious political class and egregious violation of electoral laws by parties and election managers.

"Would one urge the courts and judges to shut their doors to litigants given egregious violations of electoral procedures?" he asked.

He called instead for deep attitudinal, statutory, and constitutional reforms to keep democratic choices strictly in the hands of voters and minimize judicial meddling.



THE NIGERIAN OBSERVER

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NEWS

Edo targets jobs, revenue from creative economy, tourism

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has unveiled plans to harness the state's rich cultural heritage, creative talents, tourism and hospitality industries as major drivers of job creation, wealth generation and sustainable economic growth.

The State Commissioner for Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Hon. Chris Okaeben,

disclosed this at a stakeholders' engagement themed "Heritage to Hospitality: Driving Edo Economic Growth," held at the John Odigie Oyegun Public Service Academy (JOPSA), Okada Avenue, Government Reservation Area, Benin City.

The engagement, which brought together government officials and practitioners across the creative, tourism and hospitality sectors, was aimed

at identifying challenges confronting the industries and developing practical strategies for transforming Edo's enormous cultural and creative assets into sustainable economic opportunities.

Okaeben said the state government was committed to creating an enabling environment where talents could thrive, businesses could grow and creative professionals could earn

sustainable incomes.

He identified comedians, hoteliers, hospitality operators, filmmakers, masters of ceremonies, hype men, stylists, makeup artists, sculptors, visual artists, content creators, disc jockeys and other practitioners as critical players in the state's emerging creative economy.

According to him, the government has commenced the grading and classification of

hotels across the state as part of measures to improve standards, attract more visitors and strengthen the hospitality industry.

The commissioner also announced the revival of the Edo Carnival Festival for December, describing it as an opportunity to showcase the state's unity, creativity, culture and rich heritage to a wider audience.

He said the stakeholders'

meeting was not merely a formal government engagement, but a platform for obtaining direct feedback from practitioners on the challenges affecting the sector.

> "This engagement is not a formality; it is to listen to you, understand your challenges and jointly fashion a roadmap that will put Edo on the global map as a major destination," he said.

Okaeben challenges security agencies to restore order at city centre

By Richard Eweka

BENIN CITY

Edo State Commissioner for Art, Culture and Creative Economy, Hon. Chris Okaeben, has challenged security agencies in the State to urgently restore law and order around Ring Road and the King's Square ahead of the 10th coronation anniversary of the Oba of Benin, His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II.

Okaeben made the call in Benin City while speaking with newsmen on the need to restore sanity to the city centre, particularly the area around the Palace of the Oba of Benin.

He expressed concern over what he described as the indiscriminate activities of traders and commercial transport operators around the King's Square, particularly near the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) branch.

According to him, the situation requires urgent intervention by security agencies to restore order and ensure that the city centre presents a befitting image as Edo State prepares to host dignitaries and visitors from within and outside Nige-

ria for the anniversary celebration.

The Commissioner said: "Nigeria must not degenerate to a level where security agencies are guarded on what to do or taught how to do their jobs."

He therefore called on the media, relevant stakeholders and security agencies to collaborate in checking what he described as illegal and indiscriminate activities by drivers and traders around the King's Square.

"As we plan the celebration of the anniversary of the coronation of our Royal Father, I urge the press to join hands with the relevant security agencies to fight and checkmate the illegal activities of both drivers and traders at the King's Square in Ring Road.

"Illegal activities like trading, picking and dropping off passengers indiscriminately around the King's Square, especially close to the CBN branch, are not acceptable. These people are bold with these activities because some people may be allegedly collecting money from them," he said.

Okaeben warned that he would personally take up the challenge of clearing the Ring Road and restoring order if the security agencies failed to discharge their responsibilities.

**STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT:**

Edo State Commissioner for Art, Culture and Creative Economy, Hon Chris Okaeben (left), the Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Iryn Omorogiwa Esq and Ms. Aiyegbeni Balogun, PS who represented the HOS at the Stakeholders' Engagement held in Benin City last week Friday.

Photo by EMMANUEL IJGBAL.

Don't pull down Okpebholo, Oba Ewuare II, Prophetess Edoriawhe warns

BY MATTHEW OKAGHA

BENIN CITY

The General Overseer of God's Gift Church of Jesus Christ, Prophetess Patience Azeta Edoriawhe, JP, has cautioned individuals and

groups against any attempt to undermine or pull down the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, and the Oba of Benin, His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II.

The Prophetess, who renewed her support for the Governor and the Benin monarch, described the two institutions as critical pillars of peace, stability, unity and progress in Edo State.

She said while Governor Okpebholo occupies a constitutionally established political office, the Oba of Benin represents a revered traditional institution deeply rooted in the history, culture and identity of the Edo people.

According to her, both institutions are ordained to contribute to the peace, order and development of society and should therefore not be subjected to unnecessary attacks, ridicule or campaigns capable of creating division among the people.

Prophetess Edoriawhe warned that attempts to pull down constituted authorities or traditional institutions for political, personal or sectional interests could have far-reaching consequences for the peace and stability of the state.

She urged those who may have disagreements with the Governor or the traditional institution to pursue dialogue, constructive criticism and lawful means of expressing their concerns rather than resorting to destructive campaigns.

The clergywoman appealed to political leaders, religious leaders, community leaders, traditional stakeholders and the general public to place the collective interest of Edo State above personal ambitions and political differences.

She maintained that no individual or group could build a prosperous society by constantly attacking its institutions of leadership.

She said: "We must learn to respect constituted authority. The Governor has been entrusted with the responsibility of administering the state, while the Oba occupies a sacred traditional institution that has preserved our identity and heritage for generations. "We may disagree with leaders on certain issues, but disagreement should never become an excuse to destroy the institutions they represent."

Prophetess Edoriawhe particularly urged the people of Edo State to give Governor Okpebholo the necessary support, prayers and constructive advice to enable his adminis-

tration deliver on its responsibilities to the people.

She also called for continued respect for Oba Ewuare II, describing the Benin throne as an institution whose relevance goes beyond the personality of the occupant.

According to her, the Oba remains an important symbol of the history, culture, unity and dignity of the Benin people, stressing that the traditional institution must be protected from political manipulation and needless controversy.

The General Overseer further charged religious and traditional leaders to continue to preach peace, tolerance and unity, particularly in a period when political differences can easily generate unnecessary tension in society.

She expressed optimism that Edo State would continue to witness greater peace and development if its people closed ranks and supported institutions working for the common good.

Prophetess Edoriawhe reaffirmed her commitment to peace, good governance and the progress of Edo State, while praying for divine wisdom, strength and guidance for Governor Okpebholo and Oba Ewuare II in the discharge of their respective responsibilities.

Delta Govt condoles Adeda's family, assures justice

By Ajuwa Victor

ASABA

Delta State Government has condoled with the family of late Mr. Unity Adeda, a Level 16 civil servant in the Ministry of Secondary Education, who reportedly died following an altercation at his workplace, assuring that justice would prevail.

The Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Dr. Kingsley Emu, gave the assurance on Saturday when he led a delegation of senior government officials to the deceased's family to commiserate with them over the incident.

The delegation included the Chief of Staff to the Governor,

Hon. Johnson Erijo; Permanent Secretary, SSG's Office, Mr. Lucky Nkemachor; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women Affairs and Community Development, Mrs. Kevwe Agas; and Executive Secretary, State Pensions Bureau, Mr. Lawson Efenudu, among others.

Emu said the state government was deeply concerned about the incident, stressing that every life mattered to Governor Sheriff Oborevwori's administration.

He said the government was mourning with the family, the civil service and the entire state, describing the deceased as a senior public servant who contributed to the development of the state.

According to him, the full

circumstances surrounding the death had yet to be established as police investigations were ongoing.

He disclosed that Governor Oborevwori had directed the Commissioner of Police to ensure a thorough investigation, adding that some persons connected with the incident had already made statements to the police.

Emu also said the government had constituted an administrative panel comprising serving and retired civil servants to examine the incident and strengthen conflict-resolution mechanisms in the public service.

He stressed that the panel would not interfere with the police or judicial processes, but would help the government improve its internal conflict-management system.

NEWS**Momoh urges Edo muslims to support Okpebholo administration**

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

BENIN CITY:

The Special Adviser to the Edo State Governor on Islamic Religious Matters, Hon. Ahmed Musa Momoh, has called on Muslims in the state to support the administration of Governor

nor Monday Okpebholo and contribute actively to the development of the state.

Momoh made the call during a recent radio programme on Qalam Radio, where he spoke on the place of Muslims in the Okpebholo administration and the responsibilities of the Muslim community to the state.

He said governance was a partnership between government and citizens, stressing that Muslims should not see themselves merely as beneficiaries of government programmes but as partners in progress.

"For me, Muslims must understand that governance is a partnership. Govern-

ment cannot do everything all alone. Our responsibility as Muslims is first to be good followers and responsible citizens.

"We should also support the policies of government and the way they are designed to benefit all of us. At the same time, supporting government does not mean we

should not speak when something is wrong," he said.

Momoh said Muslims should feel free to constructively criticise government policies where necessary, noting that constructive criticism could help correct mistakes and improve governance.

He cited the recent controversy over the use of the hijab in schools as an example, saying the Muslim community had a responsibility to speak when it believed that something was wrong.

"Where the administration makes mistakes, we should criticise constructively. For me, they know me as a critic even before I came to government. I have criticised even the President on issues I feel are not right," he said.

On the controversy surrounding the handover of some schools to Catholic missionaries, Momoh disclosed that his office had begun engaging some Muslims who instituted legal action against

the government, with a view to exploring an out-of-court settlement.

He said discussions were also ongoing on the possibility of having some schools managed by Muslim communities, stressing that such institutions could help promote moral and religious values among children.

According to him, the objective should be to provide an environment where children can receive quality education while also being guided by sound moral values.

Momoh expressed concern over what he described as the declining moral values in society, noting that families were increasingly losing the culture of praying and discussing issues together.

He said, "The society has gone bad to the extent that our children now wear their trousers in their waists. Male children now plate hair. Families no longer pray together and discuss together."

**PLENARY SESSION:**

Hon Obosa Jolly Ogbeide during his screening and consideration at Edo State House of Assembly, as a member of Oil and Gas producing Areas Development Commission (EDSOGPADEC) at the house plenary session recently.

Photo: Godwin Iseguan.

Parties must submit registers 21 days before primaries -SAN**LAGOS**

Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Oba Maduabuchi SAN, has said political parties must submit their membership registers to the Independent National Electoral Commission at least 21 days before conducting primaries, following the Supreme Court's

recent ruling on the provisions of the Electoral Act 2026.

Maduabuchi, who described the Supreme Court's decision as "perfect", said the ruling affirmed INEC's constitutional authority in the conduct and supervision of elections.

