

Oba Ewuare II honours Remi Tinubu with royal bead

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II, has honoured Nigeria's First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, with a special royal bead in recognition of her visit to the Benin monarch's palace, as she reaffirmed the Federal

Government's commitment to women's empowerment and social welfare.

The presentation was one of the highlights of Mrs Tinubu's courtesy visit to the palace in Benin City, Edo State, as part of activities marking the Oba's 10th coronation anniversary.

During the visit, the First Lady highlighted various so-

cial intervention programmes under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration, assuring that efforts to improve the livelihoods of women, children, students and other vulnerable Nigerians would remain a priority.

She listed scholarships for students, the distribution of two million exercise books to

schools, the provision of sanitary pads for school-age girls and information and communication technology (ICT) initiatives designed to empower women and girls among the programmes being implemented.

Mrs Tinubu also cited the akara initiative, under which she said more than N2 billion

had been spent nationwide. She further disclosed that efforts were underway to link birth registration with the National Identification Number (NIN) system to strengthen identification and improve national record-keeping.

The First Lady also highlighted campaigns against female genital mutilation

(FGM), community food banks for lactating mothers and other vulnerable persons, as well as social investment programmes aimed at improving household welfare.

In his response, Oba Ewuare II described Mrs Tinubu's visit as a homecoming and ac-

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#200

First Lady unveils 50 CNG buses, #1bn empowerment scheme in Edo

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Nigeria's First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, yesterday inaugurated 50 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses and launched a N1 billion economic empowerment scheme for 5,000 beneficiaries in Edo State, in a major push to improve public transportation, strengthen small businesses and expand economic opportunities.

The two initiatives, introduced by the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo, are designed to address critical needs of residents by promoting more accessible transportation and providing financial support to individuals seeking to improve their livelihoods, particularly women, youths and small-business operators.

Speaking at the inauguration and launch in Benin City, Mrs Tinubu commended the

Edo State Government for prioritising programmes aimed at improving the welfare of the people, describing the initiatives as practical expressions of the governor's commitment to the development of the state.

The First Lady expressed delight at returning to Edo to inaugurate the 50 CNG-powered buses, noting that the intervention would benefit resi-

dents by improving access to public transportation.

"I am glad to be in Edo today after quite a long time for the commissioning of 50 compressed natural gas buses for the benefit of the people," she said.

She also applauded the economic empowerment programme, under which 5,000 beneficiaries are to receive N200,000 each to support

their businesses, strengthen their livelihoods and improve their financial independence.

Mrs Tinubu urged the beneficiaries to make prudent use of the funds, expressing hope that the financial assistance would translate into sustainable business growth and improved economic circumstances for their families.

"I pray that the monies received will prosper in your

hands and grow your businesses," she said.

The First Lady subsequently inaugurated the 50 CNG buses and formally launched the N1 billion empowerment scheme, marking the commencement of the two interventions aimed at improving the economic well-being of residents.

Earlier, Governor Okpeb-

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Oluku tanker inferno: Several feared dead, properties destroyed

● UBTH CMD leads emergency response

ISAAC ERANGA

BENIN CITY

Several people were feared dead and others injured following a devastating petrol tanker explosion along the Benin-Lagos Expressway near Oluku, Benin City, Edo State, yesterday, with shops, buildings and other properties reportedly affected by the inferno.

The explosion occurred after a tanker loaded with Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), popularly known as petrol, reportedly fell and spilled its contents, attracting people who rushed to scoop the product before the tanker burst into flames.

The ensuing inferno engulfed parts of the vicinity, triggering panic as residents, traders and motorists scrambled for

safety. Some victims were reportedly burnt beyond recognition, while the full extent of the casualties and property damage remained unclear as of the time of filing this report.

Survivors who sustained varying degrees of injuries were rushed to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), where emergency medical teams swung into action to stabilise the victims and provide urgent treatment.

The Chief Medical Director of UBTH, Professor Idia Nibokun Ize-Iyamu, personally took charge of the hospital's emergency response, coordinating medical personnel and overseeing activities at the Accident and Emergency Unit

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COMMISSIONING:

Nigeria's First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu (3rd right); Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (4th right); Kogi State Governor, Ahmed Usman Ododo (2nd left); Coordinator, Office of the First Lady, Edo State, Mrs Edesili Okpebholo Anani (2nd right); Senator Adams Oshiomhole (left); and Kwara State First Lady, Mrs Olufolake AbdulRazaq (1st left), during the commissioning of 50 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses and the launch of a N1 billion economic empowerment programme for 5,000 women in Edo State yesterday

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Sierra Leone will never forget Nigeria's sacrifice for peace — Ex-VP —Pg 3

At least 27 pupils and teacher killed after school roof collapses in Pakistan —Pg 13

Morocco welcomes Africa to Tangier for ITTF Africa Championships 2026 —Pg 17

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knowledge her contributions to national development.

The monarch said he had followed her activities within and outside Nigeria, including the recognition she recently received from United States President Donald Trump.

He also commended Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for his development initiatives, particularly in Edo Central Senatorial District.

In a goodwill message delivered on behalf of the monarch by his daughter, Princess Ikhuoyemwen Aimiwu Ewuare, the palace described the First Lady's visit as timely, coming amid activities to commemorate the Oba's 10th

coronation anniversary.

The palace reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the Oba Ewuare Foundation, particularly its skills acquisition programmes designed to improve livelihoods and enhance the welfare of the people.

The Benin monarch also expressed appreciation to the Federal Government for its Renewed Hope Agenda, while calling for stronger collaboration with traditional institutions to promote development and improve the living conditions of Nigerians.

The visit attracted several dignitaries, including Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, and his Kogi State counterpart, Usman Ododo, among others.

First Lady unveils 50 CNG buses...

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holo welcomed Mrs Tinubu to Edo State, describing her visit as a demonstration of care, compassion and a shared commitment to the welfare and development of the people.

"Your visit is not just a ceremonial engagement. It is a demonstration of care, compassion and our commitment to the growth of our people," the governor said.

Okpebholo explained that the initiatives were targeted at two important areas of public need: affordable transportation and economic empowerment, particularly for women and small-business operators whose activities contribute significantly to household welfare and the local economy.

He said the introduction of the CNG buses was expected to improve the accessibility, affordability and efficiency of public transportation while offering a more environmentally friendly alternative to

conventional fuel-powered buses.

The governor added that the N1 billion empowerment programme would provide financial assistance to 5,000 beneficiaries, giving each recipient N200,000 to support existing businesses, expand income-generating activities and strengthen economic independence.

Emphasising the importance of women's economic participation, Okpebholo said empowering women had wider benefits for families, communities and society.

"When you empower a woman, you strengthen a family, uplift a community and contribute to the prosperity of society," he said.

The governor expressed appreciation to President Bola Tinubu for his leadership and support, reaffirming his administration's commitment to working with the Federal Government and the All Progressives Congress (APC) to

2027: Edo First Lady tasks LGA chairmen's wives on APC grassroots mobilisation

BENIN CITY

The Edo State First Lady, Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo Anani, has charged wives of Local Government Area (LGA) chairmen to intensify grassroots mobilisation and rally support for All Progressives Congress (APC) candidates ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Mrs. Anani gave the charge when the wives of LGA chairmen paid her a courtesy visit at Government House, Benin City, urging them to leverage their positions to strengthen community engagement, encourage voter participation and promote the success of APC candidates at the polls.

She also emphasised their responsibility to complement their husbands' roles by serving as a vital link between government and the people, particularly women, schoolgirls and other vulnerable groups at the grassroots.

The First Lady, who outlined their roles in social develop-

ment and the implementation of government programmes, called for accountability in the distribution of sanitary pads provided under the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI).

She stressed that the items were specifically intended for schoolgirls and must reach the designated beneficiaries without discrimination or exclusion.

"Wherever the girls are, look for them and give them the pads. Ensure that the pads get to the intended beneficiaries," she said.

Mrs. Anani commended those who had distributed the sanitary pads to schools in their respective local government areas and urged others to ensure that every eligible girl benefited from the intervention.

She further advised the chairmen's wives to maintain close collaboration with their respective LGA women leaders and familiarise themselves with relevant constitutional provisions to understand their roles and responsibilities better.

According to her, their positions demand integrity, empathy, accessibility, good character and optimism, as well as a commitment to creating meaningful value and sustainable impact in their communities.

The Edo First Lady also cautioned against the mismanagement of public funds, stressing that transparency, accountability and responsible leadership must remain central to the discharge of their duties.

She advised them to maintain appropriate dress standards at official engagements, noting that their appearance should reflect the nature and demands of the occasions they attend.

On inclusive community development, Mrs. Anani urged them to replicate international commemorative activities at the local government level to promote awareness, inclusion and access to empowerment opportunities.

She specifically identified the International Day of the

Girl Child, International Day of the Boy Child, Menstrual Hygiene Day, Widows' Day, International Day of Older Persons and International Day of Persons with Disabilities as occasions that should be observed to address the needs of different groups.

Emphasising balanced child development, she called for adequate attention to the welfare of both boys and girls, noting that the boy child must not be neglected in efforts to promote healthy development and prevent avoidable social challenges.

Mrs. Anani also thanked the delegation for their condolence visit following the death of her mother, late Mrs. Charity Okpebholo.

Earlier, the delegation, led by Mrs. Helen Ekpeson, wife of the Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Area, thanked the First Lady for receiving them and conveyed their condolences over the loss.

Mrs. Ekpeson prayed that Almighty God would comfort the family and grant them the strength to bear the loss.



COURTESY VISIT:

The Coordinator, Office of the First Lady, Edo State, Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo Anani, in a group photograph with wives of Local Government Area (LGA) Chairmen during their courtesy visit to Government House, Benin City,

Oluku tanker inferno: Several...

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and specialised Burns Unit.

In a hands-on response to the disaster, Professor Ize-Iyamu worked with the hospital's emergency teams to facilitate the prompt assessment, triage and treatment of casualties, particularly those with severe burns and other life-threatening injuries.

The hospital mobilised medical personnel, including surgeons, anaesthetists, burn-care specialists and emergency nurses, to attend to the victims. Additional personnel were reportedly called in to strengthen the response as the facility worked to manage the influx of casualties.

The immediate medical priorities included resuscitating critically injured patients, managing severe burns and possible inhalation injuries, and preventing complications such as res-

piratory failure and infections.

The explosion also prompted emergency rescue operations involving security personnel and firefighters, who worked to contain the situation and assist affected residents.

Reacting to the tragedy, the Edo State All Progressives Congress (APC) Campaign Council expressed deep sorrow over the incident, commiserating with the affected families and praying for the speedy recovery of injured victims.

In a statement issued by its Director of Media, John Mayaki, the council described the incident as heartbreaking and called for urgent support for survivors and families affected by the disaster.

"Our hearts go out to the families affected by this unfortunate tragedy. We share in their grief and pray that Almighty God grants them the strength to bear their losses,"

Edo ICTA raises cybersecurity awareness, warns residents against malware attacks

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Information and Communication Technology Agency (Edo ICTA) has urged residents to strengthen their digital security practices and remain vigilant against malware attacks to promote a safer digital environment across the state.

The agency said the awareness campaign, themed "Malware: Stop, Detect, Protect," aligns with Governor Monday Okpebholo's SHINE Agenda and reflects the state government's commitment to digital awareness, cybersecurity and

responsible technology use.

The campaign seeks to educate residents on the importance of safeguarding digital devices, protecting personal information and adopting safe online practices amid growing dependence on digital technology.

The Managing Director of Edo ICTA, Mr. Eghosa Urhohide, emphasised the need to deepen public awareness of cybersecurity, noting that protecting digital systems and sensitive information is essential to building public confidence in technology.

Similarly, the Director of the Systems Engineering and Cybersecurity Department, Engr.

Courage Adaghe, stressed the importance of promoting a culture of digital safety and encouraging residents to adopt responsible online practices.

As part of activities marking Cybersecurity Awareness Month, Adaghe advised residents to regularly update their devices, install reliable antivirus software, download applications only from trusted sources and avoid suspicious links that could expose their devices and personal information to malicious software.

The agency noted that malware poses significant risks to individuals, businesses and public institutions, stressing

that preventive measures and sustained public education are critical to reducing cybersecurity threats.

It added that cybersecurity is a collective responsibility, urging residents to remain alert and take practical steps to protect their digital assets from potential attacks.

Edo ICTA reaffirmed its commitment to building a secure and resilient digital ecosystem in the state through sustained awareness campaigns and the promotion of responsible technology use.

The agency urged residents to embrace the message, "Stop, Detect, Protect," as a practical guide to safeguarding their devices, personal information and digital assets.

Sierra Leone will never forget Nigeria's sacrifice for peace — Ex-VP

IGIEBOR CONFIDENCE

ABUJA

Former Vice-President of Sierra Leone, Samuel Sam-Sumana, has paid

tribute to Nigeria for its contributions to restoring peace in his country, saying the sacrifices made by Nigerian troops and civilians during the civil war would remain

etched in the nation's history. Sam-Sumana made this known when the leadership of the Defence Correspondents Association of Nigeria (DECAN) paid him a courtesy

visit, according to a statement issued by the association's president, Sunday Odita, and made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja on Wednesday.

