

Ahead 2027: Edo APC chair urges members to adopt 'one man, one vote' strategy

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Jarrett Tenebe, has urged members of the party to adopt a "one man, one vote" strategy and mobilise voters peacefully ahead of the 2027 general election.

Tenebe made the call during the party's statewide mobilisation tour of Okpella, Agenebode and Fugar in Etsako East and Etsako Central Local Government Areas of Edo State.

The APC chairman, who accompanied Governor Monday Okpebholo on the tour, urged party members to intensify grassroots mobilisation while

avoiding quarrels, violence and other acts capable of undermining the electoral process.

He said the party's victory in 2027 would depend largely on its ability to mobilise voters across the state and ensure that supporters came out to exercise their franchise.

"We need to maintain the one-man, one-vote concept

introduced by our leader. Our vote is what is needed to return President Tinubu to power and ensure the developmental stride continues in Nigeria," Tenebe said.

He commended President Bola Tinubu and Governor Okpebholo for what he described as their developmental efforts, urging APC members

to support the two administrations for continuity.

"We have all seen the developmental stride of our governor, the son of President Tinubu. Governor Okpebholo is working as well as President Tinubu. We all need to support our party for continued development," he said.

Tenebe also defended the

Federal Government's removal of fuel subsidy, arguing that the policy had increased resources available to state governments for development.

According to him, the additional resources had also contributed to improvements in the security sector.

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>

The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

f t i g NigerianObserver @Nigerian_Observer @NigerianObserver www.nigerianobservernews.com

PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1,369

FRIDAY 9TH OCTOBER, 2026.

#200

Edo Government plans palliative measures to control flood in GRA

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government says it plans to commence a rehabilitation of roads and drainage infrastructure in the Government Reserved Area (GRA) of Benin City as part of measures to tackle flooding and create a new GRA.

Governor Monday Okpebholo disclosed this on Thursday when he received the

Chief Judge of Edo State, Justice Daniel Iyobosa Okungbowa, and other judges who paid him a courtesy visit at the Government House in Benin City.

The judges were at the Government House to invite the governor to activities marking the commencement of the 2026/2027 legal year.

Okpebholo said the existing GRA was not properly planned from inception, adding that some houses might have to be

removed to make way for the planned infrastructure improvements.

"My administration is working to have a new GRA as I believe the old GRA was not properly planned right from inception.

"I called for proposals and three companies gave me an estimate of about N250 billion. Some houses have to give way, But at the moment we are going to focus on doing some

palliative work to control flooding and ease movement in the area, He said.

The governor said the government would commence palliative work on roads in the GRA after the rainy season.

"After the rainy season, we have to do some palliative work on most of the roads in the GRA. The EdoGIS is already working on areas requiring improvements of infrastructure like water and

electricity," he said.

Okpebholo also commended the state judiciary for its cooperation with his administration, particularly in the use of special courts and efforts toward speedy dispensation of justice.

"I want to thank the judiciary for the cooperation my administration is enjoying in the state, most especially in the area of the Special Court and speedy dispensation of

justice," he said.

He also commended the judges for what he described as diligence in the discharge of their duties.

"I also thank all the judges in the state because I have not heard any negative reports about their activities, showing that they are diligent in the discharge of their responsibility as judges in the state," the

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>

FG opens 2026 oil licensing round, offers 40 blocks to investors

AGHEDO IYOBOR

ABUJA

The Federal Government has officially opened the 2026 oil and gas licensing round, offering 40 petroleum blocks across land, shallow water and deepwater terrains to investors.

The exercise, announced by the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), is aimed at attracting fresh investment into Nigeria's upstream oil and gas sector and strengthening the country's production capacity.

The Commission also announced new bidding guide-

lines requiring prospective bidders to disclose the beneficial owners behind their bids, while the evaluation methodology and results of the exercise would be made available to promote transparency.

NUPRC Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan, announced the licensing round during her closing remarks at the fifth anniversary celebration of the Commission in Abuja on Tuesday.

Eyesan said the exercise followed the approval of President Bola Tinubu, who also serves as Minister of Petroleum Re-

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>



COURTESY VISIT:

Deputy Governor of Edo State, Dennis Idahosa (7th left), Chief Judge of Edo State, Hon Justice Daniel Iyobosa Okungbowa (8th left) and Gov Monday Okpebholo (9th left) with judges across the state on a courtesy visit to Edo State Government House on Thursday.

Oba of Benin's 10th Coronation Anniversary: Imasuen unveils month-long celebration —Pg 2

#11.2trn oil security spending under scrutiny —Pg 11

Russian strike on buses kills 33, say officials, as deadly attacks on Ukraine surge —Pg 10

Abuja set for 3rd PremiumTrust Bank Abuja City International Half Marathon —Pg 14

NEWS

Ahead 2027: Edo APC chair...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

"The removal of fuel subsidy has brought about development across all sectors of the Nigerian economy, especially the security sector, as security has improved across the nation," he said.

He explained that the mobilisation tour was designed to bring the party leadership closer to members at the ward and unit levels and prepare them for the 2027 elections.

"I am here to meet with leaders of the party and members across units and wards in the council areas to motivate and prepare them for the forthcoming general election," Tenebe said.

He further maintained that the Okpebholo administration had taken measures to strengthen security in Edo, noting that criminal elements were finding it increasingly difficult to operate in the state.

At Fugar, the administrative headquarters of Etsako Central Local Government Area, Tenebe paid tribute to the late Chief Dan Osi Orbih, a prominent politician from the area, acknowledging his contributions to Edo politics.

He urged the people of Okpella, Agenebode and Fugar to remain committed to the APC and participate actively in the

2027 general election.

Also speaking during the mobilisation tour, Governor Monday Okpebholo said the votes of Edo people were needed to sustain what he described as the developmental strides of the Tinubu-led Federal Government.

Okpebholo said President Tinubu had demonstrated courage by removing the fuel subsidy and introducing measures aimed at blocking leakages associated with the subsidy regime.

He said the development had resulted in more resources being made available to state governments for infrastructure and other development projects.

"In January 2027, we would be facing a major election in Nigeria and this election will shape Nigeria. I urge you all to play your part and ensure massive votes for our party to return our President to enable him continue his developmental stride in the nation," the governor said.

Meanwhile, Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Area and Edo State Chairman of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), Sunny Ekpeson, commended Governor Okpebholo for what he described as his non-interference in local government finances.

Edo Govt plans palliative...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

governor said.

On the welfare of judges, Okpebholo said the state government had obtained approval from the State Executive Council to purchase new vehicles to replace the old ones currently being used by judges.

"We have gotten approval from the State Executive Council on purchasing vehicles to replace the old ones our judges are using. We are looking at about 33 vehicles which you will get soon," he said.

The Chief Judge, Justice Okungbowa, commended the governor for what he described as his developmental strides and the collaboration between the executive and judiciary.

He said the cooperation between the two arms of government had contributed to development and peace in the state.

Okungbowa said the delegation was at the Government House to formally invite the governor to the activities marking the commencement of the 2026/2027 legal year in the state on Thursday, Oct. 9.

"We are here on a courtesy visit to invite you to the commencement of the 2026/2027 legal year as our visitation is to inform you of our programme of activities," he said.

The Chief Judge thanked the governor for his administration's collaboration with other arms of government, which he said had contributed to the peaceful atmosphere in Edo.

"Thank you for the good work you are doing in Edo State and the collaboration with other arms of government which has made the state peaceful. Thank you for your developmental stride across all sectors of the state," Okungbowa said.

FG opens 2026 oil licensing...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

sources.

According to her, the licensing round is designed to boost Nigeria's crude oil production, increase the nation's reserves and deepen both local and foreign participation in the petroleum industry.

The initiative is also expected to provide new opportunities for investors while

supporting the Federal Government's broader efforts to reposition the upstream sector as a major driver of economic growth and national revenue.

The NUPRC boss said the transparency measures embedded in the new bidding guidelines were intended to strengthen confidence in the licensing process and ensure that qualified investors had a fair opportunity to participate.

Oba of Benin's 10th Coronation Anniversary: Imasuen unveils month-long celebration

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The 10th coronation anniversary of the Oba of Benin, His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku'Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, CFR, will be marked with a month-long programme of cultural, educational, sporting and social activities across Benin City, Edo State.

Chairman of the 10th Coronation Anniversary Committee and former Deputy Governor of Edo State, Chief Lucky Imasuen, disclosed this while briefing journalists on the activities lined up to commemo-

rate the landmark anniversary.

According to Imasuen, the celebrations, which commenced on October 4, 2026, with the airing of the coronation compendium on mainstream and social media platforms, will run through November 21, when a grand reception is scheduled to hold at the newly constructed festival hall within the palace premises.

He said the anniversary was designed to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Benin Kingdom, while bringing together traditional institutions, government officials, professionals, young people, artists and other stakeholders.

The official 10th coronation anniversary documentary was scheduled for broadcast on October 5, while a food festival, arts and photo exhibition, trade fair, skills acquisition programme and luncheon will hold on October 9 at the Oba Akenzua Cultural Centre.

The programme will continue on October 10 with a cultural festival and luncheon at the Oba Akenzua Scout Centre.

Also scheduled for October 12 is the Oba Erediauwa Memorial Lecture and luncheon at the Akin Deko Auditorium of the University of Benin.

A major highlight of the celebrations will be a special cour-

tesy visit to the Benin monarch by the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, on October 15, in commemoration of the coronation anniversary.

Other activities include wrestling, a palace football match and luncheon at the palace grounds on October 16, while a chess tournament and Children's Day activities are scheduled for October 17 at the Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub and Oba Akenzua Cultural Centre respectively.

On October 19 to 21, an exhibition of recovered Benin artefacts will take place at the National Museum Grounds, Kings Square, Benin City.



STATEWIDE MOBILISATION:

Edo State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo (middle, above), flanked by other APC leaders, addressing supporters of the party during the APC statewide mobilisation tour across Estako East and Estako Central Local Government Areas of the state yesterday.

Tinubu administration deepens innovation drive, awards ₦100million to young Nigerian inventor

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Federal Government has intensified its push to transform Nigerian ideas and inventions into commercially viable products, with the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu backing a

nationwide innovation programme that has reached more than 3,500 young Nigerians.

The initiative, implemented by the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) in partnership with AfriLabs, culminated in Abuja with the award of a N100 million grand prize to Adaeze Ruth Ak-

pagbula, an agricultural engineer from Abia State.

Akpagbula, co-founder of Farm Speak, won the 2026 InnovateNaija competition for developing the PenKeep Smart Poultry Climate Control System, a technology designed to help farmers manage environmental conditions in poultry, aquaculture, greenhouse and

smart irrigation systems.

The award was presented at the 2026 InnovateNaija Final Pitch Event and Awards Ceremony held at the Banquet Hall of the State House, Abuja, where 15 national finalists showcased solutions developed to address challenges across different sectors of the Nigerian economy.

Representing President Tinubu, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Dr Kingsley Tochukwu Udeh, said the quality of innovations displayed at the event showed that Nigeria had a large pool of talent capable of producing solutions to national challenges.

Udeh said the administration's priority was to ensure that Nigerian innovations progressed beyond research and prototypes to commercial products.

"We are looking at how to connect our researchers and innovators with investors and industries that can commercialise their ideas," he said.

NDLEA arrests 42, seizes 9.5 tonnes of drugs in Edo

● declares suspected drug baron wanted, destroys 10 cannabis farms

OUR REPORTER

The Edo State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) arrested 42 suspected drug traffickers and seized illicit drugs weighing more than 9,520 kilogrammes in September 2026.

The command also declared a suspected drug trafficker, Gospel Mudiaga Odeh, alias "Omega", wanted after he reportedly escaped during an

intelligence-led operation in the state.

The State Commander of the NDLEA, Mitchell Ofoyeju, disclosed this while presenting the command's September 2026 scorecard covering drug law enforcement, prosecution, rehabilitation and drug-abuse prevention.

According to him, the 42 suspects comprised 22 females and 20 males, highlighting what he described as the increasing involvement of women in illicit drug trafficking in the state.

Ofoyeju said Odeh escaped during an operation but abandoned his black Toyota Matrix vehicle. A subsequent search of the vehicle allegedly led to the recovery of 65kg of cannabis, N1.16 million cash and 55 Ethiopian birr.

He said the suspect's 26-year-old salesgirl, Ojugo Mercy, was arrested and found in possession of assorted illicit substances, including 989 grammes of Loud, 13 grammes of Colorado and 83 grammes of methamphetamine.

Wike, Oshiomhole, others eulogise late Dan Orbih

BENIN CITY

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mr Nyesom Wike, has recalled the pivotal role played by late Chief Daniel Orbih in his emergence as Governor of Rivers State in 2015, describing the late politician as an instrument used by God to advance his political ambition.

Wike made the disclosure on Wednesday in Abuja at a night

of tributes organised in honour of Orbih, former National Vice-Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), South South.

Orbih, who hailed from Et-sako in Edo State, died on August 31 at the age of 64.

Recounting the political intrigues surrounding the 2015 Rivers governorship contest, Wike said Orbih stood firmly by him despite intense pressure and attempts to induce him

into withdrawing his support.

"Today I am a Minister of the FCT; yesterday I was a governor. Who did God use for me to become governor? It was Dan," Wike said.

He recalled that between 2013 and 2014, political opponents mounted enormous pressure on Orbih, who was then the PDP National Vice-Chairman, South South, to abandon his support for his governorship bid.

"There was nothing in this world that was not done to induce him. My governor then sent people to Dan, offered him everything in this world, but Dan stood firm and said, 'No, I will not accept, I will not agree,'" he recalled.

According to Wike, Orbih not only offered political backing but also donated two bulletproof Mercedes-Benz buses to support his campaign and security, while mobilising the

PDP structure across the South South.

He said what distinguished Orbih was that his loyalty was not driven by personal interest, noting that during his eight years as governor, the late politician never approached him for contracts or political patronage.

"Dan is not a typical Nigerian politician. Throughout my eight years as governor, he never came for one day—either by phone or coming to my house to say, 'I need this contract.' Never," Wike said.