He made the remarks in an interview with ARISE NEWS on Monday while discussing

the apex court's September 24 judgment, which restored provisions of the Electoral Act relating to political party membership registers and the nomination of candidates.

The Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision by a seven-member panel, set aside the Court of Appeal judgment that had voided the provisions and restored the decision of the Federal High Court.

Under the restored provisions, only members whose

names appear on a party's membership register submitted to INEC at least 21 days before a primary, congress or convention can participate in the exercise. The law also requires parties to use the submitted register and provides consequences for failure to submit it within the stipulated period.

Maduabuchi said the requirement did not amount to interference in the internal affairs of political parties.

NBA president begins reconciliation efforts to unite Bar**ABUJA**

The President of the Nigerian Bar Association, Oyinkansola Badejo-Okusanya (SAN), has pledged to unite the Bar, saying her administration would work to move beyond the divisions that characterised the NBA presidential election.

She was responding to questions regarding perceived regional polarisation within the Bar following the national election, specifically concerning factions within Egbe Amofin in the South-West.

Badejo-Okusanya, who spoke in a brief interview with newsmen on Sunday, said she had already begun engaging elders in the Western Region as part of

efforts to build a unified Bar.

She said, "I have no desire to be President of only people that supported me. I am President of the entire Bar, and I want to build a unified Bar, and I've already started working towards that."

"And by the grace of God, before very long, we would have put all that behind us. It's already happening."

The NBA president said her administration's programmes would be anchored on the "Members First" theme contained in her manifesto, with emphasis on improving lawyers' ability to earn, live and practise better.

She said the administration would not attempt to do everything but would instead focus on laying the foundation for a member-oriented association.

"In my manifesto, as you said, not that I promised a lot of things, everything centres around one theme: members first."

"Simply put, what that means is, we want to introduce and establish programmes that will help lawyers to earn better, live better, and practise better. That's the foundation of everything we're going to do."

"We don't want to do everything. Just to lay the foundation for the NBA to rejig itself into a member-oriented association wherein everything that the NBA does is geared towards how it can help members earn better, live better, and practise better."

Badejo-Okusanya also clarified reports concerning her recent meeting with the Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu, over the recording of police officers while performing their duties.

She said her comments on the issue were made before Disu spoke and were not a response to the IGP's position.

"First of all, the way it was re-

ported was wrong. I spoke before the IG. I wasn't responding to what the IG said," she said.

According to her, her position was that accountability could benefit both members of the public and police officers, particularly through the use of body cameras.

"I was just talking about the fact that accountability helps all of us, including the police officers. Because when police officers, for example, are wearing body cameras, then they will be conscious and they will act better," she said.

However, she acknowledged the IGP's concern over the abuse of the right to record police officers.

"But the IG made a very good point. Just because there is a judgment that allows citizens to video policemen in the exercise of their duties, some people have abused it."

Independence: Sanwo-Olu urges Nigerians to renew faith, hope**LAGOS**

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has urged Nigerians to respond to the country's challenges with renewed faith, responsible citizenship and collective action.

Sanwo-Olu said on Monday that the nation's capacity to survive periods of adversity remained a reason to hope for a better future.

He spoke at the inter-denominational service held at the Chapel of Christ the Light, Alausa, Ikeja, as part of activities to commemorate Nigeria's 66th Independence Anniversary.

The governor, who was represented at the service by the Secretary to the State Government, Abimbola Salu-Hundeyin, acknowledged that Nigeria's journey since independence had been marked by periods of progress as well as difficult national challenges, but said the country's resilience through such periods should strengthen citizens' confidence in its future.

Sanwo-Olu said Nigeria remained endowed with the human and natural resources required to achieve meaningful transformation, pointing to its youthful population, skilled manpower, natural wealth, creativity and entrepreneurial energy as assets that could be harnessed for national development.

He said the responsibility for building the country could not rest solely on government, urging Nigerians to contribute through their individual conduct and commitment to the common good.

According to him, honest work, responsible citizenship, excellence and compassion were necessary ingredients for building the kind of country Nigerians desired.

The governor also urged religious institutions to complement prayers for the nation with practical efforts that would promote responsible citizenship, peaceful coexistence and development.

He said, "The theme of this year's anniversary service, 'A Nation of Hope, Healing and Revival,' aptly captures our aspirations as a people at this time."

"Nigeria has experienced periods of progress and difficult challenges since independence, but our ability to endure through adversity remains a reason for optimism about our future."

Sanwo-Olu said the development trajectory of Lagos offered an example of what could be achieved when government, citizens and other stakeholders combined determination with innovation and a shared sense of purpose.

He cited investments by his administration in transportation, education, healthcare, security, enterprise development and environmental sustainability as part of efforts to improve the quality of life in Lagos.

The governor said his administration would sustain investments in the state and its people, stressing that the ambition of building a greater Lagos could not be separated from the broader aspiration for a stronger Nigeria.

He said, "We must continue to believe in Nigeria and in our collective capacity to build the nation we desire. Our diversity should be a source of strength and not division."

NEWS**Ex-commissioner demands power rotation, governorship for Kogi West****LOKOJA**

Former Kogi State Commissioner for Information and Convener, Coalition for Better Kogi State, Dr Tom Ohikere, has called for the rotation of the governorship seat to Kogi West in 2028, insisting that equity and fairness required the zone to produce the next governor.

Ohikere, who said this in a statement made available to journalists in Lokoja, the state capital, on Monday, said Kogi East had produced governors

for 17 years while Kogi Central had governed for 10 years, there by leaving Kogi West without a year on the governorship seat since the state's creation.

He said, "As an Epira man from Okene, I cannot defend 17-12-0. My conscience forbids it," stressing that his support for power rotation to Kogi West was based on fairness rather than ethnic or sectional interest.

The former commissioner said the principle of rotation was necessary to promote justice, peace and political stability in the state, arguing that Kogi

West had demonstrated sufficient human and economic resources to lead the state.

"Kogi West, which hosts the state capital, Lokoja, as well as major economic assets and diverse communities, could provide a platform for greater unity among the three senatorial districts," he stated.

Ohikere also rejected the proposed Kogi Unity and Power Rotation Summit scheduled for September 30 and October 1, 2026, describing it as a gathering being organised by serving government officials rather than a

neutral stakeholders' forum.

He argued that serving commissioners, special advisers and senior special assistants could not objectively moderate a debate on power rotation because they were beneficiaries of the existing political structure.

"You cannot be a beneficiary of 10 years going to 12 years and at the same time be the moderator of who gets it next," he said.

Ohikere said the Coalition for Better Kogi State would not participate in the planned summit, describing it as a potential avenue for delaying the discussion

on power rotation to Kogi West.

He said the coalition would instead organise a "Kogi Equity, Unity and Rotation National Summit" in Abuja in the third week of October 2026, with Kabba proposed as an alternative centre.

The ex-commissioner said the proposed citizens' summit would bring together stakeholders, particularly from Kogi East and Kogi West, as well as individuals from Kogi Central who support equity.

He noted that the summit would seek to develop a "Kogi Charter of Equity" to be present-

ed to political parties, the Independent National Electoral Commission and other stakeholders.

Ohikere maintained that political rotation was not a constitutional requirement but argued that zoning and political agreements remained part of Nigeria's political practice.

"Kogi East has governed. Kogi Central has governed. Kogi West has not. That is history," he said.

The ex-commissioner urged political parties to consider the principle of equity in determining their candidates for the 2028 governorship election.

**GROUNDBREAKING:**

L-R Ethiopia Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed; President/CE, Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote; President of the Republic of Djibouti, Ismail Omar Guelleh; at the Dangote Oil & Gas Trading Damerjog, Djibouti, Groundbreaking Ceremony of Damerjog Oil Terminal and Pipeline Damerjog – Dewele Project in Federal Republic of Djibouti

Four teenage girls die as boat capsizes in Jigawa**ABUJA**

Domestic airlines under the umbrella of the Airline Operators of Nigeria have threatened to shut down operations nationwide if unions again disrupt the operations of any member airline, following the picketing of Air Peace flights in Lagos and Abuja on August 11.

The warning was contained in a communiqué issued after the AON General Meeting in Abuja and made available to journalists on Monday, in which airline operators condemned what they described as "violent disruptive action" by aviation unions and other groups.

The association said the August 11 action brought operations at the Murtala Muhammed Airport Terminals 1 and 2 in Lagos and the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, "to a screeching halt," after union members allegedly blocked access to Air Peace departure terminals, check-in counters, offices and workstations.

Recall that the union and the airlines have been at loggerheads over the refusal of airlines to pay statutory funds to government agencies, a development the unions say is capable of threatening safety.

The union also accused the airlines of stopping workers from unionising, a development the workers described as unacceptable.

According to the AON, the

disruption was more than an industrial dispute because it affected passengers, airline workers and airport security.

The association further said there were "recorded cases" of violence against airline staff, with some workers allegedly sustaining bodily injuries while attempting to perform their duties. For passengers, the consequences were immediate. Flights were cancelled or disrupted, travellers were stranded, and airlines were forced to rebook passengers, arrange accommodation and issue refunds.

The AON said Air Peace

alone had more than 70 flights affected, with estimated losses exceeding N2bn. More than 30 United Nigeria Airlines flights were also affected, impacting about 13,000 passengers.

The association said airlines incurred additional costs from repositioning crew, rescheduling aircraft and other recovery measures at a time when operators were already grappling with high aviation fuel prices and foreign-exchange-linked maintenance expenses.

However, the AON said its members had reached a collective position that any repeat of

the incident would trigger an industry-wide shutdown.

"To this end therefore, the AON would like to state in unequivocal terms that should the events of August 11, 2026, repeat themselves again against any domestic airline, the entire AON member airlines will immediately shut down operations," the communiqué stated.

The association also described the incident as a serious security concern, arguing that the ease with which access to airline terminals was blocked exposed weaknesses in airport security arrangements.

Danielle Adewusi crowned Miss Universe Nigeria 2026**LAGOS**

Lagos State representative, Danielle Adewusi, has been crowned Miss Universe Nigeria 2026 after defeating 19 other contestants at the pageant's grand finale in Lagos.

The finale was held on Sunday at Balmoral Hall, Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos, following weeks of competition featuring camp activities, advocacy projects, talent showcases and stage performances.

According to Silverbird, Adewusi impressed the judges with her "confidence, intelligence, elegance and commitment to social impact" before securing the crown after the final question-and-answer session.

The Top 10 contestants were Danielle Adewusi of Lagos, Anita Osikhena of Edo, Myya Jones of Cross River, Melissa Toghanro of Delta, Oluwafunmibi Ajaja of Ekiti, Benedicta Ifeike of Abuja, Chidinma Olu-ku of Abia, Precious Chinah of Rivers, Eno Idungafa of Akwa Ibom and Edidiong Udoidua of Ebonyi.