He expressed appreciation to Nigeria and other countries that supported efforts to restore peace and stability in Sierra Leone during the civil war.

The former vice-president acknowledged the sacrifices of Nigerian military personnel and civilians, stressing that their contributions to ending the conflict and rebuilding stability in his country deserved lasting recognition.

He described Nigeria as a big brother to other West African nations, noting that its stability and prosperity had significant implications for the entire sub-region.

"As a Sierra Leonean, I wish to express my profound gratitude for the role Nigeria and other countries played in helping Sierra Leone regain peace and stability," he said.

"When Nigeria catches a cold, the rest of us sneeze," Sam-Sumana added, highlighting the close relationship

between Nigeria's fortunes and the wellbeing of neighbouring countries.

The former vice-president also called on journalists to strengthen accountability in public service by holding political leaders responsible for their decisions and actions.

He described constructive criticism as an important tool for improving public institutions and promoting good governance, urging public officials not to interpret critical media reports as acts of hostility.

Sam-Sumana stressed that journalists had a responsibility to provide fair, accurate and credible information, particularly on defence, security and other matters of national importance.

He maintained that responsible journalism was essential to promoting transparency and ensuring that public institutions remained accountable to the people.



INAUGURATION:

From left: Senate President Godswill Akpabio; Wife of the Vice President, Hajia Nana Shettima; Vice President Kashim Shettima; President Bola Ahmed Tinubu; First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu and APC National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, during the Presidential inauguration of the APC 2027 Presidential Campaign Council in Abuja on Wednesday.

Igbokoda crash: Health scare as NAF jet pollutes river

● **Aiyedatiwa orders fumigation, water tankers as Air Force pledges clean-up**

OSEMUDIAMHEN O. FAITH

IGBOKODA

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has assured residents of Igbokoda, Ondo State, of decisive action to address environmental concerns arising from its crashed aircraft, as the Ondo State Government ordered immediate fumigation of the affected river and distribution of potable water.

The NAF, in a statement on Thursday in Abuja by its spokesman, Air Commodore Ehimen Ejodame, acknowledged complaints of offensive odour and possible environmental impact from the crash site.

The Force said it noted the discomfort, anxiety and uncertainty the situation had caused and assured the com-

munity that their concerns were being taken seriously.

Ejodame said search and recovery operations were still ongoing in coordination with relevant partner agencies to ensure safe and orderly recovery of the wreckage.

He said upon completion of the operation, the NAF would engage environmental and public health authorities to assess the situation and coordinate appropriate response.

"Upon completion of the recovery operation, it will engage with the appropriate environmental and public health authorities and other relevant agencies to assess the situation and coordinate appropriate action to address any identified environmental concerns," he said.

Meanwhile, Governor

Lucky Aiyedatiwa has directed the ministries of environment and health to begin extensive fumigation of the river where the aircraft crashed.

Aiyedatiwa said the directive was aimed at preventing a possible outbreak of diseases, as the river remains a major source of livelihood for residents of Igbokoda and neighbouring communities.

The governor also directed the Ilaje Local Government to arrange water tankers for continuous distribution of potable water to residents if the river is found to be severely polluted and unsuitable for use.

According to a statement by the Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Idowu Ajanaku, the arrangement will remain in place

pending a lasting intervention.

Aiyedatiwa further directed the ministries to provide nose masks and other essential health kits to residents.

He reiterated the state government's commitment to providing all necessary support to the NAF in its ongoing evacuation efforts and ensuring the welfare and safety of residents of the affected community.

The NAF ATR-42 aircraft (NAF 931), with 25 persons on board, comprising five crew members and 20 passengers, crashed on October 5, 2026, while on a routine mission from Benin City, Edo State, to Lagos.

Although search-and-rescue operations were immediately activated, the passengers and crew have yet to be located.

After row over suicide bill, Senate declares Akpabio's seat not vacant

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Senate on Thursday resolved that the seat of its President, Godswill Akpabio, was not vacant following a mild drama during plenary over his remarks on a bill seeking to decriminalise attempted suicide.

The resolution followed Akpabio's assertion that some politicians were targeting him because of the position he occupies as President of the 11th Senate.

Akpabio said his comments during deliberations on the suicide prevention bill had been

taken out of context by individuals he alleged were interested in his position.

Clarifying his remarks, the Senate President insisted that he did not malign the Islamic religion while contributing to the debate on the proposed legislation.

The bill, sponsored by Akpabio, seeks to establish a framework for suicide prevention, decriminalise attempted suicide and provide rehabilitation for people who attempt to take their own lives.

The resolution reaffirming that the Senate President's seat was not vacant followed the exchange during Thursday's plenary.



GODSWILL AKPABIO

2027 Elections: Amupitan inaugurates logistics committee, warns against late arrival of materials

CAROLINE AMEH

LAGOS

The Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan, has inaugurated the Electoral Logistics Committee (ELOC) to strengthen preparations for the 2027 general elections, warning that no Nigerian should be disenfranchised because of the late arrival of election materials.

Amupitan inaugurated the committee on Thursday at INEC headquarters in Abuja, naming National Electoral Commissioner, retired Rear Admiral Jamila Abubakar-

Sadiq, as its chairperson.

Describing the 2027 electoral preparations as a marathon rather than a sprint, the INEC chairman said early planning and effective coordination were essential to ensuring the timely and secure distribution of election materials nationwide.

He identified logistics as one of the most critical components of the electoral process, noting that the credibility of an election depends significantly on the availability of essential materials at polling units at the designated time.

According to him, the inauguration was a proactive step towards addressing the challenges associated with trans-

porting sensitive and non-sensitive election materials across Nigeria's diverse geographical terrain through road, air and maritime routes.

Amupitan said the committee would adopt a multi-agency approach, bringing together military and paramilitary institutions, security agencies and relevant transport organisations to improve coordination and operational efficiency.

He explained that the committee's terms of reference include assessing the logistical requirements for the elections, developing comprehensive plans for the storage, distribution, deployment and retrieval of election materials, and evaluating

the readiness of warehouses, vehicles, airports, seaports and other transportation facilities.

The committee is also expected to identify logistical gaps, ensure timely delivery of materials to all parts of the country, monitor compliance with approved schedules and develop strategies to address transportation bottlenecks, shortages and security threats.

The INEC chairman urged members to demonstrate professionalism and commitment, stressing that the country's varied terrain, from the creeks of the Niger Delta to the arid regions of the North, required flexible and resilient logistical arrangements.

He said the commission was

determined to ensure that logistical failures did not undermine voter participation or the credibility of the electoral process.

In her remarks, Abubakar-Sadiq described election logistics as the operational foundation of democracy, noting that effective planning and execution directly influence electoral integrity and public confidence.

She said the committee would develop a strategic logistics plan informed by lessons from previous elections, identify systemic vulnerabilities and establish mechanisms for the seamless movement of election materials.

The retired naval officer listed strategic airlift and cargo

planning, land and maritime transportation, identification of operational bottlenecks, and the mapping of difficult terrain and security-challenged locations among the committee's priorities.

She added that the committee would develop appropriate transportation and security arrangements for high-risk areas and submit a comprehensive report containing actionable recommendations and clearly defined operational timelines.

Abubakar-Sadiq also proposed the establishment of specialised subcommittees to handle airlift operations, land transportation, maritime transportation, storage and security, where necessary.



THE NIGERIAN OBSERVER

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LONG MAY HE REIGN

Ondo crash: Search and recovery operations still ongoing – NAF

AKURE

The Nigerian Air Force has acknowledged concerns raised by residents of Igbokoda in Ondo State over an offensive odour and fears of possible environmental impact following the recent aircraft accident in the community.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the Director of Public Relations and Informa-

tion, Air Commodore Ehimen Ejodame, said the Force recognises the discomfort caused by the situation.

The NAF acknowledges the concerns expressed by residents of Igbokoda, Ondo State, particularly reports of an offensive odour and fears of possible environmental impact following the aircraft accident,” Ejodame stated.

“The NAF recognises the

discomfort, anxiety and uncertainty such circumstances may cause and assures the affected community that their concerns are being taken seriously.”

He noted that search and recovery operations remain ongoing. “While search and recovery operations remain ongoing, the NAF continues to work in coordination with relevant partner agencies to

ensure the safe and orderly recovery of the wreckage,” the statement read.

Ejodame added that environmental assessments would follow the completion of recovery efforts. “Upon completion of the recovery operation, the NAF will engage with the appropriate environmental and public health authorities and other relevant agencies to

assess the situation and coordinate appropriate action to address any identified environmental concerns,” he said.

The Air Force reaffirmed its commitment to the community. “The NAF remains concerned about the wellbeing of the affected community and is committed to constructive engagement with relevant stakeholders to ensure that ap-

propriate measures are taken in the interest of public health, safety and environmental well-being,” Ejodame concluded.

The ATR-42 aircraft (NAF 931) crashed in a swampy area of Igbokoda on October 5, 2026, while on a routine mission from Benin City to Lagos. All 25 people on board — five crew members and 20 passengers, lost their lives.

NSCDC arrests man for vandalising telecom mast in Anambra

AWKA

The operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Anambra State Command, have arrested one Anuba Chisom, male, aged 39, for vandalism of an IHS-MTN telecom mast located at Okpuno, close to UNIZIK Temporary Site, Awka.

Chisom, from Amaputa, Isiala Ngwa North, Abia State, was apprehended at about 4 am on Thursday, following credible intelligence while operatives were on routine patrol within the area.

The NSCDC Anambra State Commandant, Olatunde Maku, disclosed this on Thursday, while parading the suspect at the State Command Headquarters, Awka.

Maku said that the suspect belongs to a syndicate responsible for the rising wave of vandalism in the state.

Maku said, “In the course of routine patrol by the Command’s Anti-Vandal operatives, credible information was received concerning unusual movement inside an IHS-MTN mast with site number IHS_ANA_0888A located at Okpuno, Awka South LGA, close to Igwe Okpuno’s palace.

“The team swooped on the suspect and apprehended him at the scene with vandalised cables and other components of the mast.

“Preliminary investigation revealed that the suspect belongs to a syndicate responsible for the rising wave of vandalism in the state.”

He added that the suspect has voluntarily confessed to having vandalised two other sites before now, blaming his action on unemployment.

The State Commandant commended the “eagle eyes” of the operatives and warned that the Corps will not tolerate vandalism of critical national, state and local government assets and infrastructure.

“Unemployment is not a licence for crime; we therefore warned all economic saboteurs and vandals to relocate from Anambra State, as the Command will smoke them out and ensure they face the full wrath of the law.

“Members of the public are enjoined to continue to provide timely and credible information to aid NSCDC operations in the State,” he added.

Consequently, the State Commandant has directed that a thorough investigation be conducted, after which the suspect will be charged to court.

NBA probes mismanagement claims of N100m Imo govt gift to Owerri branch

OWERRI

The President of the Nigerian Bar Association, Oyinkansola Badejo-Okusanya, SAN, has constituted a three-member committee to investigate allegations of impropriety in the receipt, management and disbursement of a N100m gift from the Imo State Government to the NBA Owerri Branch.

The decision followed concerns raised by members of the branch and a requisition by 183 members for an Extraordinary General Meeting over the matter.

According to a statement on Thursday on her X handle, Badejo-Okusanya acknowledged receipt of letters dated October 13 and 14 concerning the developing situation in the branch and the proposed meeting.

She said the concerns surrounding the receipt and disbursement of the funds

required a clear account and fair examination, adding that members must be allowed to ask questions and receive answers in an atmosphere conducive to orderly discussion.

The NBA President stated that the committee comprises the NBA General Secretary, Afam Okeke; Third Vice-President, Iniobong Pepple; and Treasurer, Esther Jimoh.

“I have constituted a three-member committee to investigate allegations of impropriety concerning the receipt, management and disbursement of the N100 million gift from the Imo State Government to the NBA Owerri Branch.

“The committee comprises the NBA General Secretary, Afam Okeke; Third Vice-President, Iniobong Irene Pepple; and Treasurer, Esther Jimoh,” the statement read.

According to the NBA president, the committee will examine relevant financial re-

cords, receive representations from concerned parties and submit its findings and recommendations to her no later than October 30, 2026.

Badejo-Okusanya confirmed that the Extraordinary General Meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 15, 2026, at 2 pm should proceed as planned.

She said the committee members would attend the meeting as her representatives to observe proceedings, ensure that a signed attendance register was taken and give necessary directions to maintain order.

In the letter, she urged the branch chairman to facilitate the committee’s access to the venue and provide it with full cooperation.

She stressed that the investigation was intended to establish the facts surrounding the controversy and ensure that members’ concerns were addressed through due process.

The NBA president also em-

phasised that setting up the committee did not amount to a finding of wrongdoing against any individual.