The FCT minister said Orbih's commitment to friendship and loyalty was deeply rooted in his family values.

"The only way I can identify a politician that is reliable is when that politician has stood in times of crisis. Loyalty, commitment to friendship, and being a brother's keeper run in Dan's family," he said.

Wike further said Orbih's influence as PDP National Vice-Chairman, South South, contributed to the emergence of several political office holders in the region.

He also recalled Orbih's role in promoting political cooperation across party lines in Edo State, describing him as a politician who supported others without necessarily seeking personal benefit.

Wike called for a state burial for the late politician, citing his contributions to the political development of Edo State.

He also pledged to maintain a close relationship with Orbih's family and work with them to preserve his legacy.

Chairman of the Board of the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), Senator Magnus

Abe, also attributed his entry into politics to Orbih.

Abe recalled that he served as Director-General of Orbih's first governorship campaign under the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP).

"I was the Director General of his first campaign in the United Nigeria Congress Party when he ran for governor and I went everywhere in Edo with him," Abe said. He described Orbih as a bridge-builder whose political life had positively influenced many people.

"Dan was indeed a bridge builder par excellence. We are gathered here today not because Dan is dead. We are gathered because of the life that he lived and that life impacted all of us in so many different ways," he said.

Senator Adams Oshiomhole, representing Edo North, said despite their political differences over the years, Orbih's opposition helped him become a better governor of Edo State.

Oshiomhole, who governed Edo between 2008 and 2016, said Orbih's presence as an opposition leader compelled his administration to think carefully about its decisions.

"So my happiness today is that Dan and I, whatever our political differences we might have had, the truth is, Dan made me a better governor," Oshiomhole said.

He recalled that before taking major decisions, he often considered how Orbih and the opposition would interpret them. "That is why I say Dan helped me to be a better governor," he said.

Oshiomhole urged Orbih's family to take solace in the fact that their father worked for unity, progress and development.



AWARDS CEREMONY:

L-R..Director of Programme, Afrilabs, Ms Nanko Madu and the Executive Vice Chairman/Executive Officer (NASENI) Engr. Khali Suleiman; during the 2026 InnovateNaija final pitch events and awards ceremony in Abuja yesterday. Photo:Omoye Aminu

Oredo council, NIMASA equip pupils with school materials

OSEMUDIAMHEN O. FAITH

BENIN CITY

The Oredo Local Government Council, in partnership with the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), has distributed educational materials, school uniforms, school bags and shoes to pupils in public schools across the council area.

The intervention, according to the council, is aimed at creating a more conducive learning environment, improving pupils' welfare and strengthening access to quality basic education.

Leading the exercise, the Chairman of Oredo Local Government Council, Hon. Engr. Gabriel Iduseri, visited several schools in the council area alongside members of his administration.

The delegation included the Vice Chairman, Hon. Ekinadose Akhilome; Secretary to the Council, Hon. Aimuamwonsa Airhiabere; Chief of Staff, Hon. Ebegue Igbo-Osagie; Special Adviser, Hon. Austin Odigie; Secretary, Local Government Education Authority, Mrs. Sandra Iyalekhue; and the newly appointed Supervisor for Education, Hon. Weyimi Omorogiuwa.

Among the schools visited were Payne Primary School, Uwa Modern Primary School, School of Developmental Challenge and the School for the Visually Impaired.

The visit to the School for the Visually Impaired was particularly emotional, as the determination, enthusiasm and resilience displayed by the pupils visibly touched the council chairman and members of his entourage.

The pupils' enthusiasm during the presentation underscored the importance of

providing children with special needs the necessary educational materials and support to participate meaningfully in the learning process.

Speaking on the intervention, Iduseri commended NIMASA for partnering with the council to support pupils and contribute to the development of education in Oredo.

He stressed that collaboration between government agencies and other stakeholders was essential to expanding access to quality education, particularly for children living

with special needs.

According to him, the initiative reflects his administration's commitment to ensuring that every child in Oredo has the opportunity to learn, develop and realise his or her potential, irrespective of physical ability.

Iduseri assured that the council would continue to pursue programmes aimed at improving pupils' welfare, supporting teachers and creating an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning across the local government area.

Imafidon appoints five supervisory Councillors ...tasks them on effective service delivery

BENIN CITY

The Executive Chairman of Uhumwode Local Government Council, Hon. Austin Imafidon, has approved the appointment of five Supervisory Councillors as part of efforts to strengthen grassroots administration, enhance service delivery and consolidate his administration's development agenda.

The newly appointed Supervisory Councillors are Osaretin Eboigbe, Sunday Ogbiede, Ades- uwa Menyagan, Blessing Abang- bee and Jane Idahor.

In a statement issued by the

Chief Press Secretary to the council chairman, Ogijehor Ehis Tornado, Imafidon congratulated the appointees and expressed confidence in their capacity, competence and experience to contribute meaningfully to the development of Uhumwode.

The chairman charged them to bring their expertise and professional experience to bear on the administration of the council, stressing the need for dedication, transparency, accountability and effective service delivery.

He urged the new appointees to justify the confidence

reposed in them by embracing selfless service, teamwork and innovative approaches to governance.

Imafidon further reiterated his administration's commitment to purposeful, responsive and people-oriented governance, noting that the appointments were aimed at strengthening the machinery of the council and ensuring that the dividends of democracy reach the grassroots.

He wished the newly appointed Supervisory Councillors a successful and impactful tenure.

UBEC finalises framework to institutionalise public-private basic education partnerships

ABUJA

The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) is finalising a framework to institutionalise public-private partnerships in basic education and ensure that interventions are better coordinated, sustainable and aligned with national priorities.

Acting Head of the Public-Private Engagement and Partnership (PPEP) Unit of UBEC, Mr Abdulmumuni Abdulsalam, disclosed this on Wednesday in Ikeja, Lagos, at a two-day meeting on the finalisation of the commission's Public-Private Engagement and Partnership Framework.

Abdulsalam, who was represented by an official of the PPEP Unit, Mrs Ebire Agada, said the framework would provide a structured approach to engaging private-sector actors, development partners and other stakeholders in basic education delivery. He said the meeting was designed to ensure that

the framework was practical, effective and responsive to the realities of basic education delivery across Nigeria.

According to him, the draft framework is a strategic tool for strengthening collaboration between government and non-state actors by harnessing their resources, expertise, innovation, technology and institutional capacity to complement government efforts.

"Government alone cannot address all the challenges of providing quality, accessible, equitable and inclusive basic education," he said.

Abdulsalam said sustainable partnerships were required to mobilise additional resources, introduce innovative solutions, strengthen institutional capacity and support interventions in areas with critical gaps.

He explained that the framework would move partnerships beyond isolated interventions to strategic and coordinated efforts aligned with national education priorities.

THE NIGERIAN OBSERVER

That The People May Know

OBA EWUARE II AT 10

A DECADE OF ROYAL EXCELLENCE

Celebrating the

**10th Coronation Anniversary
& Birthday Anniversary**

of

**HIS ROYAL MAJESTY
OMO N'OBA N'EDO UKU AKPOLOKPOLO**

OBA EWUARE II, CFR
Oba of Benin

To mark this historic milestone,
The NIGERIAN OBSERVER presents a
Special Commemorative Edition
celebrating a decade of purposeful reign,
cultural preservation, peace and unity.

**BE PART OF THE
CELEBRATION**



Place your **Congratulatory & Goodwill Message**
in this special edition.

ADVERT RATES

Page Size	Colour	Black & White
Full Page	₦448,645	₦396,213
Half Page	₦317,770	₦254,238
Quarter Page	₦206,561	₦122,119



SUBMISSION DEADLINE

October 18, 2026



BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES

Marcus Atoe - 08081986842
Mrs. Doris Igbinigie - 08051177163
Andy Asemota - 08035872075

LONG MAY HE REIGN

Omoike pledges to support initiatives for safer roads in Etsako West as FRSC honours him

LAMAI CASSIUS

AUCH

The Executive Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Area, Hon. Romeo Alaoye Omoike, has said his administration will continue to support initiatives aimed at ensuring

safer roads and protecting the lives of motorists, pedestrians and other road users across the local government area.

The Chairman stated this when the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Auch Unit Command, presented him with an award in recognition of his humanitarian

services and support for road safety operations in the area.

Hon. Omoike noted that government alone cannot effectively tackle road safety challenges without active collaboration with relevant agencies and stakeholders.

He assured the FRSC of the council's continued cooperation,

saying the partnership would be sustained in the collective interest of the people.

The Chairman further reaffirmed his administration's commitment to removing obstructions and supporting measures that promote safe motoring and orderly movement across Etsako West.

He thanked the FRSC for the recognition, describing the award as a call to deepen the partnership between the local government and the Corps.

Earlier, leaders of the delegation, Chief Route Commander Abdulai Khamis Faruq and Superintendent Route Commander Darling Chigozie Abara, said Hon. Omoike's intervention had strengthened the humanitarian activities of the FRSC and enhanced its capacity to respond to emergencies involving road users in the area.

According to them, the recognition is part of a national pro-

gramme of the FRSC designed to acknowledge individuals and organisations contributing meaningfully to its humanitarian and road safety mandate.

They commended the council boss for his willingness to partner with the agency, particularly in addressing environmental and traffic obstructions capable of endangering motorists and pedestrians.

The delegation also acknowledged the Chairman's support for the relocation of trucks obstructing pedestrian walkways, an intervention that has helped to improve movement and safety along affected routes.



POLICY DIALOGUE :

From left: Head of British Academy Research project, Prof. Chukwumerije Okereke (3rd L); and other participants, during a Policy Dialogue on Energy, Forestry and Critical Minerals Sector in Abuja

Oyo sugar factory reaches test-running stage after over a decade

IBADAN

The Oyo Sugar and Derivatives Industries Limited factory in Iseyin, Oyo State, has reached the commissioning and test-running stage after more than a decade.

The National Sugar Development Council disclosed this in a statement on Thursday, saying the development is "a milestone that brings to fruition over a decade of financial, technical and institutional support by the Council."

According to NSDC, the 300-tonnes-per-day green-

field sugar mill was developed under the Nigeria Sugar Master Plan's Backward Integration Programme.

The council said it funded the procurement of the factory's core sugar mill at about N1.64bn and later provided additional funding for cane development and operational support, bringing its total financial commitment to approximately N2.2bn.

It added that the Oyo State Government contributed an estimated N850m in equity funding towards the completion of outstanding works.

The NSDC Executive Secretary and Chief Executive

Officer, Kamar Bakrin, said the factory's readiness for commissioning was the result of sustained contributions from the council, the state government and the project promoters.

"That this factory now stands ready for commissioning is the result of sustained commitment — by the Council, by the Oyo State Government and by the promoters themselves," Bakrin said.

He added that the council would remain involved as the factory moves towards full-scale commercial production.

"Our work does not end here. The NSDC will remain engaged as OSDL moves into

full-scale commercial production, and we expect this project to serve as proof that Nigeria's sugar sector can be built on locally grown cane," he said.

The council also commended the promoters and farming communities in Iseyin for developing the project from a cooperative farming venture into an operational factory.

The NSDC said the project was one of the few new-build sugar factories to emerge from the Backward Integration Programme of the Nigeria Sugar Master Plan, which seeks to increase domestic sugar production and reduce dependence on imported sugar.

FG urges scrap dealers to suspend strike, promises steel sector

ABUJA

The Federal Government has appealed to scrap metal dealers under the National Association of Scrap and Waste Dealers Employers of Nigeria to suspend their ongoing industrial action and return to the negotiation table over grievances threatening activities across the steel value chain.

The Minister of Steel Development, Prince Shuaibu Audu, made the appeal through the Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Ambassador Nura Abba Rimi, in a statement issued by the Head of Press and Public Relations, Tine-Iulun M.A., on Thursday.

The development followed an industrial action embarked upon by members of NASWDEN over what the association described as practices undermining the operations and economic interests of local scrap dealers.

The association's complaints include alleged undervaluation of scrap metals, manipulation of weighing scales leading to weight reductions, direct purchase of scrap metals by local and other steel-producing companies, and the importation of billets.

The Federal Government said it recognised the concerns raised by the scrap dealers and was considering them in consultation with the National Steel Council.

The statement read, "The Honourable Minister of Steel Development, Prince Shuaibu Abubakar Audu, has, through the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Ambassador Nura Abba Rimi, called on the leadership of the National Association of Scrap and Waste Dealers Employers of Nigeria to suspend its ongoing industrial action in the interest of industrial harmony, mutual understanding and the overall stability and development of Nigeria's steel sector."

"The Minister acknowledges the concerns raised by NASWDEN, which were formally presented to the Ministry through the National Steel Council.

Council. These concerns include alleged undervaluation of scrap metals, weight reductions arising from malpractices involving weighing scales, the involvement of local and other steel-producing companies in direct scrap metals trading, the importation of billets, and other practices perceived by the Association to be limiting the effective participation of local scrap dealers in the steel value chain."

The ministry said the complaints were serious because of the role of scrap dealers in supplying raw materials to steel-producing companies and supporting activities across the domestic steel value chain.

It said it was working with the National Steel Council to develop practical measures that would address the grievances without undermining steel manufacturers or other businesses operating in the sector.

"The Ministry recognises the seriousness and importance of these concerns and is currently giving them due consideration in consultation with the National Steel Council, with a view to developing practical, balanced and sustainable institutional measures to address the issues raised," it stated.

The Minister has consequently directed the Permanent Secretary, in collaboration with the Office of the Executive Secretary of the National Steel Council, to invite NASWDEN's leadership for further discussions and mediation.

The engagement is expected to examine the association's grievances and their implications for scrap dealers, steel manufacturers and other operators.

"The Honourable Minister has directed the Permanent Secretary, in collaboration with the Office of the Executive Secretary of the National Steel Council, to invite the apex leadership of NASWDEN for further discussions and effective mediation on the issues raised by the Association, as well as their implications for steel-producing companies and other operators within the sector," the statement said.

Soludo sets up panel to probe Anambra communal crisis

AWKA

Governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, has convened a high-level stakeholders' peace meeting at the Light House, Awka, to address the protracted crisis between the Umuoba Anam and Aguleri communities in Anambra East Local Government Area.