Silverbird reported that Jones received the highest number of votes in the fast-track voting process, earning an automatic place in the Top Five.

Toghanro also emerged as Nigeria's representative at Miss Supranational, while Osikhena was among the night's major award winners.

Osikhena won the Pitch Your

Dream Competition, receiving N1m from Yolo Island and a two-night, all-expenses-paid stay at Yolo Island Beach Resort.

She also won the Best Advocacy Project award, taking home N500,000 and a one-year supply of Golden Penny products.

President of the Silverbird Group and National Director of Miss Universe Nigeria, Guy Murray-Bruce, crowned Adewusi at the end of the ceremony.

Adewusi will represent Nigeria at the 75th Miss Universe Festival scheduled for November 24 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

She will also take her "Scrub the Stigma" advocacy project, which focuses on women's health, to the global stage.

Nigerian Navy opens 2026 batch 39 recruitment**ABUJA**

The Nigerian Navy has announced the commencement of its 2026 recruitment exercise for Batch 39 of the Nigerian Navy Basic Training School.

According to the recruitment guideline, the exercise will run from October 2 to October 31, 2026, with qualified applicants expected to complete their applications online through the Nigerian Navy's official recruitment portal as reported in a post on its X handle on Monday.

The Navy said the recruitment process is free of charge, warning applicants against making payments to individuals claiming to facilitate recruitment.

"Online registration and other recruitment processes are free of charge and no payment should be made at any point to anyone throughout the Exercise," the Navy said.

The recruitment is open to eligible Nigerian citizens by birth who possess a National Identification Number (NIN) and meet the specified educational, age, physical and medical requirements.

Applicants are required to meet minimum height requirements of **1.69 metres for males and 1.65 metres for females**. They must also be medically, psychologically and physically fit and have no pre-

vious criminal conviction.

For applicants with O'Level qualifications, the Navy said candidates must be between **18 and 22 years** as of December 31, 2026, and possess at least five credits, including Mathematics and English Language, in not more than two sittings.

The guideline also provides age and qualification requirements for applicants with OND/NCE certificates, tradesmen, applicants in medical-related professions and sportsmen and women.

The Navy further directed successful applicants to print their acknowledgement, parent or guardian consent, Local Government attestation and guarantor's certification forms after completing the online application.

It added that the date and venues for the recruitment examination would be communicated to applicants in due course.

The Navy advised interested applicants to obtain further information from its recruitment portal when the application opens on October 2.

"Only a single valid application is permitted, multiple online applications shall be disqualified," the guideline stated.

The Navy also warned that applicants must be able to communicate in basic English, noting that inability to do so could lead to disqualification at any stage of the recruitment process.

Fire guts Customs office in Lagos Metro Plus**LAGOS**

Fire on Monday gutted the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) Western Marine Command office in Apapa, Lagos, destroying property worth millions of naira.

The fire, which reportedly started at about 10:23am following an electrical surge in the conference room, spread to other sections of the building.

Officers on duty made frantic efforts to contain the fire before officials of the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service arrived at about 10:45 am.

The Deputy Comptroller of Customs, Timothy Jonah,

who had just resumed at the command to take over from his predecessor, described the incident as unfortunate.

He said: "I just resumed duty to take over, only to witness this fire outbreak.

"Every challenge, though negative, is an opportunity to strengthen our operations.

"In the meantime, we will set up a committee to investigate the cause of the fire."

Jonah commended the swift response of personnel on duty and their collaboration with the fire service, saying measures would be taken to strengthen safety protocols and prevent a recurrence.

NEWS**Business & Economy: FG seeks fresh \$1.5bn World Bank loan****ABUJA**

The Federal Government has opened discussions with the World Bank for three new loans totalling \$1.5bn, even as Nigeria's public debt climbed to a record N166.79tn at the end of June 2026.

Documents obtained from the World Bank show that the proposed financing comprises three separate \$500m facilities for climate resilience, social protection

and early childhood development.

The most immediate is a proposed \$500m additional financing for the Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes project, known as ACREsAL. The World Bank has fixed October 29, 2026, as the estimated date for consideration by its board. The borrower is the Federal Republic of Nigeria, while the Federal Ministry of Environment is the implementing agency.

The financing would raise the

size of ACREsAL from its previously approved \$700m to \$1.2bn, entirely financed through the International Development Association, the World Bank's concessional financing arm.

The document said, "The Government of Nigeria has requested AF of \$500m to scale up demonstrated project results and strengthen the institutional, operational and financing arrangements needed to sustain integrated landscape management."

The additional financing is expected to support landscape restoration, watershed rehabilitation, erosion and flood management, irrigation and drainage, water harvesting and storage, reforestation and other climate-resilient interventions.

Of the additional \$500m, \$310m is proposed for dryland management, \$165m for community climate resilience and \$25m for institutional strengthening and project management.

ACReSAL currently operates across 19 northern states and the Federal Capital Territory and is targeted at land degradation, water insecurity, climate vulnerability and declining agricultural productivity.

The World Bank said desertification and land degradation affected an estimated 43 per cent of Nigeria's land area, while failure to address climate change could reduce gross domestic product by about 2.6 per

cent annually by 2030 and as much as 6.7 per cent by 2050.

The second proposed loan is another \$500m IDA credit for the Household Prosperity and Empowerment-Social Protection Project.

Unlike the ACREsAL facility, the HOPE-SP project is at an earlier stage of preparation. Its technical design review is expected on October 30, 2026, while the World Bank has tentatively fixed March 16, 2027, as its approval date.

**MEETING:**

From left: Senior Special Assistant (SSA) to the President on Community Engagement, North West, Abudullahi Tanko-Yakasai; Senior Special Assistant to the President on Community Engagement, North Central, Dr Abiodun Esiet; Minister of Works, David Umahi and : Senior Special Assistant to the President on Community Engagement, South-South, Gift Johnbull, after a meeting between the Minister, SSA to the President and National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) on the ongoing Infrastructure Projects across the country, in Abuja.

Food, beverage firms lead Nigeria's real investments with N375billion**LAGOS**

Nigeria's food, beverage and tobacco industry attracted N375.03bn in fresh investment in 2025, making it the biggest recipient of manufacturing investment during the year.

Investment in the sector jumped by 63.5 per cent from N229.42bn recorded in 2024, according to data from the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria.

The increase reflects continued expansion by major manufacturers as they seek to meet demand in Nigeria's large consumer market.

Companies including Flour Mills of Nigeria, BUA Foods, Nestlé Nigeria, Dangote Sugar, Dufil, Cadbury Nigeria, CHI Limited, Unilever Nigeria and

Honeywell Flour Mills were among firms investing in the sector.

The non-metallic products industry ranked second with N280.12bn, driven largely by investments in cement and glass manufacturing.

Motor vehicle assembly attracted N170.8bn, while the chemical and pharmaceutical sector received N123.61bn billion.

Industrial plastics, rubber and foam manufacturers invested N123.44bn, while the textile and carpet industry attracted N112.53bn.

Total investment in 2025 stood at N1.33tn. While the food and beverage industry led by sector, Lagos and Ogun remained the main destinations for manufacturing capital.

Ardova-led consortium to acquire Powergas**LAGOS**

A consortium led by Ardova Plc and including Diadem Energy has agreed to acquire Powergas Global Investments Nigeria Limited and Powergas Ebodei Limited, collectively known as Powergas, in a transaction expected to close by the end of 2026.

The deal, announced last Friday by A.P. Moller Capital, will see the Danish investor exit its stake in one of Africa's largest compressed natural gas producers and virtual pipeline distributors.

Powergas, founded in 2013 by the Clean Energy Group, pioneered the "virtual pipeline" model—compressing natural gas and transporting it by road to industrial, commercial and power customers beyond the reach of Nigeria's fixed pipeline grid.

Its flagship Ebodei flare gas monetisation project in Delta State, developed with A.P. Moller Capital's backing since 2019, converts otherwise flared gas into usable energy and has helped cut emissions while supplying firms that would otherwise rely on diesel generators.

The company now operates four mother stations—in Ikoro-du (Lagos), Ogebe (Rivers), Ebodei (Delta) and Ore (Ondo)—and a fleet of more than 250 tube skids, having delivered over 600 million standard cubic metres of CNG as at December 2025.

For Ardova, the acquisition adds a strategic gas platform to its existing downstream portfolio of petroleum products, LPG, aviation fuel, lubricants, shipping and logistics.

The Lagos-based integrated energy company, which traces its roots to BP Nigeria in 1964, plans to deploy CNG infrastructure across its nationwide retail network, targeting 100 CNG refuelling sites within 24 months.

The expansion aligns with the federal government's Decade of Gas initiative, launched in 2021 to transform Nigeria into a gas-powered economy by 2030, and President Bola Tinubu's

Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas and Electric Vehicles, which seeks to lower transport costs and emissions by promoting auto-gas adoption.

"Nigeria's next era of energy development will be built on gas, and it will be built at scale. "Powergas has built the compression backbone required to take natural gas beyond the conventional pipeline grid. Ardova brings a national distribution network, deep customer relationships, and the ability to invest for the long term.

"Together, we intend to connect Nigeria's abundant gas resources to industry, power and transportation, supporting Presi-

dent Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas and Electric Vehicles and the federal government's Decade of Gas programme.

"Our ambition is to deliver more affordable, lower-emission energy and lower transportation costs for Nigerians, while building a gas platform with relevance far beyond Nigeria," explained the Executive Chairman of Ardova Plc, Dr AbdulWasiu Sowami.

The Managing Director of Ardova Plc, Dr Abiola Babatunde-Ojo, noted that the deal would enable the firm to harness the opportunities in the gas industry.

FG seeks global alliance against insecurity

OSEMUDIAMHEN O. FAITH

NEW YORK

The Federal Government has called for stronger international collaboration to combat terrorism, banditry, oil theft, cybercrime and other emerging threats to national security.

Minister of Defence, Gen. Christopher Musa (retd), made the call on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, noting that Nigeria's security challenges have become too interconnected for any single institution or country to tackle alone.

"Nigeria's security challenges are national in their impact,

regional in their consequences, and increasingly international in their implications," Musa said.

He said while military operations remain critical to protecting lives and territorial integrity, lasting peace cannot be achieved by force alone.

Musa said government is seeking practical partnerships with the United Nations, African Union, ECOWAS, bilateral partners, civil society and the private sector to strengthen security institutions.

He disclosed that measures being pursued include recruitment of additional 22,000 personnel, restructuring of Army divisions, enhanced subnational security arrangements

and proposals for state police and forest guards.