“Everyone whose conduct is called into question will be given a fair opportunity to respond. All relevant financial records must be preserved and made available to facilitate a thorough examination,” she said.

Badejo-Okusanya reaffirmed her commitment to ensuring that concerns raised by members were handled through a fair, transparent and orderly process.

“As President of the Nigerian Bar Association, I remain committed to ensuring that concerns raised by members are addressed through a fair, transparent and orderly process. Accountability must go hand in hand with due process, and our response must sustain members’ confidence in the Association,” the statement added.

Duke likens pro-Tinubu opposition parties to Abacha-era ‘leprous fingers’

LAGOS

Presidential candidate of the Peoples Redemption Party, Donald Duke, has likened opposition parties supporting President Bola Tinubu’s 2027 re-election bid to political parties that backed former military ruler Sani Abacha’s transition programme.

Duke, a former Cross River State governor made the comparison during an interview on ARISE News on Thursday, where he criticised some opposition parties for supporting Tinubu despite belonging to

the opposition.

He recalled the expression “five leprous fingers”, a phrase used in Nigeria’s political history to describe the five political parties registered under Abacha’s military regime in the 1990s.

“Before I go into that, you know, you talked about the opposition, some of the opposition parties, um, supporting the president. It was reminiscent of what happened in, uh, Abacha’s transition.

“You know the five leper’s fingers? Yes. So you now have four leper’s fingers because one

of the fingers has been—has dropped off,” he said.

The expression was coined by the late Chief Bola Ige, a former Oyo State governor and prominent opposition figure, to condemn the five parties established under Abacha’s transition programme.

The parties were the United Nigeria Congress Party, National Centre Party of Nigeria, Grassroots Democratic Movement, Democratic Party of Nigeria and Committee for National Consensus.

In 1998, the five parties adopted Abacha as their sole

presidential candidate, a move widely criticised as an attempt to prolong military rule under civilian cover.

Abacha died on June 8, 1998, before the plan could be completed. His successor, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, subsequently dissolved the parties and introduced a new transition programme that led to the return to civilian rule in 1999.

Duke’s remarks come amid political realignments ahead of the 2027 general elections, with opposition figures divided over strategies to challenge Tinubu’s re-election bid.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **Miss. STELLA OSASUYI**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. STELLA AKPORE**. All former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MRS. OKORO ROSELINE**. now wish to be known and addressed as **Miss. ROSE PEACE EFEMWENKIE ERINMWIONROSE OJO**. All former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **EVANS O. EKHATOR**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **OSUNDE EVANS EKHATOR**. all former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

REMOVER OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **AYODEJI OGHENETEGA-JOHN OBANURE** and **AYODEJE OGHENETEGA OBANURE**. are one and the same person henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as **AYODEJI OGHENETEGA OBANURE** all former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **CLINTON DOMINIC**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **OSASU CLINTON AIWUYOR**. all former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME/ CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

I, formerly known as **OKPISA JOY**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **OKPISA ANN ANTHOSIMHE**. and my correct date of birth is 19th of July, 2004 and not 8th July, 2003 as was wrongly written on my (B.V.N) all former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **Miss. PRIYE OSARETIN MERIT** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs OSAYANDE MERIT OSARETIN**. all former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **EKIOMADO NILL ERIAMIATOR**. now wish to be known and addressed as **ERIAMATOR BRIGJET EKI**. all former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **LUCKY SAMUEL AMADI**. and not **IMADI IREDIA**. as was wrongly written on my (B.V.N). and also my correct date of birth is 15th MARCH 2001 and not 24th AUGUST 1988. All former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **Miss. ESENE OSEHONTUE FAVOUR**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. IKEKELE OSEHONTUE FAVOUR**. All former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **Miss. ANUWELE PATRICIA**. now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. OCHOROGOR PATRICIA**. all former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF MIDDLE NAME

I, formerly known as **OMO - EKHAESE RUKEVWE JULIET**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **EKHAESE RUKEVWE JULIET**. All former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **EDOSA RICHES**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **EDOSA RICHES IYENGUMWENA**. All former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **ARCHIGOR CHRISTIANA**. now wish to be known and addressed as **ATSEGOR CHRISTIANA**. All former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH

I, formerly known as **AYO GODWIN ISHEKAREO**. now wish to be known and addressed as **EFEDIA GODWIN ISHEKHAREWO**. and also my correct date of birth is 12th day of february 1972 and not 12th day of february 1977. All former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

ARRANGEMENT OF NAMES

The general public is hereby notified that the correct arrangement of names is **IMOISILI ABIGAIL OSEMEGBE**. and not **OSEMEGBE IMOISILI ABIGAIL**. as was erroneously written in my NIN registration. All former documents remain valid concern Authorities and the general public should please take note.

NEWS

Reps consider bill to create renewable energy authority

IBADAN

The House of Representatives has passed for second reading a bill seeking to establish the National Authority for Renewable Energy to coordinate the regulation, development and promotion of renewable energy in Nigeria.

The Electricity Act (Amend-

ment) Bill, 2025, sponsored by the member representing Ogburu Federal Constituency, Anambra State, Afam Ogene, was passed for second reading on Thursday following debate by lawmakers.

Ogene, who chairs the House Committee on Renewable Energy, said the proposed legislation would address institutional gaps in the power

sector by transferring renewable energy functions currently handled by the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission, the Rural Electrification Agency and the Rural Electrification Fund to the proposed authority.

He argued that consolidating these responsibilities under a dedicated institution would improve coordination,

reduce duplication of functions and provide a clearer direction for renewable energy development.

"This specialisation will improve coordination, reduce institutional overlaps and provide focused direction for the effective development of the renewable energy sector," Ogene said.

Under the proposed law,

NARE would be responsible for promoting renewable energy projects, particularly mini-grid and off-grid electricity systems serving rural, unserved and underserved communities, as well as island settlements.

The authority would also be empowered to support local manufacturing, research and technical capacity development through financial, fiscal and regulatory incentives designed to attract investment and create jobs in the sector.

The bill proposes a broader energy mix through the development of solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, biomass and hydrogen energy sources.

It also provides for the authority to oversee licensing, establish standards, promote fair tariffs and handle disputes within the renewable energy market, while working with NERC and the Federal Ministry of Finance to harmonise policies and facilitate the integration of renewable energy into the national grid.

A key provision of the bill proposes that 40 per cent of the annual funds of the Rural Electrification Fund be allocated to NARE to finance re-

newable energy development.

Explaining the need for the proposed reform, Ogene said expanding the national grid alone would not resolve Nigeria's electricity challenges, particularly in communities that remain beyond the reach of reliable grid infrastructure.

"We must embrace innovative, decentralised and renewable energy solutions that can reach communities and businesses more efficiently," he said.

The proposed authority is expected to place greater institutional emphasis on decentralised power generation, including systems that can supply electricity to households, businesses and public facilities in areas with limited or no grid access.

Following deliberations, the House unanimously adopted the bill for second reading and referred it to the relevant committee for further legislative scrutiny.

The committee is expected to examine its provisions, including the proposed transfer of personnel, assets and ongoing projects from existing institutions, before reporting back to the House.



INAUGURAL MEETING:

Representative of the Inspector General of Police, Abayomi Shogunle; INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan and the INEC National Commissioner/Chairman, Election Logistics Committee (E-LOC), retired Rear Admiral Jemila Sadiq, during the inaugural meeting of the ELC, in Abuja on Thursday.

UCH resident doctors suspend warning strike

IBADAN

The Association of Resident Doctors, University College Hospital, Ibadan, has suspended its three-day warning strike and directed members to resume duty on Thursday.

The association announced the suspension in a memo issued to members and made available to the News Agency of Nigeria in Ibadan on Thursday.

The association's President, Dr Uthman Adedeji and General Secretary, Dr Mary Awodiji, jointly signed the memo.

"Sequel to the resolutions of the Emergency General Meeting (EGM), held on Thursday, Oct. 8, members are hereby informed that the 3-day warning strike has been completed.

"Consequently, work resumes today, Thursday, Oct. 15, by 8.00 a.m.," the memo said.

It enjoined all members to promptly resume at their respective duty posts, adding that congress would receive updates on stipulated timelines in the coming days.

It would be recalled that ARD-UCH embarked on the three-day warning strike on Monday over persistent electricity crisis and chronic water shortage at the College of Medicine axis of the hospital.

The association is demanding immediate restoration of electricity to the area, urgent repair of all faulty circuit breakers as backups, and uninterrupted electricity supply to every part of the hospital.

It also issued a seven-day ultimatum to UCH management from Oct. 12 to Oct. 19, after which it said it might proceed with an indefinite strike should the demands remain unmet.

Imo land dispute: Reps halt development, order disarming of armed men

ABUJA

The House of Representatives has ordered an immediate suspension of development activities on a disputed parcel of land in Ngor Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State and directed that armed men allegedly intimidating residents be disarmed.

The orders followed allegations of illegal land acquisition, threats to villagers, shootings and other abuses in Umundioche and neighbouring communities, as the House Committee on Public Petitions began considering a petition over the dispute.

At its hearing on Wednesday, the committee directed that no further work be carried out on the land until the matter was resolved through the committee or other appropriate channels.

The petition, numbered 901 of 2026, was filed by J.U. Okoye Chambers against Prince Charles Amadi, popularly known as Chavon, Chikadibia Anyanwu and Chidubem Nwosu. It also

names HRH Eze Lambert Unuoha, the traditional ruler of Nma 1 of Obioma Autonomous Community, as a respondent.

The petition alleged the illegal acquisition of more than 2,500 hectares of land belonging to Umuoyere, Umundioche and Okwuruma in Obioma Autonomous Community, as well as Umueme in Obike Autonomous Community, all in Ngor Okpala.

Other allegations include attempted murder, shootings, invasion of the communities by armed men, desecration of a corpse, abuse of police powers and breach of a memorandum of understanding.

Presiding over the hearing on behalf of the committee chairman, the Deputy Chairman, Matthew Nwogu, said the parties must refrain from further activities on the disputed property pending the resolution of the matter.

"There are orders that no more actions on this land until this matter is resolved, either through this place, or through which oth-

er means you want to resolve it. That's the first order. No more putting up caterpillars or bulldozers in that land," he said.

Nwogu also directed that the armed men allegedly operating in the community be disarmed, saying the committee had contacted the Department of State Services and the police to establish whether they had supplied the weapons.

"All the boys that are armed in that village should be disarmed. Because we have made contact with the DSS. They said they didn't give them the gun. The police said they didn't," he said.

He added that the directives were necessary to prevent further escalation while the committee examined the competing claims.

The hearing was marked by disagreements between lawyers representing the parties over a pending court case and whether its existence should prevent the committee from considering the petition.

Counsel to Charles Farms Limited, identified during the proceedings as one of the parties involved in the dispute, main-

tained that his clients had lawfully acquired the land and made the necessary payments to the relevant parties.

He dismissed the allegations as false and disclosed that his clients had instituted legal proceedings against the petitioners.

According to the lawyer, he had written to the committee on September 28, 2026, explaining his clients' position and providing details of the court action.

He, however, admitted that he had not brought the supporting court documents to the hearing.

The committee chairman rejected the letter and oral explanations as insufficient, insisting that certified documents were needed to establish the status and scope of the case.

The lawyer subsequently undertook to organise the available documents, certify the relevant papers and submit them to the committee.

A member of the committee cautioned against treating the existence of a court case as an automatic reason to discontinue the legislative investigation.

2027: I can bet my life Obi will humiliate Soludo in Anambra – Momodu

LAGOS

A chieftain of the African Democratic Congress, Dele Momodu, has said Peter Obi could defeat President Bola Tinubu in the South-East and parts of the South-South in the 2027 presidential election.

Momodu said Obi, the Nigeria Democratic Congress's presidential candidate in the 2023 election, remained popular in the two regions and could pose a major challenge to Tinubu's re-election bid.

He stated this during an interview on Arise Television on Wednesday, while discussing the opposition's chances in the 2027 general election.

"I can tell you something. Soludo is the same. I can bet my life on it that Peter Obi will humiliate and disgrace Soludo in Anambra state. I have no question about that," Momodu said.

He described Obi as a "rock star" in the South-East and South-South, arguing that his popularity could affect Tinubu's electoral prospects in the regions.

"Peter Obi is a rock star. Where he comes from, especially in the South-East and the South-South," he said.

Momodu, however, declared his support for former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, who is also seeking to challenge Tinubu in 2027 under the ADC.

He said he would welcome calls for opposition leaders to unite, noting that their ability to work together could influence the outcome of the election.

"I'm supporting Atiku, but I will be very happy when people

say, 'Oh, if you people don't come together, you are going to lose election,'" he said.

According to Momodu, Tinubu would face a difficult task if Obi retained his influence in the South-East and South-South, as the President would need substantial support across the southern part of the country while also competing in the North.

"The scenario is different this time. Peter Obi will humiliate Tinubu and all his supporters in the South-East and South-South. And that's dangerous for Tinubu," he said.