There have been reports of communal clashes between the two communities, which have tragically resulted in the loss of lives and left several persons injured, as well as the burning of several buildings, including the palace of a traditional ruler.

According to a press statement released on Thursday by Soludo's Chief Press Secretary, Christian Aburime, the peace summit brought together traditional rulers, presidents-general and community leaders from Aguleri, Umueri and Anam.

Aburime said during the meeting that Soludo decried the tragic loss of lives and the widespread destruction of property, emphasising that such lawlessness was entirely unacceptable to the administration.

The statement read, "To ensure compliance, the governor directed security agencies to maintain a robust, round-the-clock presence in the affected

zones, reassuring all parties that the government remains firm, fair, and uncompromising in its pursuit of lasting peace and justice across the state.

"Community leaders, including Igwe Michael Idigo and Fidel Okafor, strongly condemned the hostilities, specifically highlighting the tragic killings of a minor and an unarmed person from Umuoba Anam, alongside the retaliatory destruction of the revered Idigo Palace.

"Both leaders were, however, united in a call for an immediate cessation of violence and the swift delivery of justice.

"Speaking as an observer on behalf of the Umueri community, Retired Justice Charles Okaa appealed for restraint and urged the state government to enforce the 1982 Supreme Court judgment concerning boundary matters between Umueri and Aguleri as a step toward permanent resolution."

According to the statement, following extensive deliberations, the stakeholders reached a multi-point resolution to foster reconciliation and security, including an immediate ceasefire, prosecution of perpetrators, accountability for leadership and rebuilding of the Idigo Palace.

NEWS

Police seek public help to improve policing in Jigawa

DUTSE

The Jigawa State Police Command has interfaced with critical stakeholders to identify gaps in policing and strengthen public trust as part of activities marking the 2026 Customers' Week.

It was gathered that the strategic engagement, which drew participants from across the Dutse metropolis, was convened under the leadership of the Commissioner of Police, CP Tijjani Murtala, through the command's SERVICOM

Office, to deepen community participation and foster a more responsive policing environment.

In his remarks while presiding over the event held on Wednesday at the Dutse Area Command Headquarters, the Commissioner of Police, represented by ACP Malum Garba, said sustainable peace and effective crime prevention require collective efforts.

"Sustainable peace and effective crime prevention require the collective efforts of

law enforcement agencies, community leaders, transport unions, civil society groups and citizens," the CP said.

He urged the stakeholders to remain dependable partners of the police by sharing credible information and supporting initiatives designed to safeguard lives and property.

The Commissioner's representative reiterated the command's commitment to professionalism, transparency, accountability and respect for the rights and dignity of members of the public.

"The importance of continuous dialogue with stakeholders cannot be overemphasised,

because constructive feedback from the community remains indispensable to identifying gaps, addressing legitimate concerns and improving overall effectiveness of policing operations," he added.

Accordingly, ACP Garba reaffirmed the command's commitment to sustaining regular engagement with relevant stakeholders as a fundamental component of its community policing strategy.

He also acknowledged that, "Effective policing is strengthened when citizens are actively involved in crime prevention, intelligence sharing and promotion of peaceful coexistence."

Akwa Ibom targets 1,048 housing units, urban development

UYO

The Akwa Ibom State Government has acquired and earmarked about 150 hectares of land across six locations for housing development, with a total of 1,048 housing units currently at various stages of completion.

The Commissioner for Housing, Dr. Henry Archibong, who disclosed this, explained that the Ministry of Housing under the administration of Governor Umo Eno was implementing housing projects that go beyond roofing, to creating affordable, sustainable, eco-friendly and economically viable communities in line with the ARISE Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11 on sustainable urban development.

He said, "The vision of the ministry is to become a model institution for effective service delivery by promoting operational efficiency and optimal use of resources to provide decent, quality and affordable housing."

According to him, the statutory responsibilities of the ministry include formulation and implementation of policies for design, construction and maintenance of public buildings, development of residential housing policies, vetting and approval of building drawings and valuation of buildings for government purposes, as well as management of state-owned properties in Uyo, Lagos, Abuja and other parts of the country.

The commissioner listed key ongoing projects to include Aviation Village Phase 1, Doctors' Residence at Ibom Medical City, Executive and Legislative Quarters, Judiciary Quarters and the ARISE City Social and Affordable Housing Estate.

Giving a breakdown, Archibong said the Aviation village, sited on 15.072 square metres of fenced land, comprises 100 housing units – 50 two-bedroom and 50 three-bedroom apartments, and is 98% com-

pleted.

He said five units had been allocated to the Ministry of Aviation, while facilities in the estate include a model primary school, 70,000-litre water reticulation system, 7.13km road network, electrification, police station and solar-powered CCTV, adding that Governor Eno had directed that a secondary school be included in the second phase.

He said the Doctors' Residence at Medical City, covering 11.8 hectares, comprises 50 three-bedroom bungalows and 50 terrace four-bedroom duplexes, with a model school and recreational facilities, and is 70% completed.

The Judiciary Quarters located along Idongesit Nkanga Avenue, Ring Road 3, he said, occupies 6.3 hectares and comprises 50 four-bedroom duplexes with two boys' quarters each, recreational centre and conference hall, and is 70 per cent completed.

Archibong listed other interventions by the administration to include 500 ARISE Compassionate Homes, of which 438 have been completed and delivered, 236 units of flats at Grace Estate with 150 allocated to civil servants, 35 units of duplexes at Ewet Luxury Garden and 31 residences for Local Government Chairmen under construction.

The commissioner said the housing projects were impacting the state economy, with between 5,000 and 6,000 persons benefiting directly and indirectly through employment and ancillary services, with daily earnings of between N7,000 and N12,000 for artisans and labourers.

"Housing is both a social intervention and an economic development tool. It is the single most important facilitator of economic growth," he said.

Archibong also disclosed that Governor Eno had constituted a committee to give the Ewet Housing Estate a facelift and enhance its security architecture, adding that the committee had completed assessment and submitted its report.



POLICY DIALOGUE :

From left: Head of British Academy Research project, Prof. Chukwumerije Okereke; Operation and Facility Manager, CFA, PICNG and EV, Obinna Ugochukwu and Chief Executive Officer, CEESOLAR Energy Limited, Chibueze Ekeh, during a Policy Dialogue on Energy, Forestry and Critical Minerals Sector in Abuja

Embrace reading to promote peace, Kwara urges youths

ILORIN

The Kwara State Government has urged youths and civil servants to embrace reading, saying a well-informed population would be better equipped to make sound decisions and contribute to a peaceful society.

The Acting Head of Service, Kwara State, Olufunke Shittu, made the call on Wednesday at the 2026 Readers' Day Celebration in Ilorin, where participants examined the role of reading in promoting peace and addressing insecurity.

The event was organised around the theme "Open a Book, Close the Door Against Insecurity: Reading for Peace and a Safe

er Nigeria."

Shittu said the importance of reading extended beyond academic success, stressing that regular engagement with books and other credible materials could strengthen critical thinking and improve people's ability to communicate and make informed choices.

"Reading should not be regarded merely as an academic activity or something reserved for examinations, but should become an integral part of everyday life and continuous personal and professional development," she said.

Shittu particularly charged civil servants to make continuous learning part of their professional lives, noting that changes

in government policies, technology, procedures and methods of service delivery required workers to constantly update their knowledge.

She encouraged public servants to use books, journals, policy documents and other credible resources, whether in physical libraries or through electronic platforms, while verifying the reliability of information before relying on it.

The acting Head of Service also urged workers to continually improve their skills in line with changing demands and global best practices.

She commended Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq for what she described as his support for human capital development

and capacity building among civil servants in the state.

According to her, "such support has helped improve the competence and morale of the workforce, while creating opportunities for continuous professional development."

Earlier, the Director of the Kwara State Library, Thomas Phillips, said the celebration was intended to draw attention to the value of books and the role libraries could play in developing an enlightened population.

Phillips linked reading with peaceful coexistence, arguing that exposure to knowledge could encourage tolerance, understanding and critical thinking.

Bayelsa promises partnership as 2026 content forum holds

YENAGOA

The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board has reaffirmed the collaboration with the Bayelsa State Government ahead of the 15th edition of the Practical Nigerian Content Forum, scheduled to hold from November 30 in Yenagoa.

The commitment was made when a delegation of the NCDMB and DMG Events met with the Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State, Dr Peter Pereotubo Akpe, at the Government House, Yenagoa.

Leading the delegation, the General Manager, Corporate Communications Division of NCDMB, Dr Obinna Ezeobi, conveyed the appreciation of the Executive Secretary of the board, Felix Omatsola Ogbe, to the state government for its continued support for the forum.

He said, "We appreciate the Bayelsa State Government for its continued partnership and support for the PNC Forum".

According to him, the Youth PNC was designed to expose young people in the Niger Delta to emerging opportunities in the oil and gas

industry and the competencies required to build successful careers in other sectors of the economy.

Ezeobi added, "We have introduced new initiatives into this year's programme to ensure that the PNC continues to deliver greater value to participants and address emerging issues in the Nigerian content space."

The Senior Manager, Zonal Coordination, NCDMB, Mr Adebayo Joseph, spoke on plans for the Youth PNC, while the leader of the DMG Events delegation, Ms Olamide Oloko, outlined the ma-

for activities planned for the conference.

Oloko said the new initiatives would include a Local Content Roundtable and a two-day programme for Local Community Contractors aimed at helping them scale up their operations.

She added, "The 2026 edition will also feature a breakout session to collate stakeholders' views on the future direction of Nigerian Content over the next decade."

Responding, Akpe assured the NCDMB and DMG Events of the state government's continued support for the PNC Forum.

NEWS

Mother narrates how N6m ransom was raised for abducted corps member

OWERRI

A mother of one of the 20 prospective National Youth Service Corps members abducted in Imo State, Alirat Wahab, has narrated how her family borrowed money and received contributions from relatives and other individuals to raise N6m allegedly demanded by the kidnappers for her son's release.

Wahab said the kidnappers initially demanded N50m for each of the abducted prospective corps members before reducing the amount after the parents pleaded with them.

She disclosed this in separate interviews with newsmen on Thursday, following the release of the 20 victims.

According to her, the kidnappers initially demanded N50m for each of the victims but later reduced the ransom after the parents pleaded with them.

She said, "They first said N50m per child. We pleaded because each child was given the phone for about two minutes, and then they would seize the phone back. They said N50m, are we fighting a war with them? In their main war, it's for each victim."

Wahab said the abductors later agreed to take N5m but subsequently increased the demand to N15m.

She said the family continued negotiating with the kidnappers until they eventually settled on N6m.

"As we kept pleading, they initially agreed to N5m, but later refused. They started... we became scared. Later on,

around three days ago, they said they would collect N15m from us. We started pleading again, saying we only had N5.5m at the time, but they insisted on N6m," she said.

The mother said the families of the victims were subsequently summoned to Ibadan, Oyo State, where they were instructed to send representatives to Imo State with the money.

She said the parents were informed that about 20 children were being held and that three representatives were to be sent for each child.

"When they called us that all the parents of the children in the bush... they said about 20 children were in the bush. They told us to meet them in Ibadan, and three representatives for each child should go," she said.

According to her, her husband and the victim's brother were among those who travelled to Imo State.

According to her, her husband and the victim's brother were among those who travelled to Imo State.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING:**

From left: Deputy Director, Legal/Board Secretary, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Mrs Ngozi Anotochi; Managing Director, NAN, Malam Ali M Ali and Chief Executive Officer, Green Luner Nigeria Ltd (GLNL), Mr Olaniyi Odiria, during the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between NAN and GLNL on digitalisation as platform to Promote classified adverts, in Abuja on Wednesday

World Bank selects Ebonyi to kick off Q2 malnutrition control projects in Nigeria

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

ABAKALIKI

The World Bank has selected Ebonyi State as one of the states in the South East Region to kick off its project plans to reduce challenge of malnutrition affecting pregnant women and children in Nigeria.

Speaking with Newsmen shortly after a meeting with officials from the World Bank and other stakeholders in the health and agriculture sectors

at the Old Government House in Abakaliki, the Commissioner for health Dr. Moses Ekuma said, discourse centred on practical approaches at reducing malnutrition among pregnant women and children in Nigeria.

Besides the World Bank team, delegates were also drawn from the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, the Federal Ministries of Health, Budget and that of Agriculture.

Dr. Ekuma explain that

even before the kick-off the project, the state Governor. Rt. Hon Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru has already shown commitments in the areas of procuring additional malnutrition supplements worth over N100m, in addition to gotten support from the Unicef and other donor agencies which also had supported the state with a hundred carton of malnutrition supplements.

In the area of agriculture, he said "the governor has also

invested so much in reviving the Ebonyi state Hatchery Farm that had remained moribond and abandoned by past administrations.

He said that eggs consumption was another major source of protein for the healthy of people especially pregnant women in the state, adding that the live stock farm at Ezzamgbo in Ohaukwu local government Council had received similar attention.

The Commissioner also commended the governor

FG to raise Niger power plant output to 700MW

ABUJA

The Federal Government has begun a regulatory review of the \$1.3bn Zungeru Hydropower Project in Niger State as the 700-megawatt plant currently supplies about half of its installed capacity to the national grid.

The Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission said it had stepped up oversight of the project to identify and resolve legal and

operational issues limiting the performance of the plant, which is being operated under a Public-Private Partnership arrangement.

The commission disclosed this after convening a stakeholders' meeting in Abuja involving the Federal Ministry of Power, the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation, the Bureau of Public Enterprises and Penstock Limited, the concessionaire operating the project.

The meeting was part of efforts to ensure that the plant delivers more electricity to the national grid at a time the

federal government is seeking to increase power supply and address persistent electricity shortages across the country.

The statement signed by the Acting Head, Media and Publicity, Ifeanyi Nwoko read, "The Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission has stepped up its regulatory oversight on the \$1.3bn, 700-megawatt Zungeru Hydropower Project in a bid to optimise the performance of the plant, which is operated under a Public-Private Partnership arrangement and currently generat-

ing about 350 megawatts to the National Grid."