In his remarks, Special Adviser to the President on Homeland Security, Maj.-Gen. Adeyinka Famadewa (retd), said Nigeria is shifting from a capability-driven to a threat-driven security strategy.

"We are moving from capability-driven to threat-driven. Defence is a very expensive venture, so you need to prioritise," Famadewa said.

He said the new approach would identify major threats, assess capability gaps and prioritise resources through a five-year framework, while boosting domestic defence production capacity.

Ruto hastens process as Dangote vows bigger Kenyan refinery**LAGOS**

Kenyan President William Ruto says his government is fast-tracking administrative processes for the proposed Dangote refinery in Lamu, Kenya. This is as Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, said the planned facility would be bigger than the existing Nigerian plant.

Ruto spoke at the weekend during a tour of the Dangote Petroleum Refinery in Lekki, Lagos, ahead of the September 30 groundbreaking ceremony for the proposed 700,000-barrel-per-day refinery in Lamu, Kenya.

The Kenyan President said his government had already secured the land for the project and is working on other requirements to eliminate bureaucratic bottlenecks and ensure that construction and subsequent operations are not delayed.

He described the proposed refinery as a regional project that would expand industrial activities in East Africa, create employment opportunities and improve the technical skills of the region's workforce.

"I just want to tell the Dangote family here that the government of Kenya is one hundred per cent behind your project, our project. We have already secured the land that is necessary for this.

"We are working on all the other enablers to make sure that

we don't spend time on doing administrative bureaucratic stuff. We spend time on doing what we must do so that at the earliest opportunity we can refine products out of Lamu in Kenya," Ruto said during the visit.

The assurance came as Dangote outlined plans for a larger industrial complex in Kenya, including a power plant with 1,000-megawatt generation capacity, twice the one at his Lagos refinery.

Dangote explained that the visit was arranged to enable Ruto to see the Lagos refinery physically and appreciate the scale of the investment before embarking on a similar project in Kenya.

He said the Kenyan president's presence at the facility was significant because it offered him an opportunity to understand the infrastructure, equipment and technical requirements involved in developing a refinery of such magnitude.

Dangote described Ruto's visit as an important show of support for the proposed Lamu investment, adding that the Kenyan project would have a wider economic impact beyond petroleum refining.

He said the refinery would serve as a catalyst for other investments, attracting businesses and industries that could take advantage of the infrastructure and petroleum products to be produced at the facility.

NEWS



81ST UNGA:
Vice President Kashim Shettima on arrival from the 81st United Nations General Assembly in the United States of America yesterday.

UNGA: Shettima back in Nigeria after leading delegation

ABUJA
AYENOMOH ALUKHEI

Vice President Kashim Shettima on Monday returned to Nigeria after representing President Bola Tinubu at the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, United States.

Shettima had departed Abuja on September 20 after the President mandated him to lead Nigeria's delegation to the annual global gathering.

According to a statement by his Senior Special Assistant on Media and Communications, Stanley Nkwocha, the Vice President delivered Tinubu's national statement at the General Debate, where Nigeria renewed its call for reforms to the United Nations Security Council.

The statement said President Tinubu reinforced his call for a more representative and equitable global order.

"Nigeria advocated permanent African representation on the council, fairer global financing, stronger climate support

and deeper multilateral cooperation," the statement said.

"At the Third High-Level Roundtable of the Africa Minerals Strategy Group, Tinubu urged African countries to move beyond exporting raw minerals and focus on processing, manufacturing and value addition."

At a high-level education financing event co-hosted by Nigeria and Italy, Shettima reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to education and supported the Global Partnership for Education's \$5bn financing campaign.

The Vice President described education as "a critical investment in productivity, human capital and national prosperity."

The statement added that Shettima also met with Nigerians in the Diaspora, where he highlighted the importance of their investments, expertise and networks to national development.

It said the Vice President held meetings with the new leadership of the Economic Community of West African States Commission and the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, focusing on development financing, regional integration, economic cooperation, technology, peace and security.

Oyebanji dissolves boards, sacks political appointees ahead of second term

ADO EKITI

Edo State Governor, Mr Biodun Oyebanji, has approved the immediate dissolution of boards, commissions and parastatals in the state and terminated the appointment of all political appointees.

Special Adviser (Media) to the Governor, Mr Yinka Oyebode, in a statement in Ado Ekiti on Sunday, listed those affected as special assistants, senior special assistants and technical assistants.

He said the decision became imperative in view of the gradual winding down of the governor's first term ahead of the inauguration of his second term scheduled for October 16, 2026.

However, chairmen and members of statutory boards are not affected.

These include the State Independent Electoral Commission, Civil Service Commission, House of Assembly Service Commission and Judicial Service Commission.

Similarly, the governing councils of all state-owned tertiary institutions remain intact, in line with earlier directives by the governor.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as Miss. **ONYINYECHI ABEC NWANI**. Now wish to be known and Addressed as **Mrs. ONYINYECHI IFEANACHO LUKE ABEC**. all former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as Miss. **JACKSON FAITH**. Now wish to be known and Addressed as **Mrs. FAITH OHANMU**.all former document remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME/ CORRECTION OF DOB

The general public is hereby notified that **AIGBOGHO AIFUWA**. and **CEDRIC**. are one and the same person. henceforth now wish to be known and Addressed as **AIGBOGHO CEDRIC AIFUWA**. And also my correct date of birth is 10th day of OCTOBER 1994 and not 7th day of AUGUST 1992 as wrongly capture on my (B.V.N) all former document remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as Miss. **RITA OMOSUKPON OSADARE**. Now wish to be known and Addressed as **Mrs. RITA OMOSUKPON OSASERI**. all former document remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF MIDDLE NAME

The general public is hereby Notified that. **ELEDUH BRIDGET**. and **ELEDUH BRIDGET IMARENAKHUE**. is one and the same person henceforth now wish to be known and Addressed as **ELEDUH BRIDGET IMARENAKHUE**. All former document remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

MISSING MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

The general public is hereby notified that I, **OSASERI RITA OMOSUKPON** is the rightful owner of a MISSING MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE. That the said certificate was issued 13th December in the year 2008 at central Baptist church, Ring Road, Benin city. That the said marriage certificate was discovered missing sometime in the month of JULY 2023 in Benin City Edo state, Nigeria. That all effort made to trace it has proved abortive. Hence, this publication for record purposes, concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

Signed: **OSASERI RITA O.**

PUBLIC NOTICE

HOLY CITY CHAPEL GLORIOUS GLOBAL ASSEMBLY MINISTRY

The General Public is hereby notified that the above-named Church has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) for registration under Part F of the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA), 2020.

THE TRUSTEES ARE:
OKWOMA ELVIS (Chairman)
EMAVWOSE ANNA (Secretary)

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:
To preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations. To propagate Christian faith, love, and unity among members. To engage in community welfare and charitable activities.

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420, Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja, within 28 days of this publication.

OKWOMA ELVIS (chairman)
EMAVWOSE ANNA (Secretary)

Nigeria, US sign pact on \$700bn solid minerals

• Deal to boost local processing, value addition

OSEMUDIAMHEN FAITH
NEW YORK

Nigeria and the United States have signed a framework agreement to deepen American investment in Nigeria's solid minerals sector.

The agreement, signed at Nigeria House, New York, by the Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Mr. Dele Alake, and the United States Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Christopher Landau, will cover geological data and exploration, mineral development and processing, infrastructure and technical capacity.

It is expected to provide a framework for business-to-business transactions to develop Nigeria's mineral value chains and leverage bilateral relations to attract investment into the country's estimated \$700 billion mineral resource base.

Speaking at the ceremony, Alake said the pact marked a shift from Nigeria's traditional role as an exporter of raw materials.

"Some agreements manage the present, and some agreements shape the future. The framework we sign today belongs to the second kind. In signing this framework, Nigeria and the United States affirm a shared conviction: that the supply chains for these critical minerals must be secure, resilient and built on responsible investment," he said.

The minister said the objective of the Federal Government was to retain more value from the nation's mineral resources through local processing, skills development and job creation, in line with the economic diversification drive of President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

He, however, said the signing

was only the beginning.

"Now comes the harder and more important work: moving from agreement to implementation. A signature is a promise, results are the proof," Alake said.

He said both countries would in the coming months identify viable projects, mobilise investments and develop commercial partnerships that deliver measurable benefits.

In his remarks, Landau said Washington regarded Nigeria as a regional power and was committed to strengthening partnership with Abuja.

"The signal we are sending is that the United States and Nigeria are partners. Under President Trump and President Tinubu's leadership, the United States and Nigeria have done many things together in the last one and a half years that we have never done before. I think we would like to keep building on that momentum," he said.

The US delegation included Deputy Assistant Secretary for West African Affairs, Mr. Rich Michaels; Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southern Africa, Foreign Assistance and Critical Minerals, Mr. Chris Kulukundis; and Senior Policy Adviser to the Deputy Secretary, Mr. Wyatt Toehlkeke.

Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, Mr. Yusuf Yabo; Director-General, Nigerian Mining Cadastre Office, Mr. Simon Nkom; Executive Secretary, Solid Minerals Development Fund, Hajiya Fatima Shinkafi; and Chief Executive Officer, Nigeria Solid Minerals Company, Mr. Martin Imonitfe,

LEGAL NOTICE

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

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

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration will be granted to such persons unless a NOTICE to prohibit the grant is filed in this Registry within Twenty One (21) days from the date of the publication of this notice.

MR. EMMANUEL EHIEMUA (A.K.A) EMMANUEL OIGIANGBE EHIEMUA , Late of Ekpoma, Esan West L.G.A., who died on the 22nd day of September, 2023 in Lagos.	PED/501/2026 Mrs. Aiyomorhuo Ehiemua and Louis Ojomoh Esq of No 6, Ovie Whiskey Road, Off Ekehuan Road, widow and family friend respectively of the deceased.
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DATED THIS 28TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2026.

B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar



INSIDE EDO STATE



THE AUSTIN IMAFIDON ADMINISTRATION IN UHUNMWODE LGA

One year of purposeful leadership, quality service delivery

A committee was inaugurated to conduct feasibility studies and produce designs for a modern market suitable for the environment.

The administration proposed a public-private partnership model for the development and management of the market, signalling an attempt to mobilise private capital for local economic infrastructure rather than depending exclusively on public funds.

STAFF WELFARE

Council workers also featured prominently in the administration's programmes.

Among measures attributed to the administration were payment of salaries before the 25th of the month, attention to outstanding salary-related obligations and arrears, promotion of junior staff, distribution of rice and other welfare support during designated periods, improvement of the Council's physical working environment and subsidised transportation for workers.

A notable welfare measure was the support for the NULGE staff bus scheme, under which the cost borne by staff was reduced from 2,000 to 500.

The administration presented these interventions as part of a strategy to improve staff morale and productivity.