He added that Tinubu would need to secure the three southern regions to strengthen his chances of victory, while also seeking support in the North.

"For Tinubu to win, he needs to lock down all the three regions in the South, and he now has to go and struggle in the North, where, number one, he was supported last time by President Muhammadu Buhari," Momodu said.

Tinubu won the 2023 presidential election, while Obi finished third behind Atiku, who contested on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party.

Obi secured significant support in the South-East and parts of the South-South during the 2023 election, while Tinubu's victory was supported by votes from several parts of the country.

The 2027 presidential election is expected to feature renewed competition among major political parties, with opposition figures facing calls to build a common platform to challenge the ruling All Progressives Congress.

NEWS

Customs, Delta Ports seek stronger collaboration

WARRI

The Nigeria Customs Service, Edo/Delta Area Command, has called for stronger collaboration with Delta Ports to improve operational efficiency and service delivery.

The new Edo/Delta Customs Area Controller, Dooyum Ortsen, made the call on Thursday when he led his management team on

a courtesy visit to the Ports Manager of Delta Ports, Warri, Saadi Dahiru Mohammed.

The visit was aimed at strengthening institutional relations, improving communication and fostering cooperation between the two organisations.

This was disclosed in a statement signed by an Assistant Superintendent of Customs in the command's Public Relations Office, Peters Josu, and made available to journal-

ists in Warri.

According to the statement, the visit "was aimed at fostering mutual understanding, enhancing communication, and reinforcing the existing relationship between both parties".

It added that the meeting provided an opportunity for both sides to discuss areas of common interest and explore ways to improve cooperation in support of efficient port operations and service delivery.

Josu said the importance of maintaining cordial working relationships, regular communication and mutual cooperation was emphasised during the engagement.

The statement read, "Both parties acknowledged that although their respective responsibilities may differ, effective collaboration remains essential to achieving shared objectives, particularly in promoting operational efficiency, safety, and professionalism

within the port environment."

It added that the meeting highlighted the need for continuous dialogue and stakeholder engagement to address operational challenges, strengthen working relationships and ensure the smooth conduct of activities within the port.

According to the statement, the visit reflected the organisations' commitment to building sustainable partnerships with relevant stakeholders and maintaining positive institutional relations.

It expressed optimism that the engagement would strengthen cooperation and

create opportunities for sustained collaboration in the interest of effective service delivery.

The statement added that both organisations reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining the relationship through regular engagement, open communication and a shared dedication to achieving common goals.

It said the visit formed part of ongoing efforts to promote stakeholder relations, encourage inter-agency cooperation and strengthen partnerships that would contribute to improved operational efficiency and service delivery.

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE:**

From left: President Chartered Institute of Statisticians of Nigeria (CISON), Dr Godday Ebu; Technical Assistant in the office of the Vice President, Dr Fred Ekaga; Chief Statistician/Director, OECD Statistics and Data Directorate, Paris, Prof. Steve Macfeely; Statistician-General/CEO National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Prince Adeyemi Adeniran, during the ongoing 3rd International Conference and 50th year Anniversary of the CISON in Abuja on Thursday

Photos: Anthony Alabi/NAN

2027: Atiku unveils portal for Nigerians to question him

ABUJA

The African Democratic Congress presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, has launched a citizen-engagement platform that lets Nigerians question him about his political record, policy proposals, and plans for the country.

The platform, tagged Ask AA, is scheduled to go live, according to a statement issued by the Director of Strategic Communication for the ADC Presidential Campaign Council, Phrank Shaibu.

According to the statement, the portal will allow Nigerians to submit questions on issues including the economy, security, technology, job creation and measures to make life more affordable.

The statement said Atiku would personally respond to questions submitted through the platform, while members of his media team would also assist in providing answers.

It added that the initiative was designed to bridge the information gap between voters and the former Vice-President by providing a direct channel for citizens to seek information about his positions and policy proposals.

Shaibu said the platform was aimed at bringing Atiku closer to Nigerians through direct engagement.

"The objective of this initiative is to bring Atiku Abubakar closer to the electorate through a practical, problem-solving platform," he said.

He added that the initiative reflected Atiku's commitment to using modern technology to make governance more efficient, secure and effective.

The campaign council also said it planned to introduce a radio interface to enable communities without internet access to participate in the initiative.

Melaye alleges weak N'Assembly oversight of Tinubu's governance

In a message announcing the platform on his social media accounts, Atiku said he conceived the idea because he believed that leadership should

involve direct communication between elected leaders and the people.

"For too long, governance has felt distant—locked behind walls of bureaucracy. But our country's greatest resource isn't oil or land; it is our people. If we are going to build the Nigeria of our dreams, we must start by tearing down the walls between leaders and the people," he said.

Atiku described Ask AA as a platform for transparency, accountability and dialogue, adding that Nigerians would be free to question his economic record, examine his policy plans and offer suggestions on national development.

"No filters, no intermediaries," he said.

He further disclosed that he

would personally call selected participants who provide their contact details on the platform to hear about their experiences and the challenges affecting their daily lives.

"Beyond answering questions here, I will personally call selected citizens who leave their contact details so I can hear directly about their experiences and the issues affecting their daily lives," he said.

Atiku, who served as Vice-President from 1999 to 2007, has sought the Nigerian presidency several times.

He urged Nigerians to participate in the initiative by submitting questions and recommendations, saying a technology-driven and transparent government should begin with how leaders listen to citizens.

NIS confirms death of officer in Niger attack, vows justice

MINNA

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) has confirmed the death of one of its officers following an attack by unidentified armed men on personnel conducting routine surveillance patrols in Niger State.

The attack occurred on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at about 11:30 a.m. along the Tunga Taya-Woro axis of the state, involving two personnel attached to the Service's Wawa Control Post.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the NIS identified the deceased officer as Assistant Superintendent of Immigration (ASI) I.U. Babangida, while the other officer, Inspector A.K. Musa, sustained serious injuries but managed to escape.

According to the service, the injured officer is currently receiving medical attention.

"The incident occurred on Tuesday, 6th October 2026, at about 11:30 hours, when two personnel on routine surveillance patrol were violently attacked by unidentified armed men," the statement said.

"Sadly, one officer, ASI I.U. Babangida, tragically lost his life, while the other, Inspector A.K. Musa, sustained serious injuries but managed to escape and is currently receiving medical attention."

The Service disclosed that the deceased officer had been laid to rest in accordance with Islamic rites, describing his

death as a loss to the organisation. "The Service honours his sacrifice and unwavering commitment to duty," the statement added.

The NIS also extended its condolences to the family, colleagues and loved ones of the deceased officer, while wishing the injured personnel a speedy recovery.

"The Service condoles with the family, colleagues and loved ones of the deceased officer and wishes the injured personnel a speedy recovery, assuring both families of its continued support and assistance during this difficult period," it said.

On efforts to apprehend those responsible, the Service said it was collaborating with the Niger State Government and other security agencies to track down the attackers.

"The Service is working closely with the Niger State Government and relevant security agencies to identify and apprehend those responsible for this heinous act and ensure that they are brought to justice," the statement said.

Despite the attack, the Immigration Service insisted that the incident would not weaken its resolve to carry out its statutory responsibilities, particularly the protection of Nigeria's borders.

"The Nigeria Immigration Service remains undeterred by this unfortunate incident and reaffirms its unwavering commitment to safeguarding the Nation's Borders," it stated.

Stakeholders decry weak prosecution of SGBV cases in Kaduna

KADUNA

The Executive Director of the CLEEN Foundation, Peter Maduoma, has decried weak investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence cases in Kaduna State. He warned that poor institutional coordination and inadequate support for survivors were undermining the fight against abuse.

Maduoma said the enactment of laws to protect victims

would not guarantee justice unless relevant institutions ensured that survivors could safely report abuses, access protection and obtain timely justice.

He spoke at the opening of a two-day state-level policy dialogue on bridging the implementation gap in the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law, organised by the CLEEN Foundation in Kaduna on Wednesday.

Maduoma, who was represented by the organisation's Senior Finance and Adminis-

tration Manager, Justina Johnson, said the effectiveness of the law should be assessed by its impact on survivors rather than its mere existence.

"The real test of the law is not simply whether it has been enacted, but whether a person experiencing domestic violence can safely seek help and receive a timely response," he said.

He stressed that survivors of sexual violence must be able to report abuses without intimidation, stigma or victim-blaming, adding that children exposed to

violence must receive adequate protection.

Maduoma identified poor coordination among institutions, inadequate public awareness, weak investigation and prosecution, insufficient survivor-centred services and resource constraints as major challenges affecting the implementation of the law.

"These are issues that require careful examination rather than assumptions. We need to understand which challenges are most pronounced in Ka-

duna State, where institutional processes break down, what is already working, and which reforms are feasible within existing structures," he said.

The dialogue brought together stakeholders from government ministries, Kaduna State University, the National Human Rights Commission, the CLEEN Foundation and other institutions to examine gaps in the implementation of the law and identify measures to improve access to justice for survivors.

NEWS

Tinubu, Shettima pictures adorn first Niger Bridge

ASABA

The First Niger Bridge linking Anambra and Delta states has been decorated with pictures of President Bola Tinubu and Vice-President Kashim Shettima ahead of its reopening on Thursday after weeks of rehabilitation works.

The Minister of Works, Dave Umahi, is expected to reopen the bridge, which connects Onitsha in Anambra State to Asaba in Delta State.

It was observed on Thursday that rehabilitation works had been completed, while photographs of Tinubu and Shettima were displayed along the bridge.

Some of the captions beneath the photographs read, "A road under strain before... To a road built for progress", "From challenges to prosperity" and "Hope connecting regions... let the good works continue".

All Progressives Congress campaign posters and banners were also seen at strategic sec-

tions of the bridge.

Although some of the railings had been repainted, painters were still carrying out finishing touches at some sections.

The road markings had also been repainted, while CCTV cameras, bolts and expansion joints had been installed or fixed.

Umahi had, during an inspection of the bridge weeks earlier, directed that Tinubu's pictures be displayed to appreciate the President for what he

described as his contributions to the South-East.

"Once we are done with works on this bridge, I want all the illegal adverts on this bridge removed. For now, the bridge will be decorated with the pictures of President Tinubu.

"The President has worked so hard and we need to reward his hard work by decorating this bridge with his pictures," Umahi said.

Speaking with our correspondent on Thursday, the Federal Controller of Works, Tim-

othy Emenike, said the minister was expected at the bridge to perform the reopening.

He said the major rehabilitation activities, including tarring, repainting the railings and fixing bolts and expansion joints, had been completed.

"The reopening is expected to provide relief to motorists and residents who had faced disruptions during the rehabilitation period when the bridge was closed," Emenike said.

He added that the necessary infrastructure had been put in place to ensure the free flow of traffic and improve road safety.

The bridge was closed to traffic from September 7 to

September 21 for emergency rehabilitation and maintenance after vandalised structural components, including expansion-joint steelwork, were discovered.

The reopening was delayed by persistent rainfall and other unforeseen circumstances, forcing the authorities to extend the closure beyond September 21.

Security personnel were deployed around the bridge on Thursday, with some sections of roads leading to it barricaded to control movement as dignitaries and residents awaited the minister's arrival.



ADVOCACY VISIT:

From left: Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Hussaini Magaji (R) with the Executive Director of Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), Auwal Musa-Rafsanjani, during the latter's advocacy visit to CAC headquarters in Abuja on Thursday.

Lagos urges residents to embrace healthy eating

LAGOS

The Lagos State Government has emphasised the importance of proper nutrition in improving public health, strengthening families and boosting economic productivity through its food and nutrition programme.

The Commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Bolaji Dada, stated this on Thursday during the programme at the WAPA Skills Acquisition Centre, Isheri-Olowora, according to a statement issued by the Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Rianat Onigbanjo.

Dada said the initiative was part of the state government's

efforts to promote healthy eating, improve nutrition awareness and encourage residents to make informed food choices.

"Beyond providing opportunities for economic empowerment, we must also ensure that our citizens are healthy, properly nourished and strong enough to make meaningful use of the opportunities available to them," she said.

She explained that the programme was being implemented across different locations in Lagos to improve residents' wellbeing, particularly women and girls.

The commissioner added that the initiative complemented discussions on improved nutrition at the Women in Power Confer-

ence 2026.

According to her, the programme provides medical screening, professional nutrition education and healthy food packs to beneficiaries across the five IBILE divisions of Lagos State.

She noted that proper nutrition was essential to human capital development, adding that healthy women and girls were better positioned to care for their families, pursue economic opportunities and contribute to society.

Dada said the ministry's poverty alleviation strategy combined skills acquisition and economic support with programmes designed to improve health and wellbeing.

"I encourage everyone here to take the lessons from this programme beyond today. Let us make healthier food choices, pay attention to the nutritional needs of our families and share this knowledge with others in our communities," she said.