Speaking at the meeting, the Director-General of the ICRC, Jobson Oseodion Ewalefoh, said the government could not afford to allow strategic PPP power assets to operate below their potential.

"President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's promise to Nigerians that he will solve the power problem is not words for the sake of it. It is a statement he meant, and he has charged all of us to support him by playing our roles to deliver on this promise," he said.

Insecurity: Adamawa begins fencing of schools, to hire 3,000 teachers

ASABA

To improve security in schools, the Adamawa State Government has commenced the fencing of schools, particularly those in rural areas, to prevent the kidnapping of students and teachers.

The Executive Chairman of the Adamawa State Universal Basic Education Commission, Dr Murtala Umar, disclosed this to journalists on Thursday in Yola.

He said the administration of Governor Ahmadu Fintiri was concerned about the security of citizens and students in the state.

"Fencing of all government secondary schools is ongoing now. Watertight security is going to be provided, and teachers are going to be trained on security tips to enable them to detect when a problem is coming and take proactive measures," he said.

Umar disclosed that the

state government would soon commence the recruitment of another 3,000 teachers to fill staff gaps in the education sector.

"The next recruitment is strictly going to be community-based. This is because when teachers are recruited and posted, they transfer to towns, so the schools in rural areas are left with little staff.

"We introduced the community-based recruitment strategy to ensure that only those based in the areas where the schools are located will be recruited."

Umar, who commended the governor, pointed out that education had occupied a prime place in the present administration's development agenda.

"We have accessed and utilised Universal Basic Education Commission funding, which has resulted in the construction of over 25,000 classrooms in various schools across the state under the leadership of Governor Ahmadu Fintiri.

Nigeria, Bangladesh deepen military training cooperation

ABUJA

A total of 154 Nigerian military officers have so far participated in strategic courses at the Bangladesh National Defence College, as Nigeria and Bangladesh move to strengthen defence and military training cooperation.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Nigeria, Miah Md Mainul Kabir, disclosed this on Thursday according to a statement posted on the Nigerian Army's X handle by the the Acting Director of Army Public Relations, Colonel Appolonia Anele during a courtesy visit to the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Waidi Shaibu, at Army Headquarters in Abuja.

Kabir called for expanded institutional exchanges between the two countries through foreign service academies and military training programmes, saying such cooperation would help build strategic leadership capacity.

In response, Shaibu said the Nigerian Army was ready to share operational expertise with Bangladesh in areas including counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, drone warfare technology and the humanitarian management of internally displaced persons.

"The initiative will enhance collaboration and institutionalize training exchanges, technical capabilities and diplomatic cooperation between both armed forces," he said.

See more Punch stories on Google.

The Army Chief directed relevant departments at Army Headquarters to work with Bangladeshi defence authorities on joint training programmes and strategic frameworks aimed at strengthening the capabilities of both armed forces.

Shaibu also approved the establishment of a National Defence College Bangladesh Alumni Association in Nigeria.

NEWS

#11.2trillion oil security spending under scrutiny

KEBONKWU RUTH
ABUJA

The reported N11.2 trillion financial commitment associated with the protection of Nigeria's oil and gas assets has come under intense scrutiny, with energy experts demanding full disclosure of how the money was applied and whether Nigerians received commensurate value for the huge expenditure.

The experts, who spoke against the backdrop of Nigeria's continuing struggle with crude oil theft, pipeline vandalism and attacks on critical petroleum infrastructure, said the Federal Government and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) must provide Nigerians with a detailed account of the funds reportedly committed to securing the nation's oil and gas assets.

Petroleum economist and energy expert, Prof. Wumi Il-

experts demand, accountability

edare, said the fundamental question was not merely how much government had committed to energy security, but what measurable value the expenditure had delivered.

Speaking on Arise TV, Il-dare said: "Energy security — what do we mean by energy security? You are talking in terms of the value derived from that N11.2 trillion. The gravity must be questioned."

He explained that, from the perspective of petroleum economics, government could either deploy resources towards increasing crude oil production or spend to sustain production from existing assets.

"So the basic question then is, what did you get from that N11.2 trillion?" he asked.

Another commentator, Ameh, questioned the scale and effectiveness of the country's pipeline surveillance ar-

rangement, describing the reported expenditure as excessive and raising concerns about the vulnerability of such a system to abuse.

He also questioned the value derived from the amount reportedly committed to pipeline surveillance, particularly across the Niger Delta.

"What is the value of all the network of pipelines in the Niger Delta that NNPC will claim to use N11.2 trillion on pipeline surveillance?" he queried.

However, another energy commentator, Emeka, cautioned against interpreting the N11.2 trillion figure as fresh cash expenditure solely on pipeline security in 2025.

According to him, the company's 2025 audited accounts reportedly classified the amount as receivables from the Federation, representing advances and costs incurred on behalf of the government, including expenditure associated with the protection of oil and gas assets.

"It should therefore not simply be presented as N11.2 trillion in fresh cash spent solely on pipeline security in 2025," he said.

Despite the clarification, Emeka insisted that Nigerians were entitled to a comprehen-

sive breakdown of the figure and its components.

"How much actually went into surveillance? How much went to security operations? How much went to community-based surveillance and other interventions? What contracts were awarded, to whom, and what measurable results were achieved?" he asked.

He acknowledged that securing Nigeria's oil and gas infrastructure remained critical to the country's economic survival, stressing that pipeline vandalism, crude oil theft and attacks on critical infrastructure had for years undermined crude production, investment and government revenue.

He noted that there were indications that improved security around oil infrastructure had contributed to increased crude oil production.

According to him, NNPC reported that average crude oil production had risen significantly from the low levels recorded in 2022, reaching about 1.71 million barrels per day in 2025.

Emeka, however, said the improvement in production did not remove the need for greater scrutiny of the resources deployed to achieve it.

He argued that the real issue was whether the country was

receiving commensurate value for every naira committed to oil and gas security.

He called for a new security model capable of simultaneously protecting petroleum infrastructure, safeguarding communities in the Niger Delta and giving host communities a genuine stake in the protection of oil assets.

Such a model, he said, must be transparent, accountable, independently auditable and economically efficient.

"At a time when Nigerians are facing significant cost-of-living pressures, every trillion naira committed by the government must be subjected to meticulous review. Security is necessary, but security spend-

ing should not become a blank cheque," he said.

The growing debate over the reported N11.2 trillion figure therefore places renewed focus on the financial relationship between the Federal Government and NNPC, particularly the need for clear disclosure of receivables, advances, contracts and actual expenditure associated with the protection of Nigeria's strategic petroleum assets.

For a country whose economy remains heavily dependent on oil revenues, experts said, securing the nation's oil infrastructure is indispensable — but the cost, contracts and results must be open to public scrutiny.

Satellite technology integration needed to tackle insecurity — Experts

RICHARD EWEKA

Experts in space technology and national security have called for the integration of satellite technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies to strengthen Nigeria's capacity to tackle its growing security challenges.

The experts made the call on Wednesday at the 10th annual lecture in honour of retired Brig-Gen. Michael Agu, organised by the Nigerian Institution of Space Engineers (NISEng) in Abuja.

The lecture, titled "Reconnaissance Satellites and National Security: Applying Satellite Resources to Counter Multi-Dimensional Insurgency in Nigeria," examined the strategic use of space-based resources for intelligence gathering, threat detection and national security planning.

Speaking at the event, Dean, School of Computing, Miva Open University, Dr Emeka Ogbuju, said satellite-derived data could be transformed through computing, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Artificial Intelligence and computer vision into actionable intelligence for security decision-making.

Ogbuju explained that satellite imagery provided valuable geographical and environmental information which, when integrated with human, signal, open-source and measurement intelligence, could give security agencies a more comprehensive picture of emerging threats.

He identified image classification, object detection and change detection as some of the key analytical processes capable of extracting useful security information from satellite imagery.

According to him, the integration of multiple intelligence sources would enable security agencies to develop a common intelligence picture, thereby strengthening early warning systems, threat assessment and operational planning.

He, however, identified institutional data silos as a major obstacle to effective intelligence integration, noting that critical informa-

tion was often held separately by different government agencies.

Ogbuju therefore advocated the development of secure and interoperable systems capable of connecting relevant datasets while ensuring compliance with privacy requirements, access controls, cybersecurity standards and applicable laws.

He also cautioned against excessive reliance on Artificial Intelligence in security decision-making, stressing that AI should complement, rather than replace, human intelligence.

"Artificial Intelligence should now be viewed as an analytical assistant, not an autonomous decision maker," he said.

The don explained that AI could process huge volumes of data, identify patterns, detect anomalies and classify satellite imagery, while human analysts would remain responsible for interpretation, professional judgment and final decisions.

Ogbuju further called for increased investment in computing infrastructure, secure data systems, human capital development and effective governance mechanisms to maximise the benefits of Nigeria's satellite resources.

Also speaking, Chief of the Defence Space Administration (DSA), Maj-Gen. Philip Ilodibia, said the agency recognised collaboration and strategic partnerships as critical to achieving Nigeria's objectives in the space sector.

Ilodibia noted that Nigeria operated within a resource-constrained environment, making collaboration among relevant institutions and stakeholders imperative.

He said the DSA was mandated to provide space-based solutions and products in support of the Armed Forces of Nigeria and other security agencies.

In his contribution, pioneer Director-General of the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA), Sen. Boroffice Ajayi, called for stronger development of indigenous Artificial Intelligence systems by African countries.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **OKUNDIA OSAOSEMWE OSEI** and now wish to be known and addressed as **OKUNDIA OSAOSEMWE AUSTIN**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION/REARRANGEMENT OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH
The general public is hereby notified that that my correct name arranged name is **BEN PEACE EMEM** and not **SUNDAY EMEM** and my correct date of birth is 27th September, 1985. And not 09th February 1988. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
The general public is hereby notified that that my correct name is **EKIOMADO NILL ERIAMIATOR** and **ERIAMIA TOR BRIDGET EKI**. Hence now wish to be known as **ERIAMIA TOR BRIDGET EKI**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general should please take note.

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

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **Miss. VIVIAN ORIVIRI** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. VIVIAN ORIVIRI IYAW**. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **JOSEPH THOMAS**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **TERVER TERKUMA THOMAS**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **Miss VIVIAN ORIVIRI**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. VIVIAN ORIVIRI IYAW**. All former documents Remain valid. concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly Known as **EDOSA RICHIES ENDURANCES** now wish to be known and addressed as **EDOSA RICHIES IYENGUNMWENA**. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **PATRICIA NELSON-ERUKAYENURE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **PATRICIA ERUKAYENURE** all former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **HAPPY ESOHE UHUNAMURE** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs HAPPY ESOHE ENOSEGBE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
This is to notify the general public that **PRECIOUS OGHOMWEN** and **PRECIOUS OGHOMEN** is one and same person hence now wish to be known and addressed as **PRECIOUS OGHOMMEN** all former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

RECONCILIATION OF NAMES
The general public is hereby notified that **MACAULEY EKEFUMWEN AIHIELU** and **MACAULEY EKEFUMWEN OMO-AIHIELU** are one and the same person henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as **MACAULEY EKEFUMWEN AIHIELU** all former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I Formerly known as **Miss. IYAMU TREASURE IWINOSA** now wish to be known and addressed as **Miss. EDEKO TREASURE IWINOSA** all former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **MUHAMMED JIMOH AHMED**. Now wish to be known and Addressed as **MOMODU AMEDU**. All former document remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

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

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly Known as **EDOSA RICHIES ENDURANCES** now wish to be known and addressed as **EDOSA RICHIES IYENGUNMWENA**. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME/ CORRECTION OF DATE BIRTH
The general public is hereby notified that **AGHATISE BETTY** and **AGHATISE BETTY LALA** is one and the same person. Hence forth. Wish to be known and addressed as **AGHATISE BETTY LALA**. And also my correct date of birth is 6th day of April 1997 and not 6th day of April 1996. As was wrongly captured on my bank verification number BVN. All documents Remain valid. concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **Miss EWERE FLORENCE NEKPEN** now wish to be known as **Mrs. OGHADOMWENGBE FLORENCE** and my correct date of birth is 5th day of October 1973. and not 25th day of October 1968 All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
The general public is here by notified that **UDOKHUKWU AMARACHI MERCY** and **OKECHUKWU GIFT ONYINYECHUKWU** are one and same person henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as **OKECHUKWU GIFT ONYINYECHUKWU**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME/ REARRANGEMENT OF NAME
The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **CHIDI EBUBE PRINCE** and not **JOSEPH PRINCE EBUBE**. now wish to be known and addressed as **CHIDI EBUBE PRINCE**. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE
MISSING LANDED DOCUMENT
The general public is hereby notified that I, **Mrs. DORIS A.O.OMORODION** is the rightful owner in one (1) landed property documents lying and situate at ward 17H, Behind the European Reservation, Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria measuring 2020.002 Square metres, together with the property thereon. That the said property was gifted to me with deep of gift by my mother dated on 1st day of November, 2021. That the said documents was in my fathers possession and it was discovered missing sometime in the year 2015 after the demise of my father. That all effort made to trace the said missing documents proves abortive hence this publication for record purposes concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

SIGNED:
Mrs OSAIGBOVO ANTHONY OJO

NEWS

Kenyan health workers demand protection after first Ebola death

The Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union has called on the government to protect health workers after the country reported its first case of Ebola.

"Our health workers must not be the weakest link in our response. They must be of first line of protection," the union's secretary-general, Dr. Divji Atellah, said in statement on Tuesday.

On Tuesday, Health Minister Aden Duale announced the death of a Kenyan national who had contracted the virus while living in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The patient, a 40-year-old

businessman, fell ill around a month ago and had been treated in the DRC, Duale told reporters. He travelled overland to the Ugandan capital, Kampala, and then flew to Nairobi on October 3, where he received treatment.

He eventually died on Monday evening.

Dr. Divji Atellah, demanded that the Kenyan government act with "urgency, transparency and responsibility."