AGRICULTURE AND LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recognising Uhummwode's agricultural potential, the administration incorporated agriculture and locally produced commodities into its development agenda.

The Harvest of Hope initiative deliberately emphasised locally sourced products as part of efforts to ensure that social interventions could generate economic benefits for local producers and traders.

The broader objective has been to encourage agricultural production, local patronage and economic self-reliance.

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Sports was also used as an instrument for youth engagement and community interaction.

The administration organised the ISIWINA Gold Cup, providing opportunities for young people to participate in competitive sporting activities while encouraging talent discovery, community interaction and constructive youth engagement.

GOVERNMENT ASSETS AND HEAVY-DUTY EQUIPMENT

The administration's capacity for road and environmental interventions was strengthened by heavy-duty equipment made available to the Local Government, including a grader, payload and tipper.

These assets have supported road grading, evacuation, rehabilitation and other public works undertaken within the Local Government Area.

THE 2026 BUDGET AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The administration presented the 2026 fiscal framework under the theme:

"Budget of Liberation: A New Dawn for Uhummwode Local Government Area."

The budget was put at approximately 9.516 billion, comprising recurrent and capital components.

A significant policy initiative incorporated into the administration's development thinking was the proposed Uhummwode Integrated Investment Board, intended to promote investment and public-private partnerships.

The 2026 Appropriation Bye-Law passed through the Legislative Arm and was subsequently presented for assent, strengthening the



institutional framework for implementing the Council's programmes.

TRANSITION FROM ACTING CHAIRMAN TO EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN

The conclusion of the acting tenure marked a major institutional transition.

Appointments, committees, boards and task forces constituted during the acting period were dissolved as part of the administrative transition into the substantive tenure.

Following his assumption of office as Executive Chairman, Imafidon began constituting a new administrative team and setting priorities for the next phase of the Council.

The transition provides an opportunity to consolidate projects initiated during the acting period while developing new programmes under a full electoral mandate.

PROJECTS AND INTERVENTIONS AT A GLANCE

Within the first year, the administration's reported projects, programmes and interventions include:

Comprehensive renovation of Uhummwode Local Government Council Secretariat.

Renovation and furnishing of the Legislative Arm complex.

Provision and improvement of alternative electricity supply at the Secretariat.

Borehole and water infrastructure at the Council.

Sanitation and soak-away facilities.

Solar-powered infrastructure.

Grading and rehabilitation of Idunmwowina Road.

Rehabilitation of Eyean Pipeline Road.

Intervention on Urhokhuosa-Nibiwe Road.

Rehabilitation of Eagle Road.

Intervention on Jehovah Road, Ikhueniro.

Rehabilitation of Pipeline-Eyeat/Idibo Road.

Palliative rehabilitation at Morgan Junction Bypass.

Gully-erosion control measures at Morgan Junction.

Palliative intervention at Idokpa Bypass.

Distribution of educational/library materials to 87 primary schools.

Proposed six-classroom intervention at Azagba.

Support and intervention concerning Ehor Technical College.

Computer and printing skills programme for Uhummwode youths.

Technical/vocational empowerment for young women.

ISIWINA Harvest of Hope social-support programme.

Support for free eye-care services.

Support for immunisation and disease-prevention programmes.

Healthcare partnerships and community medical outreaches.

Support for the rehabilitation of Ugomoson Primary Health Centre.

Electricity transformer/pole interventions at Ugbeze.

Electricity intervention at Orior-Ozolua.

Security-support vehicle for the police in Ehor.

Screening and strengthening of local vigilante structures.

Regular Local Government security meetings.

Emergency intervention regarding reported threats to schools.

Peace-building intervention in the Ahor crisis.

Intervention in the Ahor/Uselu N'Ahor boundary dispute.

Intervention in the Eko-Ugha/Ugha community dispute.

Monthly environmental sanitation exercises.

Refuse evacuation at Ehor Market and other locations.

Desilting and drainage clearing.

Vegetation clearing along the Idokpa Bypass.

ISIWINA Greener Uhummwode initiative.

Planned planting of 10,000 trees and ornamental plants.

Beautification programme for major entrances and exits into Uhummwode.

Establishment of a committee for the rebuilding of Ogheghe Market.

Proposed modernisation of Ogheghe Market through public-private partnership.

Staff transport subsidy.

Salary and staff-welfare interventions.

Attention to promotion of junior staff.

Periodic distribution of welfare packages to Council workers.

Agricultural and local-produce promotion through social intervention programmes.

ISIWINA Gold Cup and sports development.

Deployment of grader, payload and tipper for public works.

Introduction of an investment-oriented development framework through the proposed Uhummwode Integrated Investment Board.

Passage and implementation framework for the 2026 Appropriation Bye-Law.

A NEW PHASE OF EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

The transition from Acting Chairman to Executive Chairman means that the first year can be viewed in two phases: a foundation-building period under the acting administration and a consolidation phase following the commencement of the substantive administration.

The acting period concentrated heavily on restoring the Council's administrative infrastructure, responding to deteriorated roads, staff welfare, security, sanitation, education, social welfare and community engagement.

The substantive phase has begun with efforts to consolidate those interventions while expanding attention to environmental renewal, market development, youth empowerment and institutional strengthening.

Public reporting has also documented partnerships associated with the administration. The Lady Mechanic Initiative, for example, reported its collaboration with Uhummwode Local Government on the Harvest of Hope programme and technical training for young women.

Healthcare partnerships have similarly supported the rehabilitation of primary healthcare infrastructure and medical outreach programmes.

CONCLUSION

One year after Hon. Austin Rotimi Imafidon first assumed responsibility for the administration of Uhummwode Local Government Council, the period provides a broad record of interventions cutting across infrastructure, roads, education, healthcare, security, staff welfare, social protection, youth development, environmental management, electricity, sports, conflict resolution and institutional reforms.

The administration moved from an acting arrangement into a substantive elected administration, giving it the opportunity to consolidate ongoing programmes and undertake longer-term projects.

The challenge for the years ahead will be to complete ongoing and proposed projects, maintain already rehabilitated infrastructure, expand development to more communities, deepen transparency and accountability, and ensure that programmes produce measurable improvements in the lives of residents.

For Uhummwode, the first year of the Imafidon administration has therefore established a development agenda whose ultimate legacy will be determined by the sustainability, reach and long-term impact of the projects and policies initiated during this period.

Making of a new chapter in Nigeria army history

DR. PATRICK AKHERE EBOJELE

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has made the operationalisation of the Nigerian Army's 83 Division in Benin a personal mission. Not in the ceremonial way, but in his dogged, infrastructure-heavy style that leaves no room for excuses but action. For him it is not just about hosting the new Division. It's about positioning Edo State as the strategic security backbone of the South-South geopolitical zone as envisaged by the President and Commander in chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces, Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tinubu.

And the governor is passionate about this. At the heart of his five-pillar SHINE agenda sits Security—the first pillar by design, not accident—the foundation upon which everything else in his administration rests. Healthcare cannot thrive in insecurity. Infrastructure cannot be built where criminality reigns. Natural resources cannot be explored or exploited either. Agriculture cannot flourish where farmers fear for their lives. Education cannot progress where communities are under siege.

The South-South region faces a unique security burden. Oil theft is an industry. Illegal refining has poisoned waterways and destroyed livelihoods. Maritime piracy makes creek transportation a gamble with lives. Communal clashes over water and land compete for military attention. These aren't abstract policy problems—they are the daily realities that constrain development and prosperity in the region.

The new 83 Division of the Nigerian Army represents Governor Okpebholo's wager that federal security architecture can be mobilized to address regional security failures. It's not a substitute for state-level efforts—his government continues local policing and community engagement. But a full-strength military division with specialized focus on oil and gas infrastructure protection, maritime security, and organized crime disruption offers what local forces cannot: surveillance capacity, rapid response capability, and inter-state coordination. These gaps have cost the region billions in stolen crude and incalculable lives lost to preventable violence.

As it were, the 83 Division is one of four new Nigerian Army divisions approved by President Bola Tinubu, alongside the 5 Division in Makurdi, 9 Division in Ilorin and 10 Division in Jalingo. The newly established 83 Division, with Headquarters in Benin City, will cover Edo, Delta and Bayelsa States when activated. But what makes this division special—and why the governor is pushing so hard—goes beyond administrative reorganisation.

The new Division when fully operational will have the operational mandate of safeguarding critical oil and gas infrastructure, neutralizing crude oil theft and illegal refining networks, and maintaining internal security across the riverine and forest terrains of the region.

And so begin the journey to Teboga in Ikpoba-Okha local government area of the State. A journey that is less like a pilgrimage to a military installation and more like watching a vision take concrete form. What was once neglected and forgotten, bushy, and an abandoned land in a matter of weeks is now cleared and ordered—a testament



GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLU



to how quickly things can move when a governor decides they matter.

During his inspection visit recently, the governor moved through the facility like a man ticking off a mental checklist. The site clearance? Done. The fencing? Next. Temporary accommodation? Ready. He wasn't speaking in vague promises or diplomatic language. He was speaking in timelines and deliverables, the vocabulary of someone who understands that military hardware sits idle without infrastructure to house it.

"Last time we came here about two weeks ago, this place was very bushy, but today you can see everywhere is cleared and the next thing now is fencing," Okpebholo said during the inspection. "We are set for the 83 Division here in Edo State, by the grace of God. Everything needed to complete this place for the military to inhabit here is ready and we are set."

That's not boasting—though in Nigerian politics, the line between confidence and boasting blurs easily. It's the voice of a governor who has already moved the needle. Environmental sanitation, rehabilitation of existing structures and other preparatory works were already underway, while contractors had promised to deploy additional bulldozers to accelerate construction.

What's striking about Governor

Okpebholo's approach is that he isn't treating the 83 Division as a federal project that happens to be in Edo State. He's treating it as a state project. He's fighting for it. He's clearing obstacles. He's ensuring that when the general officers and their personnel arrive, they find not just barracks, but a state that has invested in welcoming them. That matters more than government press releases typically let on.

The governor's reasoning about location reveals something else entirely. Edo, he argued, sits at the geographic heart of a region that needs military attention. The establishment of the new Divisions will significantly improve command and control, decentralise operational decision-making, strengthen border security, enhance the protection of critical national infrastructure, improve counter-insurgency and internal security operations, and ensure faster military response to emerging threats nationwide.

"Edo is a central point. We have work to do in the South-South. That is why we were called Mid-West and the headquarters of Mid-West was in Benin, and we are still in Benin today," Governor Okpebholo said. "So, putting a division here, in the wisdom of Mr President, is a great thing for the South-South. We are happy because Mr President thought rightly for this to be in Edo."