Speaking on the topic, Healthy Woman, Healthy Life: Eating Well, Staying Clean and Preventing Disease, nutritionist Olusola Malomo urged women to prioritise balanced diets, personal hygiene and preventive healthcare.

"Affordable foods such as rice, yam and garri should be combined with protein sources like beans, eggs and fish, alongside vegetables and fruits whenever they are available," Malomo said.

Family confirms death of gospel singer Toluwanisings

The family of Nigerian gospel singer, Olayemi Bolaji, popularly known as Toluwanisings, has announced his death.

The announcement, posted on the singer's TikTok account on Wednesday, noted that he died in the early hours of October 14, 2026.

The statement read, "With deep sorrow, the family announces the passing of Minister Olayemi Bayonile Bolaji, Toluwani Gospel Music Ministry (TOGOMM), who passed away in the early hours of 14 October 2026.

"A dearly loved husband, family member, and gospel

minister.

"Please keep his wife, family, and loved ones in your prayers during this difficult time."

The statement also noted that funeral arrangements would be announced by the family in due course.

The singer's death has sparked concerns, with fans and colleagues expressing grief on social media.

The Convener of the Coalition of Public Interest Lawyers and Advocates, Pelumi Olajengbesi, expressed distress over the development in a post on Instagram, pleading for God's mercy.

Sharing a picture of the singer, Olajengbesi wrote, "My God!

What a life! No, Lord! We plead for Your mercy upon Toluwanisings.

"I am deeply troubled by the deaths of young men and women. This is not God's plan for us.

"We say no to untimely death."

An X user, Ennybets, also shared an account of the incident on Wednesday.

He stated that he was at a hospital when the singer was brought in.

He wrote, "Brought my wife to the hospital for antenatal, and some car rushed in here bringing a popular gospel man.

"Come and see how BBO and the rest are crying so bad, I pray

he survives this though."

In a follow-up post, Ennybets expressed grief over the singer's passing, saying he witnessed members of his band crying at the hospital.

He wrote, "I cried about this man's passing. The fact that I was seeing over 10 grown men who are his band members, crying heavily in front of me is giving me trauma."

Reacting to the news, gospel artiste Mega99 described the late singer as a rare talent.

He wrote, "A rare gem with a unique voice is gone. This life."

The cause of his death remained unknown as of the time this report was filed.

Lagos trains 1,800 law enforcement officers

LAGOS

The Lagos State Government has trained 1,800 law enforcement officers from seven agencies as part of efforts to strengthen professionalism and improve service delivery amid growing debate over the establishment of state police in Nigeria.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu disclosed this on Thursday at the 2026 passing-out parade of the Lagos State Law Enforcement Training Institute, where the officers graduated after completing a mandatory in-service training programme.

Represented by the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Lawal Pedro, SAN, the governor said effective law enforcement was critical to good governance and the creation of a safe environment for residents, businesses, investors and visitors.

"Effective law enforcement is therefore an essential pillar of good governance. Our officers must be adequately trained, professionally equipped, and guided by clear standards of conduct to discharge their responsibilities effectively," Sanwo-Olu said.

He stressed that the responsibilities of law enforcement officers went beyond exercising authority, noting that they must earn public trust through responsible conduct, impartiality and service.

The governor identified discipline and integrity, respect for the rule of law, professionalism and competence, respect for the public, and accountability and service as the five principles that should guide the officers.

"Today is a proud moment, but it is also the beginning of a demanding responsibility," he said.

Sanwo-Olu urged the officers to respect the rights of residents and treat members of the public fairly, stressing that public cooperation depended largely on the conduct of law enforcement personnel.

"At the same time, law enforcement officers must under-

stand that public cooperation is strengthened when citizens are treated fairly, their concerns are heard, and their rights are respected," he said.

He also called on residents to obey lawful directives, respect public regulations, protect public infrastructure and report concerns through appropriate channels.

The governor urged LETI's management to sustain its commitment to quality training, ethical standards and professional competence, noting that modern law enforcement required personnel who were knowledgeable, emotionally mature, physically prepared and technologically aware.

"The true value of today's ceremony will be demonstrated in the conduct of these officers in the field," Sanwo-Olu said.

Earlier, the Head and Chief Executive Officer of LETI, Mrs Taiwo Bonnie, said the 1,800 graduates were drawn from seven law enforcement agencies in Lagos State.

The agencies are the Vehicle Inspection Service, Kick Against Indiscipline, Lagos State Traffic Management Authority, Lagos Neighbourhood Safety Corps, Community-Based Development, Lagos State Parking Authority and Lagos State Waterways Authority.

Bonnie said the training was designed to strengthen the officers' professional capacity and equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to meet the demands of modern law enforcement.

According to her, the curriculum covered law enforcement, technology, self-development, teamwork, inter-agency collaboration, health and wellness, stress management, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first-response skills, physical fitness and field exercises.

Congratulating the graduates, she urged them to apply the knowledge acquired during the programme and discharge their responsibilities with integrity, discipline, courage, fairness, restraint and accountability.

Friday Sermon

The pharaonic politics of 'starve your Dog, and it will follow you'

IMAM MUHAMMAD YUSUF
BABANGIDA

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, the Just, the Provider, who has forbidden oppression for Himself and made it forbidden among His creation.

Dear brothers and sisters! We often hear worldly aphorisms born of human arrogance. We hear the toxic philosophy of 'Starve your dog, and it will follow you'. Fir'aun (Pharaoh) used it. The tyrants of old used it. Today, exploitative corporate systems and corrupt leaders use economic anxiety and systematic deprivation to enforce obedience.

But Allah the Almighty tells us a different law of the universe. In a Hadith Qudsi, Allah the Most High says: "O My servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden among you, so do not oppress one another."

Islam completely flips this toxic paradigm. In the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, we do not rule hearts by starving them; we win souls by nourishing them. And true strength and power is not breaking the wills of others to make them follow you—it is conquering your own ego to follow Allah.

Depriving those under your care—whether they are your employees, your family, or your community—does not yield loyalty. It breeds resentment and revolution. True leadership is rooted in enrichment and generosity. When the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) built his Ummah, he did not rule by withholding; he gave until he had nothing left for himself, earning an unbreakable loyalty born of love, not fear.

Respected servants of Allah! Look at the fate of those who practice this proverb. The king who said it was destroyed by the very hunger he manufactured.

Islam teaches us that loyalty cannot be bought with desperation. If you are an employer, pay your workers before their sweat dries. If you are a parent or spouse, do not withhold emotional or financial sustenance to assert control. Let us remember that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) warned us against the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between it and Allah the Almighty.

Dear servants of Allah! The Jahiliyyah period, the age of ignorance, taught a brutal philosophy of leadership: "Starve your dog, and it will follow you." It tells us that if you want loyalty, you must keep people vulnerable. If you want obedience, you must withhold. This is the methodology of Fir'aun (Pharaoh). Fir'aun (Pharaoh) kept his people weak, terrified, and desperate so that they would look to him as a god.

But what happens when you starve a creature? You erase its dignity. You build a relationship based on desperation, not devotion. And the moment that creature finds a hand that feeds it better, it will turn around and bite the hand that starved it. Worldly control built on fear is a ticking time bomb.

Look instead, O Muslim believers, to the Master of Humanity, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). He did not come to starve humanity; he came to feed their souls, their minds, and their bodies.

Allah the Most High says in the noble Qur'an about the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him): "And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds." [Qur'an, 21:107]

When the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) conquered Makkah—the very city that starved his companions, boycotted his family, and persecuted his followers—he did not starve them in return. He did not humiliate them to force their loyalty. He stood before them and said, "Go, for you are free."

He fed their dignity, and what was the result? They didn't just follow him; they were ready to lay down their lives for him. Hearts are opened by Ihsan, excellence and kindness, not by oppression.

If there is anything in this life you should starve, my dear brothers and sisters, it is not the people around you. It is not your spouse, your children, or your employees. Starve your lower self, the Nafs!

Your Nafs al-Ammarah, the soul that commands evil, is like a wild beast. If you feed it every desire, every luxury, every glance, and every whim, it will master you. It will lead you to destruction. But if you starve it through fasting, through discipline, through lowering your gaze, and through standing in the night prayer—it will finally submit. It will follow you in obedience to Allah.

May Allah purify our hearts, break our egos, and make us leaders of mercy, not masters of oppression. Ameen!

Dear brothers and sisters! In human relationships, this proverb "Starve your dog, and it will follow you" represents a dark psychological truth: manipulation. We see it in toxic marriages where one partner withholds affection to gain power. We see it in corporate environments where managers keep employees insecure to ensure compliance.

But Islamic psychology teaches us that a loyalty born of starvation is artificial.

Contrast the harsh Arabic proverb with one of the most emotional traditions in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) told us of a man walking through the desert. He was parched with thirst. He found a well, climbed down, drank his fill, and climbed back out.

Upon reaching the top, he saw a dog panting heavily, licking the moist earth out of extreme thirst. The man looked at the dog and didn't think, "Let me leverage this animal's weakness." Instead, his heart melted with empathy. He climbed back down into the well, filled his leather sock with water, held it in his teeth as he climbed out, and gave the dog a drink.

The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) concluded: "Allah thanked him for his deed and forgave his sins." [Sahih al-Bukhari]

The world tells you to exploit weaknesses to gain followers. Islam tells you to alleviate weakness to gain the pleasure of the King of Kings, Allah the Almighty!

When you treat people with the philosophy of "starvation," you are acting out of your own deep insecurity. You fear that if they are strong, free, and self-sufficient, they will leave you. But true leadership—good leadership—is about empowering others so much so that they choose to stand by you out of genuine love and respect.

Don't starve the world around you to make it bend to your will. Feed it with mercy, and watch how Allah the Almighty elevates your status in this life and the next.

The Arabic proverb "Starve your dog, and it will follow you" carries a raw, historical realism about power, control, and the darker side of human politics. However, when viewed through the profound lens of Islamic spirituality, psychology, and Prophetic wisdom, this proverb serves as a powerful mirror—not for how we should treat others, but for how we must discipline our own inner selves.

The historical proverb "Starve your dog, and it will follow you" represents the ultimate form of tyrannical control, psychological manipulation, and the deliberate crushing of human dignity. In Islamic history and theology, this approach is famously known as the Pharaonic Policy, Al-Siyasah al-Fir'auniyyah.

Fir'aun (Pharaoh) did not just rule through physical chains; he ruled by engineered dependency, breaking the spirit of his people until they viewed their oppressor as their sole provider.

Dear servants of Allah! Tyrants throughout history have never ruled by strength alone; they rule by weaponising artificial scarcity. When the Fir'aun (Pharaoh) of Egypt looked at the Children of Israel, he did not just see a minority to oppress—he saw a population that needed to be kept weak, hungry, and desperate.

To make people break their own backs chasing a loaf of bread, and they will never have the energy to look up and demand their freedom. Keep them terrified of losing their sustenance, and they will bow to the

one holding the grain.

But the great religion of Islam came to shatter this illusion. Islam arrived to scream into the hearts of humanity: Your boss is not your provider. Your leader is not your provider. The market is not your provider. Ar-Razzaq, The Ultimate Provider, is Allah the Almighty!

When Fir'aun (Pharaoh) claimed, "I am your lord, most high," he was attempting to centralise all dependency onto himself. He wanted the people to believe that if they disobeyed him, they would starve.

But look at how Allah the Almighty refutes this psychological warfare in the noble Qur'an. Allah the Most High says: "And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is its provision..." [Qur'an, 11:6]

When you realise that your life, your breath, and your wealth are written by the King of Kings, the Pharaonic policy, the Siyasah Al-Fir'auniyyah loses all its power over you. They can restrict the earth, but they cannot close the gates of heaven.

Remember, when the Muslim army faced the superpower of their time—the Persian Empire—the Persian general Rustam asked to speak to an emissary. The Muslims sent Rib'iyyu Ibn Amir, a man wearing simple, patched clothes, riding a small horse, carrying a basic spear.

Rustam sat in a courtyard filled with gold-woven carpets, silk cushions, and glittering wealth. He expected this simple Arab man from the desert to be blinded by the wealth, to crawl and beg for food and treaties—to follow the "crumbs" like a starved dog. Instead, Rib'iyyu rode his horse right onto the luxurious carpets. He drove his spear into the expensive rugs, tearing them up as he walked forward with his head held high.

Rustam asked him: "What brought you here?"

Rib'iyyu delivered words that should be carved into the heart of every sincere Muslim believer today. He said: "Allah has sent us to deliver whomsoever He wills from the worship of creation to the worship of the Creator alone, from the narrowness of this world to its vastness, and from the tyranny of false religions to the justice of Islam."



It will lead you to destruction. But if you starve it through fasting, through discipline, through lowering your gaze, and through standing in the night prayer—it will finally submit.

Rib'iyyu could not be starved, because his soul was already full. He could not be bribed, because he knew that the Persian Empire's wealth belonged to Allah anyway.

Respected brothers and sisters! The policy of "Starve your dog, and it will follow you" has not faded into history; it has merely modernised.