He said healthcare professionals who had come in contact with the infected patient must "receive immediate monitoring, psychological support and appropriate follow-up."

The union also called for "rigorous" contact tracing and adequate preparedness of facilities.

Kenyan authorities have identified 28 contacts of the deceased, including family members and healthcare workers, but none have test-

ed positive for the virus so far.

Authorities are pursuing a further 23 passengers and four crew members who were on the same flight and said that potential quarantine for those at risk had been prepared.

Kenya had never previously reported an Ebola case. Neighbouring Uganda recorded 20 — almost all people who had travelled from the DRC — and two deaths, before being declared Ebola-free in August. As of October 2, the

World Health Organization had recorded 4,082 deaths out of 8,463 cases since the emergence in the DRC of the Bundibugyo strain of the Ebola virus, for which there is still neither a vaccine nor a specific treatment.



Laboratory technician Irene Ooko attends to a patient seeking a COVID-19 test in Nairobi, Kenya

Senegal postpones start of school year following destructive flooding

Senegal has postponed the start of the school year across the country after the recent heavy rain and destructive flooding.

Torrential downpours from Friday through to Monday impacted several regions and paralysed parts of the capital, Dakar.

At least five people have been reported dead in the flooding which comes weeks before the country is due to host the 2026 Summer Youth Olympics.

Operations are underway to clear flooded roads and restore traffic as the authorities work to protect water and power supplies, and provide immediate aid.

The education ministry said the decision to postpone the academic year was "driven

primarily by the need to ensure the safety and protection" of children.

It added that this would also allow for, among other things, the "cleaning, sanitation, disinfection, and restoration" of educational facilities.

In what is an unprecedented postponement in recent years, primary and secondary schools will start on 12 October rather than today as scheduled.

Forecasts point to a high risk of more rain over the coming days. Senegal's rainy season usually starts in June before trailing off in October.

The country's vulnerability to flooding was evident in 2024, when the Senegal River burst its banks in 2024 affecting more than 56,000 people in the east of the country.

Four killed in helicopter crash near Montreal

Four people have died after a helicopter crashed in a small town 50km (31 miles) from Montreal, Quebec's provincial police have told the BBC.

Emergency services were called to Sainte-Brigide-d'Iberville shortly after 14:30 local time (18:30 GMT) on Saturday afternoon, where they found the aircraft on fire and declared its occupants dead at the scene.

The victims have not yet been identified but the aircraft appeared to be a private helicopter, Sgt Audrey-Anne Bilodeau said.

An investigation into the crash is being led by the Major Crime Unit of the Sûreté du Québec, work-

ing alongside crime scene technicians as well as investigators from the Transportation Safety Board of Canada.

The crash site is located near the Rang des Écoisais road off Highway 10, according to Bilodeau.

Police were notified of a helicopter in distress that may have crashed and caught fire in an emergency call.

An hour after the call, the fire at the site had been brought under control, though officials were still working at the crash site just before 22:00 local time.

The victims have not yet been identified and Bilodeau said this process may "take a few days."

Sri Lanka's ex-first lady arrested over alleged misuse of children's hospital donations

Sri Lanka's former first lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa has been arrested over allegations that a charity she is linked to misused donations raised for a children's hospital.

Anti-corruption authorities arrested the 73-year-old wife of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa at their Colombo home on Wednesday.

They are questioning her over the 10 million rupees (\$30,300; £22,800) of donations collected by the Siriliya Saviya charity, meant to be spent on a specialised scanner for Colombo's Lady Ridgeway

Children's Hospital.

But officials say such a scanner had already been donated by the Chinese government.

Shiranthi Rajapaksa has denied any wrongdoing and says the money has not been appropriated.

She returned to Sri Lanka on Monday from Singapore, where she was receiving medical treatment. She had filed a court petition to try to prevent her arrest, but the hearing was set for 12 October.

Ex-President Mahinda Rajapaksa's spokesperson, Manoj Gamage, has said the money is

safe in Siriliya's accounts and that no fraud has occurred.

Mahinda Rajapaksa served as president of Sri Lanka from 2005 to 2015 and for years, his family held a tight grip over the country's politics. He was hailed by many as a hero for bringing an end to nearly three decades of civil war when Tamil Tiger rebels were crushed in 2009, during his first term as president.

But in 2022, protests broke out across the country as inflation surged and Sri Lanka ran out of fuel, food and medicine.

Mahinda's brother Gotabaya

Rajapaksa, who was serving as leader at that time, was eventually toppled.

Sri Lanka's current government, under President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, has since revived long-stalled corruption investigations involving various members of the Rajapaksa family.

Mahinda and Shiranthi's eldest son, Namal Rajapaksa, was arrested earlier this year over allegations linked to an aircraft procurement deal made during his father's presidency. He is currently held in remand.

Zelensky condemns 'vile' large-scale Russian attacks that killed 15

At least 15 people have died in overnight strikes across central and eastern Ukraine, in what Volodymyr Zelensky has described as one of Russia's "most vile" attacks.

Ukraine's president said a residential building in Pryluky in the Chernihiv region was destroyed as a "birthday 'gift' to Putin", who turns 74 on Wednesday. Strikes also hit Kyiv, Dnipro, Kremenchuk, Zaporizhzhia and Oleksandriya.

Zelensky said Ukraine had struck targets in attacks on Russia's Perm, Samara and Astrakhan regions in the past 24

hours, adding there was "also a response in the Black Sea", without providing further details.

Moscow is yet to comment on the latest strikes.

"The Russians wanted to strike painfully and demonstratively," Zelensky said, adding that 70 missiles were fired in total.

In the social media post on Wednesday morning, Zelensky said five people had been killed and 26, including five children, injured in a strike on a five-storey apartment building in Pryluky.

He added that people could still be trapped in the rubble.

Chernihiv Oblast police later reported that the death toll had risen to nine after the bodies of three children were recovered, with emergency workers continuing a search operation.

Two people were also killed and eight injured after Russian missile strikes damaged five apartment buildings in Dnipro and four high-rise buildings in Kremenchuk, said Zelensky.

Two people were also killed in the capital, Kyiv, and two others in Oleksandriya, he added.

Ukraine's national police posted pictures online showing what it says is an unexploded Russian Iskander missile in the middle of a Kyiv district. BBC Verify has confirmed the

images are genuine and the apparent missile fragments came down in an area of open land surrounded by high-rise apartment buildings.

A video posted by the police shows people digging through collapsed remains of a residential building in Pryluky. Another verified video shows damage to cars and what appears to be rubble and a fallen tree in an area surrounded by apartment blocks in Kremenchuk.

Zelensky renewed a call for allies to provide air defence support packages to Ukraine, saying its military only managed to shoot down "some" of the missiles launched by Russia overnight.

NEWS

FOREIGN

Russian strike on buses kills 33, say officials, as deadly attacks on Ukraine surge

Thirty-three people have been killed in a Russian glide bomb attack on two civilian buses in the frontline city of Kramatorsk, rescue officials say.

Another 18 people were wounded, said Donetsk regional head Vadym Filashkin, accusing Russia of targeting a bus carry-

ing passengers to kill as many civilians as possible.

Images posted by local prosecutors showed the burning metal shell of the bus along with debris and some of the victims on the road.

Kramatorsk and neighbouring Sloviansk are part of a so-called fortress belt that Russia is trying

to seize as part of Vladimir Putin's claim to the entire Ukrainian industrial region of Donbas.

However, Thursday's attack follows a dramatic surge in Russian attacks across the country and a heavy increase in civilian casualties.

Russia is now launching constant air raids against Ukraine,

with sirens ringing throughout the day in the capital Kyiv. According to the UN, Ukraine saw more civilians killed by August this year than were killed in all of 2025.

In one single attack that destroyed a five-storey block of flats in Pryluky east of Kyiv early on Wednesday, 22 people were

killed, including five children. Three of the children were only one year old.

Moscow is yet to comment on the latest attack, however rescue officials said the attack caused a fire on two buses that were both carrying passengers.

Filashkin appealed to anyone who was still in the Donetsk region to move to safer regions of Ukraine.

Given the sharp deterioration of security in the two neighbouring cities, he said all public transport had been ordered to stop.

The safety of civilians was paramount, and "we have no right to risk the lives of passengers and drivers", he said.

Moscow has often cited the "liberation" and "protection" of the predominantly Russian-speaking Donbas as justification for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It is made up of two regions - Luhansk and Donetsk - and with most of Luhansk under Russian control, the Kremlin is also aiming to capture remaining 20% of Donetsk territory still held by Ukraine.



One of the two civilian buses struck in the eastern front line city of Kramatorsk in flames

Tanker hit by multiple projectiles in Gulf off Qatar, UKMTO says

A tanker has been struck by "multiple projectiles" north of Qatar in the Gulf, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations agency.

The incident - a rare attack deep inside the Gulf - happened 51 nautical miles (94km) from Madinat al-Shamal with casualties reported, the UKMTO said.

Maritime intelligence firm Vanguard identified the vessel as the Antigua and Barbuda-flagged oil and chemical tanker Acers. On Saturday it was reported as sailing towards the Strait of Hormuz waterway, which connects the Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.

Merchant vessels have come under repeated attack in the region since the US and Israel's war with Iran began in February.

At least 24 seafarers have been killed in 93 confirmed incidents, according to the UN's International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The IMO said the last incident that resulted in casualties was on 9 September, when two sailors were killed in an attack on the Panama-flagged tanker El Gaia in the Strait of Hormuz, just north of Oman's Musandam peninsula.

This is also the first reported attack on a ship this far west of the Strait of Hormuz since that same day, according to Martin

Kelly, head of advisory at EOS Risk Group.

Also on Thursday, Vanguard amended an earlier report that had said there was a fire on board another tanker in the Gulf of Oman, about 40km east of Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates.

The company clarified that there were no indications a fire occurred on the vessel, which it had identified as the Marshall Islands-flagged Dhalkut.

The Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of global oil and gas shipments usually pass, was effectively closed after the start of the Iran war due to Tehran's missile and drone attacks on commercial vessels and a US naval

blockade of Iranian ports.

The US and Iran reached a preliminary agreement to end the war and reopen the strait in June, but it collapsed within weeks after Iranian attacks on shipping resumed and the US reinstated its blockade.

Iran insisted it would not give up some measure of control over the waterway and targeted vessels using a southern route through Omani waters that avoids its preferred route through Iranian waters.

To keep exports flowing from Gulf Arab states, the US military has been providing protection for tankers shuttling oil through the Strait of Hormuz.

US, Lebanon protecting wanted Syrian general

A former Syrian general wanted for crimes against humanity is being bankrolled and protected by the US and Lebanese authorities, a BBC News investigation has found.

Bassam al-Hassan, who oversaw Syria's chemical weapons programme and was a senior adviser to former President Bashar al-Assad, is being harboured in Lebanon following the Assad regime's collapse in 2024.

An investigation by the BBC and the US broadcaster NPR has discovered that Hassan has been allowed to remain there under an arrangement involving the FBI, and other US and Lebanese authorities. This is because of his willingness to provide information about the abduction of American journalist Austin Tice in Syria in 2012, as well as additional intelligence, we have been told.

Last month the BBC revealed Tice's abduction had been a planned operation, with Hassan in the chain of command.

Officials from two different branches of Syria's new government have told the BBC they want Hassan returned to face trial, but that US authorities want him kept in Lebanon, and they say there is little Damascus can do about this.

We asked the FBI, the CIA and Lebanon's General Directorate of General Security to comment on our findings. Only the FBI responded, declining to comment and instead directing us to a past statement that said its focus remained on establishing the facts around the Tice case and securing his return.

In response to our findings, Phil Elwood, spokesperson for the Tice family said: "If what you are saying is true, the fact that our tax dollars are being

used to furnish a comfortable life for someone associated with the use of chemical weapons on Syrian civilians, who claims to have had Austin Tice executed, is offensive.

"This is nothing less than aiding and abetting the escape of a wanted war criminal. The Syrians deserve justice and he should be returned to stand trial."

As part of a years-long investigation featured in the new BBC podcast: Where is Austin Tice? the BBC has reviewed a detailed record of a meeting between Hassan, FBI and CIA representatives, and Lebanese security officials, where Tice's case is discussed.

In it, Hassan is offered "residency", "protection" and help securing his "living needs" in return for information, primarily about Tice.

Sources with knowledge of the arrangement confirmed

this was the case, and described to us how Hassan receives money from the US authorities through an intermediary, making it harder to trace. Hassan is sanctioned by the US government.

Yet people connected to the Tice investigation say they have seen little evidence it has significantly advanced since Hassan began providing information as part of this agreement. The deal is believed to have been struck in the spring of 2025.

Sources with knowledge of the investigation have expressed concerns that Hassan's arrangement with the US could continue indefinitely, at significant expense but with little gain.

Hassan is not the only Syrian regime official whose connection to the Tice case has seemingly afforded him financial payments or assistance for living abroad.

Prince Harry reveals he slipped into depression' after Megxit and has '10 day rule' with Meghan

Prince Harry has revealed he became depressed and 'useless' immediately after Megxit, and now refuses to spend more than 10 days away from Meghan and their children.

The Duke of Sussex claims life in the Royal Family left him unable to properly grieve the death of Princess Diana, and said official duties often triggered panic attacks.

Harry said that getting dressed for royal engagements in a shirt and tie frequently left him feeling as though he was being strangled or suffocated.

'You would think I had the best help in the world. I'm a prince, for God's sake, but I was still grieving and didn't have any place to put those feelings,' he said, describing emotions he carried for '15 or 20

years'.

He revealed that therapy eventually helped him, and described the extraordinary moment he sprayed himself with Diana's perfume, prompting hidden memories and emotions to come flooding back.

Speaking about grief on the American educational platform MasterClass, Harry said that after finding happiness with Meghan, he 'slipped into depression' after they quit royal life and left the UK.

'We moved to Canada to get some space away from everything and simply think,' he said.

'Within two or three days of leaving that stressful environment, I experienced an adrenaline crash unlike anything I'd ever felt before.

Most UK diplomats to leave East Jerusalem consulate, Israel says

Most diplomats will leave the British consulate in occupied East Jerusalem, Israel says, but the UK insists the building "will not be closing", and will operate as a "UK Mission".