This is a statement that sits comfort-

ably in Nigeria's political tradition—acknowledge the president's wisdom while subtly reminding everyone of your state's historical importance. But there's genuine gratification underneath. The 83 Division choosing Benin isn't accidental. It's recognition. And Governor Okpebholo intends to honour that recognition through action.

The Governor has expressed confidence that the facility would be ready within the next weeks, adding that alternative temporary office spaces were available if required for the division's immediate take-off. That kind of flexibility—having backup plans—speaks to someone who has thought through the logistics. Not every governor in Nigeria operates this way. Many would have made the announcement and disappeared. Okpebholo is staying on the ground, inspecting sites, holding contractors accountable.

The military side is equally committed. Brigadier General Ahmed Balogun, Commander of 4 Brigade, Nigerian Army, said the inspection was a follow-up to assess progress. "The work is progressing steadily and we are optimistic that the operationalisation of the division will commence in the nearest future as pronounced, while other amenities and facilities are being incorporated," Balogun said.

At the community level, the excitement is real. When land transforms from a hideout for criminals into a

space where military infrastructure rises, people notice. The security implications alone justify the investment. One community leader, His Royal Highness Dogwo Bako, didn't mince words. "The governor has cleared the area, and it was previously a hideout for criminals. The transformation has given us confidence."

That's the dividend of infrastructure development that spreadsheets miss. A community that feels safer. A region that feels less abandoned by the federal government. A state that is actively building, not just complaining about neglect.

The 83 Division operationalisation timeline runs through December 2026. That's less than three months away. For a major military infrastructure project in Nigeria, that's an aggressive schedule. Governor Okpebholo is set to hit the target in a manner that shows how serious his government is about supporting federal security operations in Edo State.

For now, the bulldozers are moving. The land is clearing. And in Benin, a new chapter in the state's military history is being written—one cleared acre at a time.

• Dr. Ebojele has his PhD in Public Administration and is the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State.

FOREIGN

NEWS

**HOUTHIS BATTLE:**

An international coalition led by Saudi Arabia is providing Yemeni government forces with weapons

Inside Yemen's front-line city as Houthis battle for control

This is the first drone," said the soldier accompanying us in south-western Yemen. "It's usually followed by an attack."

The buzzing sound overhead got louder as we took cover under the bushes, before climbing back into the vehicle and driving away.

Within about 10 minutes, the loud thuds of strikes followed, one after another, though it was unclear where they landed.

It is hard to tell where the front line begins in the mountains south-west of the city of Taiz.

Saudi-backed pro-government forces are battling to push back Houthi fighters, who swept down the coast of the Red Sea earlier this month, taking control of a key shipping chokepoint and escalating Yemen's civil war.

We travelled with government forces from Taiz through checkpoints to the line where their control ends and no man's land begins, in order to see the fighting up close.

Homes are scattered across the slopes, but many stand abandoned after families fled to escape the fighting.

It is eerily quiet, no sound of the cars or motorbikes that are continuously whizzing through the city. All you can hear is the bleating of livestock and the sound of incoming and outgoing fire.

"Two mortars landed here on my property," said Ali, sitting outside his home with a herd of goats, about 1km (0.6 miles) from the front line.

He told me he had sent his children to a displacement camp because they could no longer cope with the shelling and gunfire. He had stayed

with his wife and sisters to look after their animals.

"I am terrified," he said, "but I have no choice, we will all go hungry without our animals and die anyway."

He gave only his first name, fearful of repercussions if the Houthis take over the area in the days ahead. Contacts from the Houthi side have told us they are consolidating troops, preparing for a major offensive. When we asked government forces about this they said they are aware and were preparing too.

At the closest checkpoint to the front line, we met some fighters who had just returned from positions high on the mountain, just a few hundred metres from advancing Houthis. One of them said the bodies of 18 government soldiers lay in an area his unit could fire across but not reach.

"We shoot over them, but we can't pull them out," he said.

Fighting around Taiz has intensified since the Houthis seized the strategic Red Sea port of Mokha, 85km to the west of the city, on 10 September, after a ceasefire that had largely held for four years unravelled.

The group took control of a swathe of territory overlooking the strategic Bab al-Mandab Strait – a crucial shipping corridor linking Europe and Asia. This contributed to a rise in oil prices as fears rose of further disruption to supplies from the region.

Government forces hold the centre of Taiz, while Houthi positions lie to its north and east. The fiercest recent fighting has been on the western approaches, where the two sides are contesting high ground overlooking the city's

route south. If the Houthis secure these areas, government forces could find it much harder to retake Mokha.

We travelled to Taiz from Aden in the south, where Yemen's internationally recognised Presidential Leadership Council and government are based.

About 30 checkpoints along the route marked stretches of road controlled by different commanders – a clear sign of the fractured make-up of the forces fighting on the government side.

As we neared the city, ambulances began to pass us. We counted at least five within half an hour, heading towards Taiz's main hospital. It was clear that we were driving into a city at the heart of a brutal battle.

We arrived after dark. The shops were lit, the restaurants were packed and children were playing in the streets. But every so often, other sounds broke through – the thud of shelling and the crack of gunfire from the mountains around the city.

Taiz has been a major battleground in the country's devastating civil war. After ousting the government from Sanaa in 2015, the Houthis attempted to also seize control of Taiz but were driven out of most of the city by local militiamen.

Now, in their latest offensive, Houthis are making extensive use of drones alongside other weapons.

Their main outside supplier is Iran, which has provided weapons, funding and military advice, according to Saudi Arabia, Western countries and UN experts. Iran, however, has previously denied supplying weapons to the Houthis and says it only supports them politically.

There have been persistent reports over many years of the

Houthi recruiting child soldiers, and a government soldier told us he had faced them on the front line.

"It's difficult to look at a Yemeni child and shoot at him. But then they are pointing the gun at you and you have to defend yourself," he said.

The Houthis signed an "action plan" with the UN in 2022 pledging to end the practice. The BBC has also spoken to teenagers serving with government forces.

Embattled Serbian president resigns, paving way for early elections

Serbia's president has resigned after more than a year of student-led protests and growing public discontent over allegations of government corruption.

Aleksandar Vučić said his administration had preserved peace and stability during his nine-year tenure as he addressed supporters outside the presidential building in the capital, Belgrade.

He had already announced his intention to resign in June and is currently standing to be his party's candidate for prime minister in the upcoming parliamentary elections. Vučić cannot run for a third presidential term under Serbia's constitution.

The populist leader's administration has been dogged by anger over alleged corner-cutting.

It was the collapse of the Novi Sad railway station's roof, killing 16 people, that first galvanised anger towards the government in 2024.

Protests involving a wide range of citizens – from students and teachers to workers and farmers – followed.

Demonstrators believed that the disaster reflected more than a decade of governing by the Progressive Party of Vucic, who closely associated himself

with the station's renovation, which was supposed to be a symbol of Serbia's progress.

A series of resignations of those under the embattled president failed to placate the protesters, who continued to demonstrate throughout this summer, turning to unrest following accusations of police brutality.

Vučić's presidency was due to expire next year. Under Serbia's constitution, presidential elections must be held no more than three months after his resignation.

This means Serbians will go to the polls twice before the end of the year.

Vučić said the presidential election will take place more than a month after the snap parliamentary election in late October, itself called in response to the protests, which had added calls for a vote to their list of demands.

He had earlier announced that he planned to run in that election as Progressive Party's leader, leaving the possibility he could retain a position at the top of Serbian politics.

Parliamentary speaker Ana Brnabić, also a Progressive Party member, will assume the role of interim president until a new one is elected.

Two bodies found after avalanche hits Himalayan climbing group

Rescuers have recovered two bodies from the site of an avalanche that struck a climbing group camping in the Nepalese part of the Himalayas.

Around a dozen people are still thought to be missing after a sheet of snow fell on the base camp of Himlung Himal peak on Manang district on Sunday morning.

The group of Nepalese nationals, including climbers and support staff, had been sent ahead of foreign climbers to prepare the camp and fix ropes.

Forecasts showed there was heavy snowfall around the 7,126m (23,380ft) peak in recent days, which lies on Nepal's border with Tibet.

Poor weather has hampered rescue efforts, with helicopters and rescue teams initially unable to reach the site.

Bibhuti Chand Thakur, of Himalaya Holidays Trekking, told news agency AFP that at least eight members of his expedition team had been reported missing. The exact number of climbers still unaccounted for remains unclear.

A rescue team consisting of

experienced mountaineers was rushed from the Nepalese capital, Kathmandu, via helicopter.

That effort is now expected to continue on Monday due to the thick snow and bad weather, local media report.

The Nepalese team had been sent ahead of foreign climbers to prepare the camp, manage the route and fix ropes on the mountain.

Nepal's mountain districts have seen persistent rain and snow in recent days, creating treacherous conditions for the country's economically important climbing tourism industry.

Climbers were forced to leave Mount Manaslu, the eighth highest peak in the world, earlier this week due to the rising threat of avalanches.

The latest death of Nepalese climbers comes less than two months after six lost their lives on Broad Peak in Pakistan, including renowned British-Nepalese mountaineer Nirmal Purja.

It also comes as efforts to recover bodies continues on the Nepal-Tibet border, where more than 6,000 people are still missing after a massive

flood and landslide in August.

More than 1,400 people are confirmed to have died after a glacial collapse in the Himalayas sent vast quantities of water and debris careering down the Trishuli River valley, sweeping away settlements.

Extreme weather events have also affected other parts of Asia in the past week.

Extreme weather in the neighbouring Indian region of Uttar Pradesh has killed more than 50 people, officials there said.

Meanwhile, a flood emergency disaster has been declared across Bangkok because of heavy rainfall since Thursday, with people being urged to stay at home or move to higher floors.

Earlier this week, a deadly typhoon that battered Tokyo, triggering landslides in neighbouring prefectures that killed four people.

Typhoon Dujan was the latest in a series of storms in the Pacific, made more intense by the "super El Niño", an area of warmer sea water that facilitates the formation of powerful storms.

NEWS**FOREIGN**

China release information of what was agreed at the talks between Xi Jinping and Donald Trump last week

But there were no joint statements and few major breakthroughs.

Instead, both governments issued separate accounts of the meeting - perhaps a sign that despite the White House tours and promise of warmer ties, Washington and Beijing remain wary of each other.

Here are four things we now know - and still don't - about

what transpired at the talks.

A new AI dialogue and communication channel

Beijing says it has agreed with Washington to launch a new AI dialogue, with further talks scheduled for the end of November.

As both countries race to develop advanced artificial intelligence, the move suggests they see a need for some guardrails around a technology that is increasingly

being used in everything from business to military planning.

They have also agreed to establish a communication channel for AI-related incidents, aimed at preventing misunderstandings or unexpected developments from turning into a broader confrontation.