Today, economic systems and corporate structures often thrive on keeping people in a state of perpetual survival anxiety. When people are drowning in debt, living paycheck to paycheck, and terrified of losing their healthcare or shelter, they become compliant. They tolerate toxic environments, sacrifice their morals, and remain silent in the face of injustice because they fear their "provider" will cut them off.

Pharaoh's greatest victory was not building the pyramids; it was convincing the people that without him, they would perish. When Prophet Musa came with clear signs, Pharaoh's response was to attack their livelihood and security:

He doubled their workload.

He threatened their survival.

He forced them into a state of pure panic.

The psychological trap is making the victim believe they are a "dog" that needs the master to survive.

The great religion of Islam breaks this cycle through three foundational psychological shifts:

1. True Tawhid (Monotheism)

Believing that provision is fixed. No human being can give you a single penny that Allah did not decree for you, and no human can take away a single crumb that Allah wrote in your destiny.

2. The Honour of Bani Adam

Allah the Most High says: "And We have certainly honoured the children of Adam..." [Qur'an, 17:70]

A Muslim believer is a servant to Allah, but a noble leader on this earth. You are not a creature to be starved and commanded.

3. Contentment

When you train yourself to be content with less, you become unbribeable. If a tyrant cannot tempt you with luxury, and cannot scare you with poverty, they lose all leverage over you.

And if you are currently feeling trapped in a situation where someone is using your livelihood, your job, your emotions, or your security to control you—remember the parting of the Red Sea.

The Children of Israel stood with the roaring sea in front of them and Pharaoh's marching army behind them. They panicked and cried out: "We are surely overtaken!"

But Prophet Musa (Peace be upon him), whose heart was entirely detached from Pharaonic fear, replied with absolute certainty: "No! Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me." [Qur'an, 26:62]

So the sea split. The oppressor drowned. The provision came from where they least expected it.

Never let anyone starve your soul to command your body. Turn away from the hand holding the false crumbs, look up to the Heavens, and realise that you are free.

FEATURE

Tinubu's scorecard and the case for continuity in 2027

TOSIN KOLADE (NAN)

As Nigeria approaches the 2027 general elections, President Bola Tinubu's administration is making a case for continuity, citing economic reforms, infrastructure development and social investment, among other achievements.

The administration's case was presented by the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, during a media chat with senior editors at Radio House, Abuja.

Also present at the engagement was Mr Bayo Onanuga, the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, who supported the minister's presentation and offered further insights into the administration's policies and achievements.

Idris said the administration's economic reforms were producing measurable results, while acknowledging that persistent cost-of-living pressures remained a major concern for households.

Against this backdrop, the minister noted that the government's priority was to translate improving economic indicators into more jobs, productive businesses, affordable essential services and greater purchasing power for Nigerians.

According to him, the economy was projected to grow by more than four per cent in 2026, while the current account surplus rose to 12 billion dollars in the first half of 2026, up from 8.6 billion dollars in the corresponding period of 2025.

Similarly, inflation, he said, declined from about 27 per cent in January 2025 to around 15 per cent, while external reserves exceeded 54 billion dollars in September, reaching their highest level in almost two decades.

The minister also cited improved foreign exchange stability, increased oil production, reduced oil theft and non-oil export earnings exceeding six billion dollars in 2025 as indicators of economic progress.

"We recognise that many households continue to face cost-of-living pressures.

"That is precisely why the President remains focused not only on stabilising the economy but also on making the benefits of recovery visible in the daily lives of our people.

"Our commitment is to ensure that stronger economic indicators translate into more jobs, more productive businesses, more affordable essential services and greater purchasing power for Nigerian families," he said.

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Turning to infrastructure, Idris said four legacy projects

covered approximately 3,000 kilometres across the six geopolitical zones,

alongside investments in roads, railways, ports, electricity, healthcare and education.

He also highlighted an approved highway project worth approximately N1.5 trillion in Niger State, which is expected to improve connectivity along an important agricultural and commercial corridor.

"Every road project is money flowing to contractors, suppliers, engineers, artisans, transporters and food vendors.

"Once finished, it opens up communities, gets produce to market faster and raises the value of land," he said.

Beyond infrastructure, Idris said the administration was pursuing mechanisation, improved access to farm inputs, irrigation and financing in agriculture to increase domestic production, improve farmers' incomes and reduce food costs.

In the health sector, the minister said the Federal Government had commissioned five cancer treatment centres and was working towards providing 10, alongside efforts to revitalise primary healthcare.

Similarly, the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), he added, had supported more than 1.6 million students, paying over N192 billion in tuition fees and N180 billion in upkeep allowances.

In the area of digital skills, Idris added that, through the Three Million Technical Talent (3MTT) programme, the government was expanding training in software development, data science, cybersecurity and emerging technologies.

Meanwhile, he said the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas and Electric Vehicle Initiative had attracted about 2.5 billion dollars in private investment, alongside approximately N250 billion in government funding and commitments.

According to him, more than 120,000 vehicles had been converted, while over 400 certified conversion centres and more than 90 refuelling stations had been established.

Idris also disclosed that approximately 180 additional refuelling stations were under development.

On pension and power-sector obligations, he said the government had issued a N758 billion bond to clear inherited pension arrears, benefiting almost one million pensioners.

It had also issued N1.2 trillion in bonds to settle debts owed to electricity generation and gas companies.

In addition, Idris disclosed that the National Social Register was supporting more than 10



PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU

million households, while the Consumer Credit Corporation was helping working Nigerians spread the cost of essential purchases.

On security, the minister said improved equipment, intelligence, logistics and coordination had strengthened security agencies, contributing to operations against terrorists, bandits, kidnappers and criminal networks.

He cited rescued hostages, disrupted insurgent networks and operations against crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism as evidence of progress.

Nevertheless, the minister acknowledged that security challenges persisted in parts of the country and said the government was addressing them.

"Let me assure Nigerians that the Federal Government will neither relent nor retreat in its determination to secure every part of our country.

"The security of Nigerians is not negotiable.

"We will continue to protect vulnerable communities and work towards a country in which every citizen can live, travel, farm, trade and work in safety," he said.

Beyond security, the minister highlighted Tinubu's commitment to fiscal federalism through increased transfers to state and local governments.

He cited the President's efforts to strengthen local government autonomy, as well as proposals for state police and electricity reforms, as evidence of this commitment.

Furthermore, the minister referenced a World Bank report indicating that combined state

capital expenditure increased by 151 per cent in real terms between 2023 and 2025.

According to him, these initiatives form part of the administration's Renewed Hope Agenda, which covers economic growth, security, agriculture, energy, infrastructure, social investment, industrialisation, innovation and governance.

In assessing the administration's overall performance, Idris said the reforms introduced by the Tinubu administration were yielding substantial progress, strengthening the economy, restoring confidence and laying the foundation for broader prosperity across the country.

"Nigeria is moving forward with renewed confidence.

"We have taken bold decisions to address longstanding structural weaknesses, restore stability and lay a stronger foundation for sustained growth.

"These decisions are producing measurable results, and we are increasingly seeing the transition from economic reform to economic opportunity.

"We are determined to consolidate these gains and accelerate their impact across the country," he said.

Against this background, Idris urged journalists to continue scrutinising the government while providing context on the causes of current economic pressures, the progress achieved and the work that remained.

Speaking in the same vein, Onanuga emphasised the importance of responsible journalism and accountability across all tiers of government.

"Editors are gatekeepers and must exercise their responsi-

bilities carefully. We should not publish material without checking its accuracy," Onanuga said.

He warned that misleading headlines could create unnecessary public anxiety.

To illustrate his point, Onanuga cited reports that allegedly confused petrol prices with diesel prices and compressed natural gas queues with petrol queues.

He urged editors to correct misleading headlines and scrutinise government performance.

He also clarified that the fuel discount was an initiative of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) intended to provide relief to Nigerians, adding that all levels of government should remain accountable to the people.

As the 2027 elections approach, the administration's scorecard will, no doubt, feature prominently in public debate.

At the heart of this debate will be its ability to sustain reforms and deliver tangible improvements, which will be central to its case for continuity.

Supporters of the administration argue that re-electing Tinubu in 2027 would consolidate recorded achievements, sustain ongoing reforms and ensure that investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare and agriculture deliver lasting benefits to Nigerians.

According to them, continuity would provide an opportunity to deepen reforms, address persistent challenges and accelerate progress towards economic prosperity, improved security and inclusive development under the Renewed Hope Agenda.

However, economic indicators and announced projects must translate into lower living costs, better jobs, improved security and accessible public services for ordinary Nigerians.

Ultimately, voters will determine whether the administration's achievements justify another term, weighing its progress against challenges and their expectations for a more prosperous, secure and inclusive Nigeria.

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FEATURE

When justice fails a woman twice - Tennessee's Botched execution and the gender question

CLARETH SOLOMON

On the morning of September 30, 2026, the State of Tennessee prepared to do what it had not done in more than two hundred years, execute a woman. The woman was Christa Gail Pike, fifty years old, the only woman on Tennessee's death row. At 18, she had committed a crime of unimaginable cruelty, luring 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer to an isolated spot on the University of Tennessee campus and murdering her. For that crime, she was sentenced to death in 1996. For thirty years, she waited. And then, on that Tuesday morning, the state tried to kill her and failed.

The official account is clinical and chilling. At the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution in Nashville, an IV was inserted into her arm. Pentobarbital, a powerful barbiturate, was administered. It was supposed to stop her breathing and stop her heart within minutes. It did not. Witnesses and attorneys who have since spoken to the press said Pike remained conscious, snoring loudly, her chest rising and falling. The execution team then administered a second dose.

She continued to breathe. She is reported to have said, "My arm feels like it's about to burst open." Her arms, according to her legal team, became severely swollen, with chemical burns and blisters forming at the injection sites. One needle reportedly bent at a 90-degree angle after multiple attempts to find a vein. She was eventually removed from the gurney, placed on a stretcher, given life-saving care, and transported to a Nashville hospital where she was placed on a ventilator, unconscious and in critical condition. Governor Bill Lee ordered all remaining executions for the year to be paused and called for a comprehensive third-party review. Frank Strada, the Commissioner of the Department of Correction who oversaw the protocol, resigned days later.

This was not Tennessee's first failure. Six months earlier, the state failed to execute Tony Carruthers, a Black man, after spending more than an hour trying to locate a suitable vein. But Christa Pike's case carries a distinct gendered weight that cannot be ignored in any serious analysis of capital punishment. To discuss it only as a technical failure of lethal injection is to deliberately erase the woman at the center of it.

Christa Pike was not just a condemned inmate. She was a survivor of relentless sexual and physical violence from the moment she was born. Court filings, police reports, and hospital records that have emerged over decades of appeals paint a harrowing picture of a child who was failed by every adult institution meant to protect her. She was raped for the first time as a preschooler. She was sexually abused and beaten by a series of men, including family members and her mother's boyfriends. She was raped at age 11 and again at age 17. She cycled through foster care, juve-



Tennessee

nile detention, and the Job Corps program, where she met Colleen Slemmer. Her trial lawyers, as later appellate courts acknowledged, presented virtually none of this history to the jury that sentenced her to death. The jury never heard the full story of the trauma that shaped her adolescence.

For years after her conviction, the State of Tennessee's prosecutors actively discredited her accounts of abuse, calling her a pathological liar and invoking long-debunked myths about survivors of sexual violence. It was only in August 2026, one month before her scheduled execution, that the State finally acknowledged in a court filing that her accounts of rape and abuse were corroborated and true.

By then, it was legally too late. One court issued a temporary stay of execution to examine the implications of that admission, but the State appealed to the United States Supreme Court, which vacated the stay and cleared the path for the execution to proceed. In dissent, Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Ketanji Brown Jackson

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castigated their colleagues for failing to appreciate what they called "our own fallibility" and for risking irretrievable harm.

The final hours before the execution were also marked by a plea that many media outlets treated as bizarre but that gender experts recognized as profound. Pike asked that her execution be carried out by an all-female team. Her lawyers argued that being strapped down to a gurney, having her limbs immobilized by men, would trigger a severe post-traumatic stress response and cause her to relive her childhood rapes in her final moments. A clinical psychologist testified that the physical restraint of execution was very likely to cause a flashback where she would feel and believe she was being raped to death. She said if an all-female team was not possible, she would prefer to be hanged. Her mother, Colleen Slemmer's mother, May Martinez, was quoted as saying the request was "complete baloney" and an attempt to play the system.

Whether the request was granted in full is still unclear. Tennessee officials indicated they were at-

tempting to assemble a female team. Witnesses in the death chamber later reported hearing Pike speak to women present. What is clear is that the State proceeded despite knowing that the method itself could inflict gender-specific psychological torture.

This is why legal scholars and women's rights groups are now describing what happened on September 30 not just as torture, which United Nations experts have long said the death penalty can constitute, but as an act of gender-based violence. The gratuitous pain inflicted was not gender-neutral. The use of pentobarbital, which is highly alkaline and caustic, with a pH similar to bleach or Drano, burning flesh and veins on contact, was administered to a woman whose body had already been a site of male violence since childhood. The multiple needle sticks, the chemical burns, the immobilization, all of it re-enacted the very abuse the State had spent decades denying.