"We did not want it to come to this," Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar wrote on social media, as he said 20 diplomats and the consul general would leave Israel while a task force of seven could remain in the building "with a very limited scope of activity".

UK Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband responded that some staff had been "temporarily withdrawn" for security reasons, but stressed the mission will "work with the Palestinian people".

Israel said in September it would shut the consulate, in retaliation for UK sanctions on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank which are illegal under international law.

The UK government had made last-ditch efforts to persuade Israel not to close the British consulate ahead of Thursday's deadline, after the Israeli government said

it would close the consulate within 30 days of the UK sanctions announcement.

The consulate, which was first established in 1838, handles UK relations with Palestinians in Jerusalem as well as in the West Bank and Gaza.

It is distinct from the UK embassy in Tel Aviv, which is the UK's main diplomatic hub with Israel.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said the country had implemented measures announced on 8 September in response to UK sanctions.

"The British Consulate in Jerusalem is closing its operations today. Accordingly, the sign of the British Consulate in Jerusalem has been removed," he wrote on social media.

However, the British flag could still be seen outside on Thursday morning, and several staff were seen entering.

Saar said talks with the UK government had resulted in agreement on certain principles, including that "the consul general and 20 diplomats (including the consul general) are ending their duties and will leave Israel."

FOREIGN

NEWS

Group of 20 graduates rescued after being abducted in Nigeria

A group of 20 young people who were abducted in south-east Nigeria last week have been rescued, police say.

The graduates were kidnapped on 1 October while they were travelling for a national community service programme in the Abia and Akwa Ibom states in the south of the country.

They were rescued by the police with the assistance of other security agencies.

Police spokesman Ani Iniedu said in a statement on Wednesday the group were rescued at Amakohia Ubi in Imo State after a sustained search-and-rescue operation. The group are being looked after and have been taken for medical evaluation.

The police, military and other security agencies conducted intelligence-led searches of forests and sus-

pected hideouts, he said, but he did not say whether any ransom was paid or if any arrests had been made.

But the police spokesman did say they were making efforts to apprehend the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

The police had previously said they had identified the location where the group was being held but could not rescue them because it was mined with explosives.

The group of young people were participating in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), which is a compulsory one-year community service programme for most Nigerian university graduates, where people are posted to different parts of the country.

The group were travelling in two buses travelling on a major highway from Ibadan in south-western Oyo state to

NYSC orientation camps in Abia and Akwa Ibom states when gunmen attacked the vehicles.

The incident has reignited concerns over insecurity and kidnapping along roads in the south-east.

Before they were released, the father of one of the people who were abducted, Omotosho Adewale, told the BBC that the kidnappers had demanded a ransom of 50m naira (\$37,680; £28,440), which he could not afford.

"There's no peace of mind. I've not eaten in three days," he said in between tears.

Kidnapping for ransom is a major security problem in Nigeria, involving criminal gangs and armed groups. The authorities have not released

any information about the identity of the attackers.

The government has outlawed paying ransoms to kidnappers in an attempt to remove the incentive for the gangs but this has had little effect.



Nigerian police, pictured at the site of a previous abduction,

South Korea recalls Ukraine envoy over prisoner-of-war row

South Korea has said it will recall its ambassador to Ukraine, the latest escalation in a diplomatic spat between both countries.

It started last month when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced that his government had transferred two captured North Korean soldiers to Seoul.

Seoul says Ukraine broke an agreement to keep the transfer a secret but Zelensky's office maintains that there was no non-disclosure agreement in place.

The two North Korean soldiers, who were among thousands from the country supporting Russia in the Ukraine war, had earlier told local media they wanted to be sent to South Korea.

South Korean Vice Foreign Minister Park Yoon-joo had in September lodged a formal complaint with his Ukrainian counterpart Andrii Vieshkin over the matter.

And earlier this week, Foreign Minister Cho Hyun said he received an apology from his Ukrainian counterpart, but added that it fell short of Seoul's expectations, according to local reports.

But on Wednesday, Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Heorhii Tykhyi told reporters at a media briefing that its Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha had not apologised, according to Ukrainian news site Liga.

In a statement on Thursday, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said it would "continue consultations with the Ukrainian side", adding that it expected that "various outstanding issues...[would] be resolved smoothly".

Thousands of North Koreans fought for Russia. A memorial

hints at the death toll

Zelensky had revealed the transfer at a speech at the UN General Assembly in September, adding that the two North Koreans had not been "easy to capture alive".

It prompted a swift condemnation from South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, who called it "greatly disappointing" and said the transfer was a "highly sensitive issue" impacting national security.

President Lee also faced heavy criticism at home in light of the revelation, with local opposition accusing him of wanting to cover up the transfer to appease Pyongyang.

But his office said that it had been kept confidential partly to protect the North Koreans' families and added that Kyiv also wanted the transfer kept secret to avoid criticism that it had given up an opportunity to exchange the soldiers for Ukrainian prisoners of war.

Lee's office explained Ukraine had indicated the soldiers would be mentioned in Zelensky's address, but not the fact of their transfer.

The spat escalated when Zelensky's office responded claiming that the two countries did not have a non-disclosure agreement.

Seoul later demanded Ukraine apologise for "announcing a falsehood" and said its actions had seriously damaged trust between the two nations.

Seoul has been sympathetic to Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion, but has refused to break from its longstanding policy of not providing lethal weapons to any country engaged in active war.

Eritrean troops move deep into Ethiopia's Tigray region, residents tell BBC

Eritrean soldiers have crossed into northern Ethiopia heading towards an area where clashes have been taking place between national army troops and regional forces, residents in the Tigrayan town of Adigrat have told the BBC.

Fighting in the region broke out two weeks ago after months of tension between the government and the party that controls Tigray, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Both blame one another for violating a 2022 deal that ended a two-year civil war.

Ethiopia has also accused Eritrea of backing the TPLF -

something Asmara has previously denied.

The latest unrest follows the launch in September of new alliance of armed groups in Ethiopia, which includes the TPLF.

Over the weekend, TPLF forces withdrew from Tigray's main city of Mekelle, which is 115km (71 miles) south of Adigrat and is now under army control.

Eritrea was a key ally of landlocked Ethiopia during the 2020-2022 war, fighting against the TPLF in what was one of the most deadly conflicts this century and which drove the Tigray region to the precipice of famine.

But relations between the two neighbours have since deteriorated largely over the Ethiopian prime minister's ambition to take ownership of one of Eritrea's Red Sea ports.

Last week the two countries severed diplomatic relations as the renewed fighting raised fears of a wider regional conflict.

The BBC is unable to report from Tigray and surrounding areas, though mobile phone connections and internet access have been restored to most areas since the military took over Mekelle.

According to multiple accounts, Eritrean troops have

moved from the border town of Zalambessa towards central Tigray, with convoys reportedly passing through Adigrat and heading toward Edaga Hamus, a town between Adigrat and Mekelle.

"I saw about 40 trucks carrying soldiers. The convoy was moving south," one resident of Adigrat, who requested anonymity for security reasons, told BBC Tigrinya.

Pro-government forces have control of Mekelle, the capital of Ethiopia's northern Tigray region.

A second resident reported seeing troop movements, initially at night: "We have been seeing trucks with Eritrean registration plates passing through the city."

Italy overhauls electoral system after fiercely contested debate

Italy's parliament has approved fiercely contested changes to the country's electoral system championed by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni ahead of elections due next year.

Lawmakers voted 227 to 164 in favour of moving to a fully proportional system, which Meloni has argued will boost the chance of clear winners and more stable government.

Opposition parties say her right-wing coalition has designed the proposals to improve its chance of retaining power and, in a heated debate on Thursday, accused it of

flouting democracy.

Meloni had warned she could resign and trigger an early election if the plans were rejected, with the secret ballot seen as a test of her authority.

Meloni's coalition has overseen a rare period of political stability for Italy since her election in 2022, and last month her government became the country's longest-running since World War Two.

The voting reform will see the country move away from its current hybrid voting system, in which about a third of members are chosen through a first-past-the-post vote and

the rest through proportional representation.

Parties proposing to form a coalition will be required to put forward their joint candidate for prime minister, and their political programme, before any general election.

A party or coalition which emerges with the largest share of the votes - provided this exceeds 42% - will be awarded 105 additional seats in parliament (70 in the lower house and 35 in the senate), which could turn a narrow victory into a more comfortable majority.

In a debate ahead of the vote, centre-left members accused the government of forcing through the new voting

rules.

"Go ahead and change the electoral law, we will win in any case under any voting system," said Democratic Party (PD) leader Elly Schlein.

The proposals have also exposed tensions within the ranks of Meloni's coalition, too, with the Brothers of Italy (Fdi) party and its allies, the far-right League and centre-right Forza Italia.

Analysts had predicted that Thursday's final vote was unlikely to fail - particularly given the number of lawmakers who would risk losing their eligibility for a parliamentary pension if their term was ended early as a result of the threatened snap election.

FEATURE

He wrote his last exam on Friday, died in NAF crash on Sunday... the sad and tragic tale of a patriot

OSEMUDIAMHEN O. FAITH

On Friday, Squadron Leader Mamud I. Aburimen sat quietly at the back row of a lecture hall at the University of Benin, cap firmly on his head, writing what was to be his final make-up examination.

Like many students, he may have been thinking about the work still ahead of him — the result he hoped to receive, the degree he was close to completing, and the life waiting for him beyond the classroom. There was nothing to suggest that the ordinary examination would become his last known moment as a student.

Two days later, he was dead.

Aburimen, a Nigerian Air Force pilot and Master's student of Mass Communication at the University of Benin (UNIBEN), was among the officers killed when a NAF aircraft crashed at Igbo-koda, Ondo State, on October 5, while on its way from Benin to Lagos.

He was just 48 hours removed from his last classroom.

The distance between the examination hall and the crash site was not only measured in kilometres. It was the distance between expectation and grief, between a man preparing to complete one chapter of his life and a family suddenly forced to confront its end.

For Aburimen, the cockpit and the classroom were two demanding worlds. Yet, he managed to give both the same discipline, commitment and determination.

To his classmates, he was more than a military officer. He was a quiet, humble and unassuming colleague who never allowed the demands of his profession to stand in the way of his education.

"He was a perfect gentleman. He sat at the back, always with his cap on. He never troubled anyone," said Desmond Odiah, his class representative.

There was something almost ordinary about the way Aburimen occupied the classroom. He did not seek attention or announce the weight of the responsibilities he carried outside it. He simply came, listened, wrote his examinations and remained part of the quiet rhythm of student life.

Odiah had journeyed with Aburimen from the Postgraduate Diploma programme to the Master's level. He recalled how the late officer successfully balanced military responsibilities with academic commitments.

"Despite his tight schedule as a military officer, he always created time for lectures. He was always in touch about academic work. The last time he contacted me was Friday — he told me he was already in school for the make-up test."

It was the last time his classmates would hear from him.

Perhaps, at the time, the message seemed like nothing more than an update from a colleague trying to complete an academic obligation. There was no farewell in it, no warning that the next communication would come through news of a crash, no indication that the man who had just written an examination would soon be remembered in the



LOST DREAM

past tense.

In the Department of Mass Communication, Aburimen was remembered as disciplined, respectful and quiet. At the Air Force Base in Benin, he was remembered as a committed officer who gave his duty his best.

The two descriptions reveal the fullness of a life that cannot be reduced to the circumstances of its death. He was a pilot, but he was also a student. He was an officer, but also a colleague, a friend, a husband, a son and a member of a family whose future has been permanently altered.

He was among several officers aboard the ill-fated aircraft, including Squadron Leader Ahamefule Aham Man-Ugwueje, who had reportedly married just 16 days earlier; Flight Lieutenant M. Akintoye, who had celebrated his mother's birthday only hours before the flight; and Flight Lieutenant I. S. Bako.

Each name carries a life beyond the uniform — conversations left unfinished, plans interrupted, homes suddenly quiet and families forced to mourn people they expected to see return.

The tragedy has left two institutions in mourning.

At the Nigerian Air Force Base in Benin, flags flew at half-mast on Tuesday. At the University of Benin, the seat where Aburimen once sat remains empty—a quiet reminder of a student whose academic journey ended just when he

was preparing to take its final steps.

An empty seat can appear insignificant in a crowded lecture hall. But after a death, it becomes a kind of memorial. It holds the outline of the person who once occupied it: the cap, the books, the familiar posture, the quiet presence that classmates may have taken for granted because they believed there would always be another lecture, another examination, another opportunity to say hello.

Aburimen carried flight manuals and textbooks with equal seriousness.

In the skies, he served his country as a pilot. On the ground, he pursued knowl-

edge and sought to understand the society and stories he was helping to shape through his study of Mass Communication.

He was building two legacies at once.

Then, in the space of one weekend, both journeys came to an abrupt end.

The cruelest part of the tragedy may be its timing. He had endured the demands of military service and postgraduate study, had remained committed through the pressures of both, and had reached the threshold of completion. He had done the work. He had shown up. He had written the examination.

All that remained, it seemed, was to wait for the result.

Instead, those who knew him are left waiting for a return that will never come.

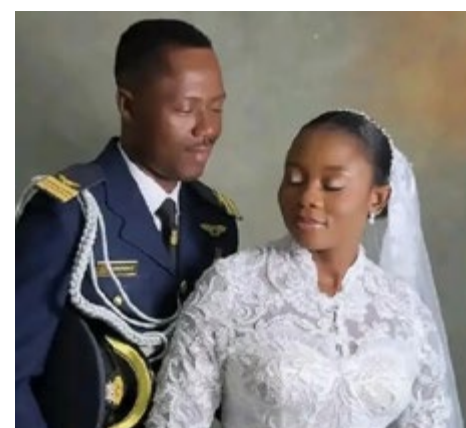
His last examination was on Friday.

His final flight was on Sunday.



”

At the Nigerian Air Force Base in Benin, flags flew at half-mast on Tuesday. At the University of Benin, the seat where Aburimen once sat remains empty—a quiet reminder of a student whose academic journey ended just when he was preparing to take its final steps.