The meeting was being closely watched for any developments or agreements in relation to AI - especially in the wake of calls by US companies like Anthropic to slow down devel-

opments, and revelations that Open AI had gained unauthorised access to government websites in countries like Australia and had "meddled" with multiple US government agency sites.

Chinese state media confirmed for the first time on Monday that the trade truce has been extended until 10 January.

The short extension ensures both leaders will meet again at major international gatherings later this year.

Trump will attend the Asia Pa-

cific Economic Cooperation summit in Shenzhen in November while Xi is due to travel to Miami for the G20 summit in December.

It is rare for the leaders of the world's two largest economies to meet so frequently.

But Beijing had hoped for a much longer extension to the truce, making the two month reprieve a modest gain rather than a major breakthrough.

China did secure lower tariffs on \$30bn (£23bn) of goods entering the US with reciprocal re-

ductions expected from Beijing.

Chinese products heading to American stores ranging from toys to small household appliances to Christmas decorations will benefit from the lower tariffs.

The Trump administration also said Beijing would buy at least 10 million metric tons of coal annually in 2027 and 2028.

What is striking is what was left out.

There was no mention of increasing exports of China's rare earth minerals to the US nor was there any indication that restrictions on advanced US semiconductors would be eased.

Ethiopians celebrate Meskel and call for peace amid renewed fighting

Thousands of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians gathered in Addis Ababa Saturday to celebrate Meskel, filling the capital's Meskel Square with singing, prayer and religious processions before the lighting of a towering bonfire, Demera.

The annual festival commemorates the finding of the cross on which Christians believe Jesus was crucified. According to church tradition, Roman Empress Helena discovered the cross in the fourth century after lighting a bonfire and following its smoke.

Meskel, which means "cross" in Amharic, is one of the most important celebrations for Ethiopian Orthodox Christians.

The lighting of the Demera bonfire is at the heart of the festival.

This year's celebration came as renewed fighting between Ethiopian federal troops and fighters loyal to the Tigray People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, raised fears of another major conflict in the country's north.

The latest hostilities have badly undermined the peace agreement signed in Pretoria, South Africa, in November 2022. That agreement ended a two-year war in which hundreds of thousands of people are believed to have died because of fighting, famine and the collapse of health services.

Ethiopian Airlines suspended flights to Tigray this week after Tigrayan fighters took control of the airport in the

regional capital, Mekelle. Residents also reported internet disruptions and the closure of roads linking Tigray with the neighboring Afar region.

Against that backdrop, worshippers at the celebration in Addis Ababa used the occasion to call for peace.

"Peace is essential for everything. Without it, we can neither celebrate our holidays nor engage in meaningful dialogue," said Fikreab Lebeza, an Ethiopian Orthodox deacon.

Sara Dinkayehu, a business woman said she had come to pray for peace to prevail across the country.

"Peace is vital for our country. As people deeply rooted in faith and values, we Ethiopians should offer earnest prayers for peace during sacred celebrations such as Meskel," said Sara Dinkayehu.

Aba Thomas Abeje, an Orthodox priest, compared national unity with the wood of the Demera, which is bound together before being set alight.

"Let us cast aside division and war and stand firmly united as one," he said.

The celebration also attracted tourists. Jino Kim, a South Korean tourist, was mesmerized during the processions.

"I can't believe it, because in South Korea we don't have those kind of big events; every Ethiopian people came out, and they're on the same spot, and they celebrate all together like just all. Just awesome!"



MEETING:

Xi and Trump's talks in Washington yielded no joint statements and few major breakthroughs.

Passports needed for ferry passengers travelling between UK and Ireland

The changes are being brought in to comply with UK Border Force rules

Passengers travelling on ferries between the UK and Ireland are to show their passport with effect from Monday.

Ferry operator Irish Ferries said the new requirement applies to their Dublin to Holyhead and Rosslare to Pembroke routes, in both directions.

Stena Line said all passengers travelling from Dublin, Holyhead, Fishguard or Rosslare ports would also be required to present a valid passport at check-in.

Previously, passengers were able to use other forms of ID, such as driving licences and national identity cards - but the changes are being brought in to comply with UK Border Force rules.

In a statement on its website, Stena Line said the change would meet UK Border Force requirements "in relation to the accuracy and integrity of passenger data before boarding".

Irish Ferries said the requirement would apply to all passengers, including Irish and UK citizens, adding that from Monday, driving licences, national identity cards and other forms of photo-

graphic identification would no longer be accepted on the two routes in question.

Irish Ferries said passengers who were not British or Irish citizens and were visiting for a short stay of up to six months in the UK may need an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), which allows travel to the UK, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man for up to six months.

Three dead, including child, in Channel crossing attempt

A 10-year-old child and two 30-year-old women have died after a small boat that was attempting to cross the English Channel got into difficulty off the northern coast of France, French authorities say.

Authorities said they responded to a distress call from the boat, which was carrying 105 people, after it departed from Blériot Plage beach in Calais on Monday

morning.

Three passengers were treated on board but were later confirmed dead by an emergency medical team flown out by helicopter, the French Maritime Prefecture of the Channel and the North Sea said.

Passengers were disembarked from a rescue boat at the port of Calais later on Monday morning, AFP news agency reported.

Power cuts, rubble: millions come home to find Sudan's capital unlivable

They came home to a war-ruined city determined to rebuild their lives, but a chronic lack of power, water, jobs and medicine has left many residents of Sudan's capital wishing they had stayed away.

About four million people fled Khartoum after war broke out between the army and a paramilitary force in 2023, in fighting that reduced large parts of the city to rubble.

But the estimated 2.7 million who have returned since the army recaptured Khartoum last year are caught between joy at being home and the harsh realities of living there.

Businessman Emad Khaled said he was sending his family back to Egypt, while he remains in Khartoum for his work.

"Bringing my family back was a mistake," the 43-year-old told AFP near the city centre, which is filled with blackened,

bombed-out buildings.

Multiple government officials, ordered back to Khartoum, told AFP they were also leaving their families outside the country.

Fighting between the armed forces and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is still raging elsewhere in Sudan, including in the Darfur, Kordofan and Blue Nile regions.

The army, strongly encouraging Khartoum's residents to return, rebuilt the airport and reopened it for domestic

flights, and patched up infrastructure.

However, electricity and water still go out for days at a time. And while markets across the capital are open again, many people are unemployed and have little money to spend.

'Price goes up every day'

By June, only one percent of Khartoum had been declared safe by the UN, with dozens of children killed and injured by booby-traps and unexploded shells lurking within walls and on street corners.

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

Bakare challenges the constitutional basis of NBBF Yola Congress

Former D'Tigers coach and President of Comets Basketball Club of Lagos, Ayodele Bakare, has raised fresh questions over the legality and constitutional basis of the Nigeria Basketball Federation's (NBBF) Extraordinary Congress held in Yola, Adamawa State, on September 25.

Bakare, who attended the congress as a delegate, made the observations in the second extract of his personal account titled "The Memoirs of a Delegate to the 2026 NBBF Extraordinary Congress."

His comments come after the NBBF Congress approved October 15, 2026 as the date for the elective congress in Abuja, while also constituting seven-member Electoral Committee and three-member Elections Appeals Committees. The federation said 39 of its 44 delegates attended the Yola meeting.

It's noteworthy to mention that 50 is the number of Congress delegates based on the NBBF constitution.

According to Bakare, one of the delegates who spoke during the proceedings questioned whether the Yola gathering had been validly convened in accordance with the NBBF Constitution.

He said the NBBF President, Engineer Ahmadu Musa Kida, responded that the Extraordinary Congress was necessitated by the need to meet the October 15 deadline associated with the federation's electoral transition.

However, Bakare argued that the FIBA communication setting out the timeline had been received months earlier, 16th of March 2026 which, in his view, provided sufficient time to organise a congress in compliance with the federation's constitution.

He further said that Kida proposed that Congress could vote to waive any constitutional anomalies that might affect the validity of the meeting.



Former D'Tigers coach and President of Comets Basketball Club of Lagos, Ayodele Bakare (middle)

Bakare said the delegates subsequently sought clarification on whether Congress was being asked either to suspend the relevant constitutional provisions for the meeting or amend the Constitution in a manner that would remove the objections to the congress.

According to Bakare, the delegates rejected both options, arguing that such a move would conflict with the NBBF

Constitution and the wider electoral directives.

No vote was eventually taken to waive or suspend the constitutional provisions, Bakare stated.

Bakare then turned to what he described as the specific requirements of the NBBF Constitution.

He cited Article 20.2, which provides for an Ordinary Congress to be held annually, with every fourth Ordinary Congress

serving as an Elective Congress.

He questioned why, in his interpretation, the federation had not held the required annual Ordinary Congress during the four-year tenure of the current board.

Bakare also referenced Article 20.5, which provides for an Extraordinary Congress upon a written request from two-thirds of the members, with the meeting to be held within 21 days of such a request.

State FA, Local Council Elections face cancellation as NFF transition takes shape

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has reportedly shelved plans to conduct fresh elections into the 36 State Football Association boards and local football

council structures.

The proposed elections had been scheduled as part of wider reforms aimed at restructuring Nigeria's football administration from the grassroots level upward.



IKPEME EMMANUEL, NFF ACTING SECRETARY

Acting NFF General Secretary, Dr Emmanuel Ikpe, had previously indicated in correspondence that fresh elections could be conducted across the states, with the local council elections expected to precede those of the State Football Associations.

However, a top NFF source told BSN Sports that the proposed exercise is now likely to be abandoned following the anticipated intervention of the Normalisation Committee expected to oversee the federation's transition.

According to the source, the committee is expected to complete its mandate and pave the way for the emergence of a new NFF board by December 2026.

Let everyone come and contest" — Kida opens NBBF election race, October 15 set for elective congress

Nigeria Basketball Federation President Musa Kida has called for an open and orderly electoral process as Nigerian basketball prepares for a potentially significant leadership transition, insisting that everyone qualified and interested in serving the federation should be allowed to contest.

Kida's appeal follows the NBBF Congress' unanimous approval of October 15, 2026, for the federation's Elective Congress in Abuja, where a new board is expected to emerge.

"Everybody who is interested should be free to participate in the election," Kida said, while calling on aspirants and their supporters to conduct themselves responsibly throughout the process.

The October 15 election will be preceded by a series of constituency elections in Abuja. Representatives of technical officials, players and other recognised affiliate bodies are expected to emerge between October 7 and 14, completing the electoral college ahead of the main congress.

The coming election has al-

ready attracted significant interest.

Former D'Tigers international Ejike Ugboaja has declared his intention to contest for the presidency, promising longer domestic leagues, stronger grassroots development and broader stakeholder participation.