For Nigeria and for the broader global conversation on women and justice, Christa Pike's case holds up an uncomfortable mirror. In our own country, how many women sit in custodial centers for crimes directly linked to the abuse they have suffered? How many women who killed abusive partners in self-defense were never allowed to tell the jury about the years of beating and rape that preceded that act? How many girls who were trafficked and forced into crime are punished as adults without any recognition of their victimhood?

The Tennessee case forces us to ask what justice looks like when the person being punished is both a perpetrator of serious harm and a survivor of serious harm. It does not excuse the murder of Colleen Slemmer. Nothing can. But a justice system that claims to be fair must be able to hold two truths at once. It must be able to see the full humanity of a woman, even one who has committed a terrible crime. It must be able to understand that trauma does not happen in a vacuum and that the failure to consider gender-based violence as a mitigating factor at sentencing is itself a form of discrimination.

Governor Lee has said the review will examine everything. But for advocates, the real review must be larger. It must ask whether a state that cannot execute people without torturing them, that cannot find veins, that burns women's arms with chemicals, should be in the business of execution at all. And for women in particular, it must ask whether we have built a system of punishment that was designed for men and then applied to women without any consideration of their different histories, their different bodies, and their different experiences of violence.

The botched execution of Christa Pike will be remembered not for how she died, because she survived, but for what it revealed about how we punish women. It revealed a system that knew her history, knew the risk of trauma, knew its own fallibility, and proceeded anyway.

FEATURE



Single mother

Far from home, holding it all - Nigerian women in the diaspora, single motherhood and survival

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

There is a particular quiet that falls in the homes of Nigerian women raising children alone abroad. It is not the quiet of peace, but the quiet after the second shift has ended, after the children have been bathed and put to bed, after the video calls to Nigeria have been made, after the kitchen has been cleaned for the second time that day. It is the quiet of a woman who is the only adult in the house and has been for months, sometimes years.

In Manchester, Birmingham, Toronto, Houston, Dublin and Berlin, a growing community of Nigerian women are living this reality. They left Nigeria with hopes that are familiar to all migrants, better opportunities, better schools for their children, a chance to save and build. Some left as students and stayed. Some left as wives, following husbands who had gone ahead. Some left because their marriages had already broken down at home and migration offered a way to start again without stigma. What unites them is that they are now navigating single parenthood in countries where the very infrastructure of family life that sustained their mothers and grandmothers does not exist.

The journey to single motherhood in the diaspora rarely begins in the diaspora. Research on Nigerian families abroad shows a consistent pattern. Migration changes the economic balance of a household. In Nigeria, a man may have been the primary breadwinner, with social status tied to that role. In the

UK or Canada, his qualifications may not be immediately recognized. He may spend months or years looking for work that matches his skills while his wife finds work quickly in the care sector, in retail, in cleaning, in hospitality. Suddenly, the woman becomes the primary earner. Yet the expectation that she will also be the primary caregiver, the primary cook, the primary homemaker, does not shift. One woman who spoke to researchers in London put it bluntly, "I work full time, I pay most of the bills, I take care of the children, I do school run, but my husband still expects his food fresh, his clothes ironed, and no complaints. Migration didn't change that part."

When that tension becomes unbearable, when it is compounded by infidelity, by financial control, by physical or emotional abuse, marriages break down. For a Nigerian woman in Nigeria, divorce may be stigmatized, but there is often a family compound to return to, a mother or sister to help with children. For a Nigerian woman in the diaspora, divorce can mean total isolation. She may be on a spousal visa that is now precarious. She may have no family within a five-hour flight. She may have to remain in the same expensive city because that is where her children are in school.

The economics are brutal. Childcare in the UK can cost more than rent. In Canada, finding affordable housing as a single mother is a crisis. In the United States, health insurance tied to a former partner's job disappears after divorce.

These women work. They work hard. They do night shifts as healthcare assistants and then do morning school runs. They clean offices and then come home to clean their own homes. They braid hair in their living rooms on weekends to make extra money. They drive taxis, they work in warehouses, they study for nursing conversion exams late at night after the children are asleep.

But the financial struggle is only one part of the story. The emotional labour is heavier. Many of these women



The stigma follows them across borders. In many Nigerian diaspora communities, a single mother is still viewed with suspicion. She is blamed for not enduring enough. She is told to go back and beg her husband, even when that husband was abusive."

are what sociologists call transnational mothers. They are mothering children in two places at once. There is the child or children in the flat with them in the UK who need help with homework and need to be taught how to speak Igbo or Yoruba or Edo. And there are often children left behind in Nigeria, or elderly parents who need monthly upkeep, or siblings whose school fees they are still paying. The phone never stops ringing. The requests never stop coming. And because they are abroad, it is assumed they have money, even when they are choosing between heating and eating.

The stigma follows them across borders. In many Nigerian diaspora communities, a single mother is still viewed with suspicion. She is blamed for not enduring enough. She is told to go back and beg her husband, even when that husband was abusive. She is excluded from couples events in church. Some women have described how they stopped going to certain community associations because of the gossip.

And yet, to speak only of struggle is to miss the extraordinary resilience and reinvention happening in these homes. Nigerian women in the diaspora are creating new models of kinship to survive single parenthood. In WhatsApp groups with names like Naija Mums in Manchester or Edo Women in Toronto, they share information about free childcare, about immigration lawyers who do not exploit, about which schools have good special needs support. They do rotational childcare, one mother watches four children on Saturday so

the other three can work or rest. They form ajo or esusu savings groups to help each other pay for emergency expenses.

They are also reclaiming autonomy in ways that would have been impossible at home. Many speak of the relief of no longer having to ask permission to work, to visit friends, to make decisions about their children's education. They are going back to school at forty, forty-five, fifty, to become nurses, social workers, teachers. They are starting small businesses, catering businesses, event decoration, online sales of African prints, that give them flexibility and pride.

Their children are watching. Daughters are watching their mothers negotiate landlords, challenge bosses, and manage budgets alone. Sons are watching their mothers do what they were told only men could do. These children are growing up with a different understanding of what a woman can be. They know how to make jollof rice in a small kitchen in Leeds. They know how to code-switch between a Nigerian accent at home and a British accent at school. And they know, intimately, what survival looks like.

The story of Nigerian women in the diaspora who are single mothers is not a story of failure. It is a story of a global economic system that makes migration necessary, of a patriarchal system that makes single motherhood difficult, and of women who, despite both, are holding it all together with grace, humour, and a determination that deserves to be seen and supported, not judged.

NEWS**FOREIGN**

THE SCENE IN TIRANA, ALBANIA'S CAPITAL ON WEDNESDAY

Retired US generals call on Pentagon to cancel 'barbaric' execution livestream

A group of 72 retired US generals, admirals, and other high-ranking military officers are pressing the US government to cancel plans to livestream an execution by firing squad.

"We ask the President, our Congressional representatives, and our fellow citizens to act to prevent this barbaric abuse of authority," they wrote in a letter where they also argued the livestream would turn the mass killer into a "martyr".

Last week, the Pentagon announced it would publicly show the 3 December execution of Nidal Hasan, an Army psychiatrist who shot dead 13 unarmed US soldiers at the Fort Hood military base.

Lawmakers from both parties, as well as religious leaders, have criticised the plan.

Last week President Donald Trump said he "absolute-

ly" approved of the livestream plan, but some administration officials are now leaning against it, according to CBS News, the BBC's US media partner. CBS reported that Trump had not yet made a final decision on the livestream as of Tuesday.

In the open letter released on Wednesday, the former military leaders - which included 45 generals, 12 admirals and several former judge advocates general - said they did not oppose the death penalty being carried out.

But they argued a public execution would violate the US Constitution's protections against cruel and unusual punishment and turn what should be a "solemn and grave punishment" into "a carnival for the enjoyment of voyeurs and spectators".

"This type of exploitative broadcasting - that debases

human dignity - will taint the honor of the military that employs it, and a nation that allows it," they also wrote.

"It will be used by our nation's enemies to stoke hatred, harm American soldiers and citizens in the future, and will ensure that Hasan becomes a martyr for attacking and killing his fellow soldiers."

The letter's signatories came from throughout the military and included a handful of officers who retired during Trump's first term. Some also had served during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Hasan said in court that he carried out the shooting at Fort Hood, the deadliest ever non-combat attack on an American base, believing he was protecting Muslims and the Taliban in Afghanistan from the US military. Hasan

was shot during the attack and now uses a wheelchair.

Retired Maj Gen Tony Taguba, who led the Army's investigation into reported prisoner abuses at Abu Ghraib in Iraq, and retired Air Force Col Moe Davis, a prosecutor at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre who called waterboarding torture, signed the letter.

So did Charles Bolden, a US Marine Corps Major General who became the head of Nasa, and a retired Lt Gen Claudia Kennedy, the first woman to become a three-star general in the Army.

Can the Fort Hood shooter's execution be livestreamed?

Trump has said he signed off on the execution, but while he approves of the livestream plan, a final decision is yet to be made.

At least 27 pupils and teacher killed after school roof collapses in Pakistan

At least 27 pupils and a teacher have been killed after a school roof collapsed in the north-western Pakistani city of Peshawar, according to hospital officials.

More than a dozen others are injured, with some in a critical condition. Several children are feared trapped under the rubble.

Emergency services were alerted to the incident at the private Al-Khair school in Dir Colony at 08:48 (03:48 GMT) on Thursday after lessons had begun, a rescue official said.

He told the BBC the roof of a first-floor classroom had collapsed onto a ground-floor classroom below, causing its ceiling to cave in as well.

"The children in the affected classroom were trapped under the debris," the official, Bilal Faizi, said.

The school is located in a building that had been constructed on a temporary basis, with two and three-storey portions, according to emergency official Arif Khattak.

The affected classrooms were in the two-storey part of the building, which did not appear to have a conventional reinforced concrete roof. Instead, it had prefabricated roofing slabs.

Based on the condition of the debris, it appears that when the roof of the upper-floor classroom collapsed, the falling rubble crashed through into the classroom below, burying another group of children under the debris.

The Al-Khair school is in a narrow street on which only one vehicle can pass at a time - meaning it was difficult for rescue workers to reach the site and transport the injured to Peshawar's Lady Reading Hospital.

Sohail, a local resident, said his sister had called him at 09:30 urging him to come to the school, where she said young children were trapped.

"I and other residents of the area rushed to the scene and tried to pull them out using shovels," he told BBC Urdu.

The school's owner has been arrested, the city's police chief confirmed, and the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has ordered a safety audit of all schools in the province to "identify potential risks and ensure that immediate corrective measures are taken wherever necessary".

"We cannot allow the safety of our children to be compromised," said Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

A rescue worker said a first-floor roof collapsed onto a ground-floor classroom below, causing its ceiling to cave in.

Four months ago, fourteen children died after the roof of a private tuition centre near Lahore collapsed.

And in August, 14 newborn babies were killed by a fire that ripped through a neonatal unit at a hospital in the capital Islamabad, which an inquiry found lacked fire alarms and sprinklers.

Burnham treads carefully with Zelensky visit, balancing Trump and Ukraine

For months, US President Donald Trump had been a largely benign presence in the conflict, promising Ukraine greater access to American air defence technology and threatening more sanctions on Russia.

Then last week Trump carried out an abrupt U-turn, lifting sanctions on Russian diesel and calling for Zelensky to be replaced.

Once again Ukraine's leader got on his plane to shore up support among European allies. Today London, tomorrow Brussels.

"We are behind you and that will not change," Burnham told Zelensky.

For the prime minister there was the tricky but now familiar diplomatic task of needing to show solidarity with Zelensky without appearing to criticise Trump.

Burnham's answer was to say and announce as much as he could without exposing himself to questions from journalists asking about Trump's latest betrayal of Kyiv.

So Downing Street issued

an embargoed press notice overnight with warm words of support for Zelensky.

It said Burnham would promise to go "further and faster" in helping Ukraine with financial and military aid.

Specifically, the prime minister would pledge to speed up the delivery of lightweight multirole missiles that can help bring down fast jet-powered Russian drones.

Andy Burnham is expected to promise to go "further and faster" in helping Ukraine with financial and military aid.

There was a military honour guard in Downing Street to greet Ukraine's president, followed by a controlled photo opportunity showing the start of the meeting between the two men.

In No 10, before that meeting, Burnham told Zelensky that Britain stood with him "at this difficult time".

He said it was clear "who the aggressor is" after Russia's attacks on Ukraine's critical national infrastructure. And crucially he praised Zelensky

India and China aren't friends - but Nepal wants to unite them against climate threats

The recent floods in Nepal have highlighted the need for cross-border co-operation in the Himalayan region.