COLUMN

Kidnapping war: Edo must not become an Island

There are moments in public administration when leadership is best measured not by the volume of rhetoric, but by the willingness to confront a difficult problem with decisive action. For me, the development in Edo State's battle against kidnapping-for-ransom deserves commendation.

Governor Monday Okpebholo has taken the bull by the horns by strengthening the judicial response to kidnapping, cultism and other violent crimes through the establishment of a special criminal court.

The significance of this intervention became clearer on 29 September 2026, when the Edo State Special Criminal Court delivered its maiden kidnapping judgment and sentenced four persons to death over their involvement in the abduction of a woman at the Vegetable Market off Airport Road, Benin City. The defendants — Marvellous Isaac, Wisdom Michael, Rufus Emete Michael and Gift Raphael were tried on an 11-count charge involving kidnapping, conspiracy, armed robbery, cultism and unlawful possession of firearms.

The court imposed death sentences on relevant counts, alongside other terms of imprisonment. It also ordered the confiscation and destruction of a pump-action firearm and cartridges tendered as exhibits.

This is no small feat for Edo State. It sends an unmistakable message that kidnapping is not merely another criminal enterprise to be discussed endlessly at security meetings while victims and their families bear the consequences. More importantly, the special court is intended to address one of the most persistent weaknesses in Nigeria's criminal justice system: the interminable delay between arrest, prosecution and judgment.

Indeed, the court's judgment was particularly instructive because Justice Terry Aigbona Momodu reportedly observed that the law left him without discretion in imposing the prescribed sentences. In other words, the court did not invent the punishment; it applied the law. That distinction matters. A society governed by the rule of law must allow the courts to administer laws duly made, while ensuring that accused persons receive a fair hearing and retain every lawful right of appeal.

Governor Okpebholo therefore deserves a thumbs-up for recognising that the fight against kidnapping cannot be won through security operations alone. The police and other security agencies may



arrest suspects, but arrests without effective prosecution and timely adjudication can produce little deterrent value. Criminal justice is a chain: intelligence, prevention, arrest, investigation, prosecution, adjudication and where conviction is final, lawful punishment. A weak link anywhere along that chain can embolden criminals.

Yet, while applauding Edo State, I am compelled to raise a concern that should exercise the minds of governors, lawmakers and security strategists across Nigeria. What happens when a state becomes hostile territory for kidnappers, while neighbouring states remain relatively attractive operating environments?

This is the elephant in the room.

Criminals are opportunistic. If they discover that the legal and security environment in one jurisdiction has become too hostile, they may relocate their activities to another where the risks are perceived to be lower. That is why Edo's new posture, commendable as it is, could inadvertently produce a displacement effect if neighbouring states do not strengthen their own legal and institutional responses.

Imagine a kidnapping syndicate that has learnt that Edo State has become increasingly difficult terrain because cases can be fast-tracked and severe statutory penalties can follow conviction. If the same syndicate can cross a state boundary into a jurisdiction where prosecution is slower, special courts do not exist, relevant laws are weaker or inconsistently enforced, and criminal proceedings can linger for years, what rational choice would a criminal organisation make?

The danger is obvious. Edo could succeed in pushing the problem beyond its borders without eliminating the criminal networks responsible for it. The result would be a dangerous geographical redistribution of kidnapping rather than its meaningful suppression.

This is not a hypothetical concern. Even if Edo succeeds in making the state increasingly inhospitable to kidnappers and consequently reduces kidnapping within its territory, Edo people do not live, work or conduct their businesses exclusively within the state's boundaries. They travel to neighbouring and distant states for business, edu-

”
But the real test is not the number of death sentences secured; it is whether Edo can sustain a comprehensive strategy that makes kidnapping increasingly difficult, unprofitable and ultimately untenable.

cation, religious activities, family visits, professional engagements and other legitimate purposes. What happens to an Edo resident who leaves the state and enters a jurisdiction where the legal and security environment remains comparatively permissive? The safety achieved at home could suddenly become vulnerable the moment the traveller crosses the state boundary.

This concern becomes even more compelling against the backdrop of recent reports of the abduction of about 20 National Youth Service Corps members in the eastern part of Nigeria, with the kidnappers reportedly demanding as much as N900 million in ransom. If accurately established, such an incident is a sobering reminder that Nigerians cannot be protected merely by fortifying individual states. A citizen does not cease to deserve protection because he or she has travelled outside his or her state of residence. The same applies to Corps members, students, traders, transporters, tourists and business people whose legitimate activities routinely take them across state boundaries.

Therefore, while the Edo lawmakers and the state government deserve commendation for strengthening the legal framework and potentially mitigating the incidence of kidnapping within Edo, the ultimate objective must be broader than making Edo safe in isolation. Edo people will continue to travel, and criminals will continue to exploit jurisdictional gaps unless neighbouring states adopt similarly robust laws, efficient prosecution mechanisms and effective security strategies. The safety of Edo's citizens cannot end at the state's geographical boundaries.

This is why Edo's achievement should not be treated as an isolated state victory. It should be regarded as a template for a nationally coordinated response. Other state governments must look closely at what is happening in Edo and ask themselves whether their own laws, courts and enforcement mechanisms are sufficiently robust to confront kidnapping-for-ransom.

Neighbouring governors must not wait until kidnappers move into their forests, communities and highways before acting. Security intelligence should already map escape routes, criminal corridors, forest hideouts and interstate networks. Kidnapping-for-ransom syndicates rarely respect political boundaries. Why, then, should the response be trapped within them?

There is also a broader lesson for state Houses of Assembly. Where laws are inadequate, lawmakers should review and strengthen them in accordance with the Constitution and applicable laws. Where prosecution is undermined by poor investigation, evidence management or insufficient prosecutorial capacity, those deficiencies must be addressed.

This is particularly important because kidnapping-for-ransom has evolved beyond random criminality. In many places, it has become an organised and economically motivated business enterprise. Its ecosystem can involve recruiters, informants, financiers, gun suppliers, drivers, negotiators, intelligence gatherers, safe-house operators and those who receive or launder ransom proceeds. Fighting only the gunman at the point of abduction therefore leaves the larger criminal architecture intact.

Consequently, state governments must widen the scope of their response. It is not enough to sentence captured kidnappers. Law enforcement must pursue the money trail, identify financiers and accomplices, disrupt communication networks, seize criminal assets where the law permits, and dismantle the infrastructure that makes abduction profitable.

There is another important dimension: interstate cooperation. The governors and security agencies of Edo, Delta, Ondo, Kogi, Anambra and other states connected by major highways, forests, rivers and commercial routes cannot afford to operate in silos. Intelligence-sharing must become routine rather than occasional. Joint operations, coordinated surveillance and rapid cross-border communication can make it harder for criminals to exploit jurisdictional gaps.

The Federal Government also has a role to play. Kidnapping is a national security challenge, even when particular offences occur within state territories. The Nigeria Police Force, military formations, intelligence agencies and state security structures should deepen

cooperation with state governments.

Governments must also recognise that punishment alone cannot defeat kidnapping. Punishment may deter some potential offenders, but sustainable security requires prevention. Rural communities need effective security presence. Roads and vulnerable settlements require surveillance. Emergency response systems must be strengthened.

Young people need meaningful opportunities that make criminal recruitment less attractive. Traditional rulers, community leaders and residents must be incorporated into local intelligence networks, without exposing informants to retaliation.

The judiciary must also be adequately supported. A special court without competent judges, prosecutors, investigators, defence counsel, court administrators, forensic capacity and secure evidence management cannot deliver miracles. Speed must never become a euphemism for denial of justice. The rights of the accused must remain protected because justice is measured not only by punishment, but also by how fairly guilt is determined.

The recent Edo judgment itself illustrates why due process matters. The convictions followed a trial on multiple counts, and reports indicate that appeals remain legally available. That is how a functioning justice system should operate. A death sentence pronounced by a court is not the same thing as immediate execution. Every lawful appellate and constitutional safeguard must be respected.

If Edo builds a formidable legal wall while neighbouring states leave wide openings through which criminals can escape, the wall will not provide lasting security. It may simply redirect the criminal traffic. That is why the Edo example should trigger an urgent national conversation and, more importantly, practical action.

The National Assembly, the governors and state Houses of Assembly should therefore see the Edo intervention as a wake-up call. Nigeria cannot afford a situation in which kidnapping is heavily penalised in one state but becomes comparatively less risky in another. Such a disparity could unintentionally create a migration route for criminality.

Governor Monday Okpebholo has taken a bold step. His administration deserves commendation for moving the fight from political declarations to institutional action. But the real test is not the number of death sentences secured; it is whether Edo can sustain a comprehensive strategy that makes kidnapping increasingly difficult, unprofitable and ultimately untenable.

And here lies the clarion call: let Edo's action become a catalyst, not an exception. Let other states strengthen their laws, courts and security institutions. Let neighbouring jurisdictions close the gaps. Let intelligence cross state boundaries as easily as criminals do.

If Nigeria truly intends to defeat kidnapping-for-ransom, every state must become an uncomfortable environment for the kidnapper. Anything less may simply compel the men of the underworld to pack their bags, cross the next boundary and continue their reprehensible business elsewhere.

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



Sports

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

Abuja set for 3rd PremiumTrust Bank Abuja City International Half Marathon ● *Event holds November 14*

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Participants and organizers are bracing up as the Federal Capital Territory is set to come alive with the 3rd edition of the PremiumTrust Bank Abuja City International

Half Marathon holding on Saturday, November 14, 2026.

Organized by Nilayo Sports Management Limited, the 21-kilometre race has rapidly grown into one of Nigeria's leading road races, attracting elite athletes, recreational run-

ners, fitness enthusiasts and corporate teams from across Nigeria and beyond.

According to the organizers, registration for participants is currently ongoing through the online platform via <https://share.google/wLD16eRrvX-wnaCW34>

The organizers further disclosed that physical registration is yet to open, with the proposed venue for physical registration being the PremiumTrust Bank. Prospective runners have been advised to register early to allow adequate time for training and preparation for the 21-kilometre challenge.

The event continues the successful partnership between sole sponsor, PremiumTrust Bank, and Nilayo Sports Man-

agement Limited, a collaboration that has elevated the profile of the half marathon since its inaugural edition in 2024.

Managing Director/CEO of Nilayo Sports Management Limited, Mrs. Yetunde Olopade, expressed confidence that the 2026 edition will build on past successes and meet international standards, with enhanced athlete services, world-class logistics, medical support, security and spectator entertainment.

She noted that this year's race will place greater emphasis on athlete welfare, improved route management, entertainment zones along the course, and a more immersive experience for spectators and families who turn out to cheer the runners.



NSC appoints caretaker Committee to Steer Nigeria Judo Federation ahead of fresh elections

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Following the recent dissolution of the Nigeria Judo Federation (NJF) board by the International Judo Federation (IJF), the National Sports Commission (NSC) has moved swiftly to stabilize the sport by constituting a six-member Caretaker Committee. Backed by Section 16 of the NSC Act 2023. This strategic intervention is designed to steer the Federation through a crucial transitional period and pave the way for fresh elections.

Taking immediate effect, the transition committee has been instituted to oversee the affairs of the Federation until a new board is democratically elected. The committee will be chaired by Sheriff Hammed, with Amayo Ngozi serving as the Secretary. Other appointed members of the administrative body include Ekuta Catherine Ewa, Sule Musa, Bashir Musa Bassey, and Oladipupo Idowu.

The NSC has mandated the committee to manage the day-

to-day administration of the NJF while executing crucial reforms needed to place the sport on a solid administrative foundation.

Central to their mandate is the immediate amendment of the Federation's constitution to align perfectly with the statutory provisions demanded by the In-

ternational Judo Federation(IJF).

The committee is responsible for convening an Annual General Meeting to secure approval for the amended constitution and subsequently organizing transparent elections.

To ensure a seamless transition of power, the NSC has

strongly charged the Caretaker Committee to execute its duties with the utmost diligence, transparency, and impartiality. The NSC emphasized that the overall interest and development of judo in Nigeria must be placed above all personal or political considerations.

Senegal's Basketball star set for bail after nearly two months in US detention

Senegalese basketball player Aminata Seck is set to be released on bail after spending nearly two months in detention in the United States over a visa-related issue.

Seck, who plays for Kentucky State University, was arrested in the US as authorities addressed the immigration matter.

Her expected release will allow the Senegalese player to return to her basketball career and resume access to essential medical care.

The development comes as a relief to Seck, her family and the basketball community, with her prolonged detention having in-



AMINATA SECK

terrupted both her sporting activities and medical treatment.

Seck is now expected to fo-

cus on her recovery and return to the court as she continues her career in the United States.

AFCON 2027: Kenya cannot win trophy, National Team coach insists



BENNI MCCARTHY

Harambee Stars head coach Benni McCarthy has admitted that Kenya will not be able to win the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), despite their status as one of the tournament's co-hosts.

Kenya, alongside Tanzania and Uganda, is set to host the 2027 continental showpiece, which will guarantee the Harambee Stars a place in the tournament.

However, McCarthy believes Kenya still have a significant gap to bridge before they can compete for the AFCON

title against Africa's established football powerhouses.

The former South Africa international striker acknowledged the ambition surrounding the national team but insisted that winning the continental championship would be beyond Kenya's current level.

"Kenya cannot win AFCON even if you give me millions of dollars," McCarthy was quoted as saying. The coach's remarks underline the scale of the challenge facing Kenya as they prepare for a home AFCON campaign in 2027.



CAS DIRECTOR GENERAL MATTHEW REEB

AFCON 2025 Final: CAS sets no fixed date for final verdict

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has revealed that there is no fixed date for the final verdict in the legal dispute between Morocco and Senegal over the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations final.

CAS Director General Matthew Reeb explained that the arbitration panel could issue its decision within a few days or take several weeks, depending on the nature of the ruling being prepared.

According to Reeb, the timeline could be extended if the panel decides to deliver a

detailed judgment containing the legal grounds and reasoning behind its decision.

He stressed that the verdict would not be announced on the day of the hearing or the following day.