Basketball investor and federation presidential aspirant Mark Igoche has also expressed his desire to lead the NBBF, pointing to his years of investment in the domestic game as evidence of his commitment.

Against that backdrop, Kida believes maintaining decorum

will be crucial as different interests compete for positions within the federation.

The outgoing leadership has operated through a turbulent period in Nigerian basketball, including the long-running administrative disputes that previously produced rival factions and threatened the stability of the sport.

With another election approaching, attention will therefore extend beyond who eventually wins.

For Nigerian basketball, the manner in which the process is conducted could be equally important.

Abeokuta 10KM Race: Over 3,000 Runners set for October 3 showdown

More than 3,000 runners have registered for the 2026 Abeokuta 10KM Race, with just five days to the much-anticipated road race scheduled for Saturday, October 3, in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

The impressive number of registered participants has further raised expectations ahead of the fifth edition of the race, organised by Nilayo Sports Management Limited.

The race will commence at Macjob Grammar School, Onikolobo at 7 am, and terminate at the MKO Abiola Sports Arena, Kuto, taking participants through parts of Abeokuta and providing spectators with an opportunity to experience the city's unique character.

One of the distinctive features of this year's race is the

decision to make it a 100 per cent indigenous Nigerian athletes' event, with only Nigerian runners eligible to compete.

Beyond the contest for prize money, the Abeokuta 10KM Race is also expected to contribute to the local economy, particularly by creating opportunities for small-scale businesses and traders along the race route.

Food vendors, transport operators, artisans, hospitality providers and other small businesses are expected to benefit from the increased movement of people that the event will bring to different parts of the city.

For residents and visitors, the event is expected to be more than a road race, as Abeokuta prepares to combine athletics, culture, tourism and local economic activity on October 3.



ABEOKUTA 10KM RACE

Adidas set to return as CAF technical sponsor after 12-year absence

German sportswear giant Adidas is set to return as a technical sponsor of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) after a 12-year absence.

The development marks a renewed partnership between the global sportswear brand and Africa's football governing body, with Adidas expected to provide technical support and equipment for CAF competitions.

Adidas previously had a

technical partnership with CAF before the relationship ended 12 years ago.

The return of the renowned sportswear company is expected to further strengthen CAF's commercial and technical portfolio as the organisation continues to expand its competitions and global partnerships.

Further details on the duration and scope of the new partnership are expected to be announced by CAF and Adidas.



THE RAPE OF ENYIMBA FC: How political vultures and a \$1million heist are murdering Nigeria's greatest football club

2026/27 NPFL SEASON									
MATCHDAY 6									
CLUB	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS	
1 BARAU FC	6	3	3	0	9	3	+6	12	
2 PLATEAU UNITED FC	6	3	2	1	9	6	+3	11	
3 RIVERS UNITED FC	4	3	1	0	10	1	+9	10	
4 RANGERS INT'L FC	5	3	1	1	8	6	+2	10	
5 DOMA UNITED	6	3	1	2	9	8	+1	10	
6 KANO PILLARS FC	5	2	3	0	10	6	+4	9	
7 INSURANCE	6	3	0	3	9	10	-1	9	
8 IKORODU CITY FC	5	2	2	1	8	5	+3	8	
9 ARIA WARRIORS FC	6	2	2	2	7	8	-1	8	
10 KWARA UNITED FC	6	2	1	3	7	6	+1	7	
11 SPORTING LAGOS	5	2	1	2	7	7	0	7	
12 WARRI WOLVES	5	2	1	2	3	4	-1	7	
13 NASARAWA UNITED	6	2	1	3	6	8	-2	7	
14 KATSINA UNITED	5	2	1	2	4	7	-3	7	
15 RANCHERS BEES	5	2	0	3	8	8	0	6	
16 SHOOTING STARS SC	4	2	0	2	5	5	0	6	
17 NIGER TORNADES	6	1	2	3	5	7	-2	5	
18 KUN KHALIFAT FC	6	1	2	3	5	13	-8	5	
19 INTER LAGOS FC	6	1	1	4	3	9	-6	4	
20 ENYIMBA FC	5	0	1	4	3	8	-5	1	

CAF Champions League CAF Confederation Cup

Relegation



SPORTS



CAF fumbles again: Annuls Edo Queens well deserved WAFU B victory

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The confederation of African Football is again caught in another administrative crisis less than a year after the last Nations cup in Morocco when it overturned Senegal's victory over Morocco. Same scenario is playing out again

in the just concluded WAFU B women's tournament of the female African champions league hosted by Burkina Faso.

Edo QUEENS played the WAFU B version finals against Ampem Darkoa ladies FC of Ghana. Arising from a petition filed by the Ghana Football Association within 48 hours of the

WAFU B final. CAF has upheld the Ghana Football Association protest on its merit as the direct resort to penalty kicks after regular time constituted a breach of Articles 13.1 and 72.4 of the CAF women's champions league regulations.

The rule clearly states there would be 15mins half each way

before penalty kicks but match officials and organisers proceeded to penalty kicks which Edo queens won by 4-1.

What is the 54 member federations that make up CAF learning from CAF in terms of organization of championships? It's been one blunder to another while holding national teams and football clubs in Africa responsible for CAF failures?

According to Harrison Jalla, Chairman, Advocacy for Nigeria Football Reform Initiative, "Who authorized match officials to proceed to penalty kicks? Are the match officials not conversant with the rules? CAF must allow football games to be won and lost on the field of play and invoke disciplinary measures against it's staff and committee members and stop subjecting the continent to constant embarrassment." He quariied.



EDO QUEENS CELEBRATE WAFU B VICTORY

Ethiopian Referee Tewodros Mitiku gets Whistle for Guinea-Bissau vs Super Eagles AFCON Qualifier

The Confederation of African Football has appointed experienced Ethiopian referee Tewodros Mitiku to take charge of Tuesday's crucial 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier between Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria at the Estádio 24 de Setembro in Bissau.

Mitiku will lead an all-Ethiopian officiating team for the Group L top-of-the-table encounter, with Fasika Biru Yehualashet serving as first assistant referee and Tigle Gizaw Belachew as second assistant.

Manuhe Woldetsadik has been appointed fourth official. The appointments have also been independently reported ahead of Tuesday's fixture.

Mitiku brings considerable international experience to the assignment. FIFA's official refereeing records list him as an international referee since 2018, while Belachew has been an international assistant referee since 2012 and Woldetsadik a FIFA-listed referee since 2022.

Interestingly, Mitiku is not entirely unfamiliar with Nigerian international football. He served as fourth official when Nigeria faced Benin Republic in a 2026 World Cup qualifier in Abidjan in June 2024, with fellow Ethiopian Bamlak Tessema handling the whistle.

CAF has also appointed Senegal's Yaya Balde as match commissioner, while one of African football's most recognisable

former referees, Papa Bakary Gassama of The Gambia, will serve as referee assessor.

The officials will oversee a contest carrying considerable early significance after both Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria won their opening qualifiers.

Nigeria defeated Madagascar 2-1 in Uyo, while the Wild Dogs beat Tanzania 2-0, leaving Tuesday's opponents separated only by goal difference at the top of Group L.



Runsewe unveils grand return of Nigeria open Golf, rebrands NGF for global standards

The Nigeria Golf Federation (NGF) has fixed November 16 to 20, 2027, for the Nigeria Open Golf Tournament, heralding the comeback of the nation's biggest golf championship after 20 years.

NGF President, Otunba Olusegun Runsewe, made the announcement while unveiling plans to reposition and el-

evate the standard of golf in the country.

Runsewe said the federation is delighted to stage a befitting Nigeria Open, the country's premier golf event, after two decades of inactivity.

The Nigeria Open was one of Africa's most prestigious golf tournaments, held annually from 1969 to 1999, mostly at

the Ikoyi Club in Lagos.

Its last three editions, between 1997 and 1999, were hosted at the IBB International Golf and Country Club in Abuja.

According to Runsewe, the long break was necessary to allow the federation to rebrand and put structures in place that meet global best practices.

He disclosed that the rebranding drive includes a new website, revamped social media presence, insurance cover for golfers and the introduction of the World Handicap System (WHS) index.

The NGF boss explained that the WHS initiative will unify all golf clubs in the country under one recognised handicap system.



NGF PRESIDENT, OTUNBA OLUSEGUN RUNSEWE



Why Botswana withdraws from Three-Nation 2028 AFCON hosting bid

Botswana has pulled out of the joint bid with South Africa and Zimbabwe to host the 2028 Africa Cup of Nations, leaving the two southern African neighbours to continue the hosting process without their former partner.

According to Botswana newspaper Mmegi, the decision followed the government's refusal to provide the financial guarantee required to support the country's participation in the bid.

The government reportedly cited financial constraints and competing national priorities, effectively ending Botswana's involvement in the three-nation hosting project.

Botswana also failed to submit the required bidding documents before CAF's September 14, 2026 deadline, unlike South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The withdrawal came despite the Botswana Football Association's

earlier position that the financial guarantee was not mandatory at the initial stage of the bidding process.

The original proposal included matches in Gaborone and Francistown, with the latter's existing stadium infrastructure expected to be utilised while renovation work continued at the National Stadium in Gaborone.

The proposed arrangement would also have provided Botswana with an opportunity to host matches at Africa's premier football tournament while sharing the financial and logistical demands of staging the competition with South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Botswana's decision is another setback to its ambitions of hosting the AFCON. The country had previously sought to host the 2027 edition but lost out after CAF awarded the tournament to the joint Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda bid.

PAMOJA 2027 Race: Ikpeme urges focus, as Eagles seek to cage Wild Dogs in Bissau

The Acting General Secretary of Nigeria Football Federation, Dr Emmanuel Ikpeme, has called on the Super Eagles to be fully-focused and entertain no distractions as they confront the Wild Dogs of Guinea Bissau in Tuesday's 2027 AFCON qualifying match at the 24 September Stadium in Bissau.

Ikpeme made the charge as the Nigerian contingent landed in Bissau on Sunday evening, for the top-of-the-table clash in Group L, with both teams having won their first-day encounters. The delegation arrived aboard a chartered ValueJet aircraft which touched down at the Aeroporto Internacional Osval-

do Vieira at 7.07pm (8.07pm Nigeria time) on Sunday.

On hand to receive the players and officials were the Consul of the Embassy of Nigeria in Bissau, Mr. Ifeanyi Obuneme Chukwuenyem, officials of the Guinea Bissau Football Federation, and an excited group of Nigerians led by the President of Nigerian Community Football Association, Mr. Agwu Ojukwu.

"We were here for a similar AFCON qualifying match three years ago, and we won by a lone goal. Victory is crucial on Tuesday, and I believe you will give your all for the three points as you did three years ago, and as you did on Friday against Madagascar in Uyo.