The dispute centres on the outcome of the AFCON 2025 final between Morocco and Senegal, with the case now before CAS for determination.

The arbitration panel is expected to communicate its decision after completing its deliberations and preparing the necessary documentation.

3SC fans seek Aweroro's return as team struggles under Salisu Yusuf

Supporters of Shooting Stars Sports Club (3SC) have called for the dismissal of head coach Salisu Yusuf following the club's disappointing start to the 2026/27 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) season.

The call for Yusuf's exit came after seven matches, with sections of the club's supporters expressing their frustration over the team's position on the league table.

In a short video made available to BSN Sports, the supporters were heard demanding a change in the technical crew and calling for the return of former

head coach Nurudeen Aweroro.

Aweroro was relieved of his position before the commencement of the current campaign, despite guiding 3SC to a third-place finish in the 2025/26 NPFL season.

The supporters' reaction comes amid a sharp decline in the club's league standing compared with the corresponding stage of last season.

After Matchday 7 of the 2025/26 campaign under Nurudeen Aweroro, 3SC had accumulated 11 points and occupied fifth position on the NPFL table.



SHOOTING STARS SPORTS CLUB (3SC)

SPORTS

Nigeria was Cheated: The FIFA–DR Congo eligibility scandal must not be buried

DOUGLAS BAYE-OSAGIE
Email: dbayeosagie@yahoo.com

Nigeria's painful exit from the race for the 2026 FIFA World Cup has now taken a disturbing new dimension. What Nigerians were told was a footballing defeat in Rabat is increasingly looking like a governance controversy that FIFA must answer.

The Super Eagles lost to the Democratic Republic of Congo on penalties after a 1–1 draw, but new revelations indicate that FIFA officials themselves had identified an eligibility problem involving DR Congo goalkeeper Lionel Mpsi.

The significance of the revelation cannot be overstated. According to documents reviewed by The New York Times and reported by the Associated Press, FIFA's own legal officials determined that Mpsi had not completed the required process to change his international association from France to DR Congo. Yet he continued playing for DR Congo, including in the decisive playoff against Nigeria.

This is no longer simply a Nigerian complaint against another African football federation. Nigeria filed its complaint after the match, challenging the eligibility of several DR Congo players. FIFA rejected the complaint on what has been described as a technicality relating to the timing of the filing. But the new information raises the obvious question: if FIFA itself subsequently identified an eligibility problem, why was the sporting consequence not allowed to follow?

That question becomes even more important because FIFA reportedly considered several possible courses of action. According to the documents reported by the New York Times, those options included sanctioning DR Congo, awarding the match to Nigeria, replacing DR Congo with Nigeria in the intercontinental playoff, or taking no action. The final outcome was that DR Congo continued.

The consequences were enormous. DR Congo went on to defeat Jamaica in the intercontinental playoff and secured its first World Cup appearance in 52 years. Nigeria, meanwhile, remained outside the tournament. In other words, a decision concerning eligibility potentially affected not merely one match but the identity of an entire World Cup participant.

This is why Nigeria deserves more than another explanation from football administrators. If an independent investigation establishes that an ineligible player participated in a match that determined which country proceeded to the next stage, then FIFA must consider an appropriate remedy for Nigeria, even if restoring Nigeria's place at the 2026 World Cup is no longer practically possible.

Compensation should therefore be part of the conversation. It would not be a substitute for sporting justice, but it could represent a recognition of the financial and institutional consequences suffered by Nigeria. World Cup qualification brings broadcasting opportunities, sponsorship value, commercial exposure, bonuses, preparation opportunities and international prestige. Losing that opportunity because of an eligibility issue is



SUPER EAGLES OF NIGERIA

fundamentally different from simply losing a football match.

But there is an even bigger issue here: consistency. Football cannot have one rule for one federation and another rule for another. FIFA has previously imposed sporting consequences in eligibility cases. The AP has pointed to the 2018 World Cup qualifying case involving Bolivia, where matches were forfeited after an ineligible player was fielded. That history makes the handling of the DR Congo case deserving of serious scrutiny.

FIFA's own regulations make eligibility and changes of association a formal process. Indeed, FIFA published updated guidance on player eligibility and change of association in September 2026, stressing the procedures and documentation required for such cases. That makes the question surrounding Mpsi particularly difficult to dismiss as an obscure technicality.

There is also the question of timing. Nigeria had already complained about player eligibility. FIFA's later discovery, according to the reports, concerned a player who had participated in the very qualifying campaign that ultimately took DR Congo to the World Cup. If the governing body's own officials knew there was a problem, Nigerians are entitled to ask why the matter did not receive a sporting resolution before DR Congo's qualification was completed.

The issue also inevitably brings FIFA President Gianni Infantino into

the wider conversation, although an important distinction must be maintained. The reports do not establish that Infantino personally ordered the rejection of Nigeria's complaint or personally intervened to protect DR Congo. FIFA has maintained that its disciplinary bodies are independent and make decisions according to the regulations and facts before them.

Nevertheless, questions about institutional relationships will not disappear. DR Congo's football federation president, Véron Mosenko-Omba, has a long professional relationship with Infantino. The two men studied at university in Switzerland and subsequently worked within European and international football structures. That relationship does not prove wrongdoing, but it makes transparency and independent scrutiny even more important when a decision involving DR Congo is being questioned.

That is why allegations of secret payments or "money deals" should not be presented as established fact without evidence. Such allegations are extremely serious. If evidence eventually emerges of bribery, financial inducement or improper interference, then the matter would move from a football eligibility controversy into a potentially much larger corruption investigation. For now, the documented questions about FIFA's handling of the case are already serious enough without adding claims that have not been proven.

Nigeria's response should therefore be bigger than anger. The NFF should demand the complete legal record, the reasoning behind the disciplinary decision, the internal assessment of Mpsi's eligibility, the basis for the filing-deadline argument and the identity of the decision-making bodies involved. If necessary, Nigeria should take the matter through every available appeal and arbitration mechanism.

The NFF also needs to explain to Nigerians exactly what happened after its original complaint. The federation announced in March that it was dissatisfied with FIFA's rejection and had begun the appeal process. The latest revelations make it imperative that Nigerians are told where that process stands and what legal avenues remain open.

There should also be a call for an independent investigation. FIFA investigating FIFA's own handling of a controversy will inevitably raise questions about independence. A credible review should examine the eligibility process, the complaint, the internal legal advice, the disciplinary decision, the applicable deadlines and whether the regulations were applied consistently with previous cases.

And DR Congo should not simply walk away from this controversy without consequences if an eligibility breach is confirmed. At the very least, a substantial fine and appropriate disciplinary measures against the responsible football authorities should be considered. If officials knowingly

submitted incomplete or misleading information to FIFA, the consequences should extend beyond the player involved.

But justice cannot be reduced to punishing DR Congo. The central issue is what happens to Nigeria. A fine paid by DR Congo would not restore Nigeria's lost World Cup opportunity. Nor would an apology erase the commercial and sporting consequences of missing the tournament. FIFA therefore needs to confront the question of whether some form of compensation or other meaningful remedy can be provided.

The tragedy is that Nigeria may never know what would have happened against Jamaica. Perhaps the Super Eagles would have qualified. Perhaps they would not. Football does not permit history to be replayed. But that uncertainty cannot become an excuse for ignoring a potentially decisive eligibility violation. The integrity of competition requires that the rules be enforced before the consequences become irreversible.

Nigeria also needs to ask a painful question about its relationship with FIFA. If the revelations are substantiated, Nigerian football cannot simultaneously demand justice from world football's governing body and behave as though nothing happened. Diplomacy is important, but diplomacy should never mean surrendering legitimate institutional interests.

This is particularly relevant because Infantino is seeking another term as FIFA president. The controversy does not by itself establish personal wrongdoing by him, but it makes transparency around FIFA's decision-making more important at precisely the moment when football associations are considering the leadership of the organisation. African federations should be asking questions based on evidence, rules and institutional accountability rather than personalities or political friendships.

The story therefore should not end with Nigeria shouting that it was cheated. It should end with football demanding answers. Was the player eligible? Did FIFA know? When did FIFA know? Why was Nigeria's complaint rejected? Why were the sporting sanctions reportedly considered but not imposed? Were the same standards applied that FIFA has applied in previous eligibility cases? And what remedy is available to the country that lost its World Cup opportunity?

Nigeria deserves answers to those questions. DR Congo deserves a fair process. FIFA deserves scrutiny. And African football deserves a system in which the identity of the country advancing to a World Cup is determined on the football field under rules that are applied equally to everybody.

If the evidence ultimately establishes that DR Congo used an ineligible player and that FIFA knew of the problem but failed to apply the appropriate sporting consequence, then this will be much bigger than Nigeria versus DR Congo. It will become a test of whether FIFA's promise of fair play applies equally to its most powerful members and its most politically important relationships. And that is a test FIFA cannot afford to fail.

SPORTS



Contract Breach: Bendel Insurance FC declare Joshua Baba AWOL



JOSHUA BABA AWOL

The management of Bendel Insurance Football Club has declared goalkeeper Joshua Baba AWOL (Absent Without Official Leave), following his failure to return to the club after the expiration of an approved period of recovery leave granted him.

In a statement signed by Kehinde Osagiede, the club's Director, Media & Communications, Baba was last seen shortly after the commencement of the 2026/27 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) season on August 30, 2026, when he sustained a knock during the club's match against Warri Wolves in Benin.

Following the injury, the player was granted a two-week recovery period and subsequently travelled to Plateau State to visit his family. He was expected to

resume training and report back to the club in mid-September 2026, the statement said.

However, despite the expiration of the approved leave period, Joshua Baba, the statement added, has failed to report to the club and has remained absent without authorisation.

According to Osagiede, the club has made repeated efforts to establish contact with the player and ascertain his whereabouts. "These efforts have, regrettably, proved unsuccessful. The Head Coach and Team Manager have also confirmed that the player has neither returned to duty nor obtained any authorisation to extend his absence.

The club management warned that any club or organisation dealing with Baba is doing so at its own risk.



AFCON 2025 final: Senegal lawyer stuns CAS hearing

A dramatic moment reportedly occurred during Thursday's Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) hearing involving the dispute over the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) final between Morocco and Senegal.

A lawyer representing the Senegalese Football Federation (FSF) reportedly interrupted proceedings by lying down in the middle of the courtroom.

The unexpected incident caused a stir during the hearing in Lausanne, Switzerland, as Senegal continues its legal challenge against the Confed-

eration of African Football (CAF) decision concerning the AFCON 2025 final.

The case centres on CAF's decision to award the final to Morocco after the controversial events surrounding Senegal's players' temporary departure from the pitch during the match.

The CAS proceedings are being held behind closed doors, with the Court expected to deliberate on the appeal and issue its decision at a later date.

The outcome could have significant implications for the official status of the AFCON 2025 final and the continental title.

Adeniyi hails team Nigeria's historic first medal at veterans World Wrestling Championships

The President of the Nigeria Wrestling Federation (NWF), Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, MFR, has congratulated Team Nigeria on the country's historic achievement at the ongoing Veterans World Wrestling Championships in Amman, Jordan.

Adeniyi described the feat as a significant milestone for Nigerian wrestling following the country's first-ever medal at the Veterans World Wrestling Championships.

The championship, organised by United World Wrestling (UWW), is taking place from October 6 to 11, 2026, featuring Greco-Roman and Freestyle wrestling for athletes aged 35 and above across various age categories.

Wrestling veteran and former national champion, Mapsin Elias Mika, etched his name into the history books by becoming the first Nigerian veteran wrestler to win a medal at the global competition. Mika secured a bronze medal in the 70kg Greco-Roman wrestling category to give Nigeria its maiden podium finish at the Veterans World Wrestling Championships.

In a congratulatory message issued on behalf of the NWF Board, Adeniyi commended Mika for his outstanding performance and described the achievement as a moment of pride for the country and the wrestling community.

He said the historic medal had written Nigeria's name in the record books of world veterans wrestling while also further strengthening the coun-

try's growing presence and reputation on the international wrestling scene.

The NWF President also acknowledged the contribution of veteran coach Babatunde James, popularly known as Tunde King, for his role in guiding and supporting Mika in his successful campaign at the championships.

"On behalf of the Nigeria Wrestling Federation Board, I congratulate Mapsin Elias Mika and Tunde King on this historic feat. This historic achievement



BASHIR ADEWALE ADENIYI, MFR

National Stadium hosts over 100 swimmers for Ikoyi Club time trials

The Swimming Section of Ikoyi Club 1938 is set to stage a categorization Time Trials 1 (CTT1) at the National Stadium, Lagos on Saturday September 10.

According to the organisers, the two-day event is an important checkpoint in the squad's

2026/2027 training programme.

The time trials provide an opportunity to see how the swimmers are progressing, celebrate improvements and identify areas for continued development. It is also the point at which some swimmers may progress to a higher training category

based on their performance.

About 100 children are expected to participate over the two days, starting at 10:00am on Saturday 10th till Sunday 11th October 2026.

The Chairman of the swimming section, Akin Onabolu told our correspondent that all was set for the event. Onabolu said: "The swimmers will compete across the four strokes, different race distances and Individual Medley (IM) events. This gives the coaches a broad view of each swimmer's development rather than simply looking at performance in one event.

"We are looking forward to seeing stronger performance, a number of personal bests and time drops across the different categories, as well as swimmers taking the next step in their development within the IC Marlins squad.



IKOYI SWIMMERS

Motsepe: African country must win FIFA World Cup

President of the Confederation of African Football (CAF), Dr Patrice Motsepe, has declared that an African national team must win the FIFA World Cup.

Motsepe made the statement yesterday during the CAF Strategy Conference in Cape Verde.

The CAF president stressed the need for African football to raise its ambitions and compete for the biggest prize in in-

ternational football.

According to Motsepe, the continent possesses the talent and potential to produce a World Cup-winning nation, and achieving the feat should be a major objective for African football.

No African team has reached the FIFA World Cup final, with Morocco's historic run to the semi-finals at Qatar 2022 remaining the continent's best performance at the tournament.



DR PATRICE MOTSEPE