Nepal's Prime Minister Balendra Shah used much of his speech at the recent UN General Assembly to warn of the growing threat of climate-related disasters in the Himalayas, recalling the devastating debris floods that struck his country in August.

But it was his ambitious proposal to bring together regional rivals India and China, alongside Nepal, to tackle these shared threats that drew particular attention.

Shah called for the creation of a Himalayan Climate Resilience Mechanism to

strengthen cross-border disaster response and the sharing of scientific data and expertise in one of the world's most environmentally fragile and geopolitically sensitive regions.

"Let the Himalayas become a laboratory of international co-operation rather than a frontier of fragmented information," he said.

A senior official at Nepal's foreign ministry, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the proposal was still at an early stage.

"The PM's proposal has given a political direction. Our ministry is working with other relevant agencies to put forward a preliminary framework which can be the basis for building common under-

standing," the official said.

Neither India nor China has formally responded to the proposal. The BBC has contacted their foreign ministries for comment.

But can Nepal really bring the two regional giants together to confront a shared climate threat in a region where they have long been locked in bitter territorial disputes?

India and China share a disputed frontier stretching roughly 3,500km (2,175 miles), much of it across the Himalayas. Their competing territorial claims have led to a war, deadly clashes and repeated military stand-offs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the de facto boundary separating areas

under their control.

But the mountains that have long been a source of friction between the two countries are also facing an urgent climate threat.

Temperatures in the Himalayan region are rising faster than the global average, accelerating glacier retreat and permafrost thaw and contributing to growing risks of landslides, rockfalls, avalanches and glacial lake outburst floods.

Such disasters can sweep across national boundaries, threatening lives, infrastructure and livelihoods far downstream - making co-operation between the countries sharing the Himalayas increasingly important.

NEWS

FOREIGN

Kenya confirms second Ebola case - a relative of the first victim

Kenya has confirmed a second case of Ebola, 10 days after a businessman died of the virus after he had travelled to the East African nation from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The new patient, a 39-year-old man, is a close relative of the first case and was already in quarantine when he fell ill on Tuesday, Kenya's health ministry says.

The incubation period for Ebola ranges from two to 21 days, meaning those exposed to the virus may not become

ill for several weeks.

Detecting his illness early had improved his chances of recovery and limited the chance of him passing the virus on to others, the ministry said, as it urged the public to "stay calm but vigilant".

"Both cases are linked, and there is no evidence of spread in the wider community," the ministry said.

"Kenya remains open, with no restrictions on travel, trade or public gatherings", it added.

The 40-year-old Kenyan

man who died on 5 October was diagnosed with Ebola shortly after being admitted to hospital in the capital, Nairobi.

A relative had taken him there shortly after picking him up at the airport. He had travelled from DR Congo, through Uganda to Kenya without his illness being detected.

Since his death, officials had determined that he had been in contact with 128 people - and since Tuesday 113 of them had been found, the health ministry said.

Of these, 108 were in quarantine in Kenya and tracing of the remaining 15 continued, it said.

More than 4,000 people have died from Ebola in DR Congo this year, in what is the second most deadly known outbreak to date.

The Ebola virus spreads through contact with infected bodily fluids such as blood or vomit.

"Anyone with fever, unusual tiredness, muscle or joint pains, vomiting, diarrhoea or unexplained bleeding should

seek care promptly at the nearest health facility," Kenya's health ministry said.

The current outbreak in DR Congo, which began in May, has been caused by the Bundibugyo species of Ebola, which is relatively rare, with no approved vaccine or treatment - though trials are under way.

Shortly after DR Congo declared an outbreak of Ebola in May, it was also reported in Uganda, where two people died.

However, the World Health Organization (WHO) de-

clared that country free of the disease in August.

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the continent's leading public health agency, has reconstructed the Kenyan patient's movements for the six weeks leading up to his death.

It revealed that he first started feeling unwell in DR Congo on 15 September - and showed how several opportunities to detect the infection were missed, including during several visits to Congolese medical facilities.



RESCUE WORKERS AT THE FIRST-FLOOR ROOF WHICH COLLAPSED INTO A GROUND-FLOOR CLASSROOM BELOW, CAUSING ITS CEILING TO CAVE:

Container ship hit by projectile sinks in Strait of Hormuz, Singapore says

A Singapore-flagged container ship has sunk after being struck by an unknown projectile while transiting the Strait of Hormuz, according to Singaporean authorities.

All 21 crew members of GFS Pride were evacuated and no injuries were reported after the attack on Tuesday, which caused damage and a fire, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore said.

Another Singapore-flagged container vessel, GFS Giselle, sustained hull damage after being hit by a projectile on Wednesday but was able to reach a safe anchorage with all 22 crew, it added.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said a ship hit naval mines and sank while passing through what they called an "unauthorised" route in the Strait of Hormuz.

The Guards released photos that appeared to show a plume of black smoke rising from a container vessel that was still afloat but down by the stern. In other photos, dozens of

containers and their contents could be seen floating in the water.

The Hydrographer of Pakistan warned mariners that GFS Pride had sunk 4 nautical miles (7.4km) north-west of Ras al-Sheikh Masud in Oman's Musandam Peninsula.

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency said that two unnamed container ships had reported being struck by unknown projectiles while transiting the Strait of Hormuz between 16:40 and 17:00 GMT on Tuesday.

Both vessels sustained minor damage and were able to continue their passages, it added.

Merchant vessels have come under repeated attack in the Strait of Hormuz - which connects the Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea - and elsewhere in the Middle East since the US and Israel's war with Iran began in February.

At least 24 seafarers have been killed in 106 confirmed incidents, according to the UN's International Maritime Organization.

The Malta-flagged container ship Safeen Prestige, which was attacked near Oman on 4 March, is the only other vessel reported to have sunk in that time.

However, maritime risk management group Vanguard said on Wednesday that the Antigua and Barbuda-flagged bulk carrier Cape Dao was reported to be sinking after an unsuccessful rescue attempt, according to Reuters news agency.

One seafarer was killed when the Cape Dao's bridge and accommodation area were hit by an unknown projectile as it transited through the Strait of Hormuz, north-east of Khasab, Oman, on 23 September.

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 Iranian 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 began targeting 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.

Last month, crude exports through the waterway rose to around 80% of pre-war levels of 16 million barrels per day (bpd) on average, according to analysts from shipping data company Kpler, despite an increase in attacks on shipping.

Student protesters attack government buildings in Albania

Thousands of students have taken to the streets in the Albanian capital of Tirana, attacking several government buildings on the second day of violent anti-government protests.

The demonstration began outside the ministry of education on Tuesday, as students called for better university conditions and job prospects.

Wednesday saw part of the education ministry's building set on fire, while the prime minister's office, finance and interior ministry, and several surrounding businesses were also attacked.

Albania's Deputy Prime Minister Albana Koçiu has called for "calmness, self-restraint and maturity" and said "Albania does not need to burn to change".

Dozens of protesters wearing gas masks and balaclavas were seen throwing rocks and firecrackers through the education ministry's gates

Riot police have clashed with the protesters, using tear gas and water cannons to disperse them.

One demonstrator, Enida Bimi, told Reuters news agency that the protest is not just for the students, but "for all the people of Albania".

"The people are very angry at the system. They need to change everything. With this corruption all around, the crime and everything else is happening. And the people now are angry. They need to change the system," Bimi said.

Another protester, Arber Leshi, said people are angry at "the most corrupt government our country has ever seen".

Education Mirela Kumbaro said that while she respects the right to protest, "civic student protest and violence against public buildings and property are two different things".

Protester Enida Bimi said people "are very angry at the system"

Musk says US government may be behind slowdown of Ukraine drone speeds

Elon Musk has suggested that the US government may be behind restrictions on the speed at which some of Ukraine's weapons can travel and stay connected to SpaceX's Starlink internet network.

Starlink is a vital tool allowing Kyiv to guide drones to Russian targets and also protect its own skies, but on Tuesday night Ukraine said unexpected new speed limits were disrupting its battlefield missions.

An adviser to President Volodymyr Zelensky said he believed the restrictions were not a coincidence and were related to the latest strains between Kyiv and Washington.

Musk said that Starshield, the military-grade sister service to Starlink, is controlled by the US government, and "any limits on speed or usage are decided by the US military and ultimately [the US president]".

Musk - writing on X - had been responding to pleas from Ukrainian officials to restore

connectivity, including from Zelensky who told UK media: "I hope that it's a mistake, maybe [a] huge technical problem. I don't know, but we are asking to... switch [it] on."

Starlink, which is owned by Musk's SpaceX, restricted speed limits on Tuesday night to 100mph (160km/h), meaning any weapons that travelled faster than that lost connectivity to the network.

It had been partially restored by Wednesday evening, Ukraine's former defence minister Mykhailo Fedorov said.

"Removing Starshield's speed limit entirely is now critical for Ukraine's defense," he wrote on X, thanking Elon Musk and asking for his "continued support".

About an hour later, Musk replied to that post, defending his company's involvement.

"Starshield systems are owned and controlled by the US government. Any limits on speed or usage are decided by the US military and ultimately POTUS," he wrote.

Opinion

Okpebholo's CNG revolution, 5000 women empowerment: Governance that moves Edo forward



EUBALDUS ENAHORO

Governance is not measured by how loudly a government speaks, but by the tangible impact of its policies on the lives of the people.

In Edo State, Governor Monday Okpebholo's SHINE Agenda is increasingly being judged by how effectively it translates promises into practical interventions just like the commissioning of 50 new 52-seater Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses by Governor Okpebholo and the empowerment of 5,000 Edo women by Nigeria's First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, under her Renewed Hope Initiative.

Though different in purpose, both interventions share a common goal: reducing economic pressures, expanding opportunities and improving livelihoods.

Since the removal of the petrol subsidy, rising transportation costs have placed considerable pressure on households, traders, workers and students.

Against this background, the introduction of 50 CNG-powered buses into the Edo City Transport Service (ECTS) fleet represents an important step towards strengthening public transportation.

The initiative builds on the administration's earlier efforts to revive the Edo Line through the commissioning of 100 Toyota Hiace buses. The State Executive Council subsequently approved another 50 Hiace buses for the New Edo Line and 50 CNG buses for ECTS.

CNG offers the potential for lower fuel costs than petrol or diesel, although actual savings will depend on fuel prices, maintenance, refuelling

infrastructure and effective fleet management.

If properly implemented, the initiative could support affordable fares and improve access to public transportation.

The distribution of the buses across Edo South, Edo Central and Edo North is equally significant. Their impact, however, will ultimately depend on reliable operations, accessible routes, affordable fares and regular maintenance.

Beyond passenger movement, dependable transportation can help farmers convey produce to markets, traders move goods, workers commute more affordably and students access educational institutions.

These are the practical benefits that would make the programme meaningful to ordinary Edo residents.

The CNG initiative also offers environmental and employment opportunities. Natural gas can reduce certain tailpipe pollutants compared with conventional fuels, although its overall climate benefits depend partly on methane leakage and operational efficiency.

Particularly noteworthy is the reported training of 50 Edo women in CNG vehicle conversion. If translated into sustained employment and business opportunities, the programme could help women break traditional barriers in the automotive and mechanical trades, positioning them as active contributors to the emerging alternative-fuel economy.

While the buses are intended to move people and stimulate economic activity, the empowerment of 5,000 women seeks to strengthen household incomes and entrepreneurship.

The initiative by Senator Oluremi Tinubu under the Renewed Hope Initiative and hosted by Governor Okpebholo, with coordination by the Edo First Lady, Mrs Edesili Anani Okpebholo, places women's economic advancement at the centre of the programme.

For petty traders, food vendors, artisans and other women in the informal sector, access to financial support can help sustain businesses, replenish stock and expand operations.

When accompanied by business training and effective monitoring, such assistance can contribute to stronger livelihoods and more stable household incomes.

The state government has also highlighted

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For the 5,000 women, success must be measured by the actual delivery of promised support and evidence of improved livelihoods

wider women-focused interventions, including plans to reach 54,000 women through microfinance, the revitalisation of skills acquisition centres in Uromi and Igarra, a reported N1 billion soft-loan programme for market women and other initiatives through the Office of the First Lady.

The success of these programmes will depend on transparent beneficiary selection, timely delivery of support and sustained monitoring to establish whether the assistance improves businesses and incomes.

The economic benefits of empowering women often extend beyond individual beneficiaries to children's education, household nutrition, healthcare and the wider local economy.

This initiative should therefore be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen the productive ca-

pacity of communities across Edo State.

Together, the transport and empowerment initiatives provide a platform for assessing the broader ambitions of Governor Okpebholo's SHINE Agenda — Security, Health, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Education.

It should be noted that development challenges are interconnected. Roads become more valuable when farmers can transport produce to market; schools become more accessible when students can afford transportation; and businesses have better prospects when their owners can obtain capital and move goods at reasonable cost.

The administration's investments in roads, healthcare, schools, teacher recruitment and women's economic programmes provide a basis for evaluating this broader development approach.

Ultimately, however, their value must be established through measurable outcomes.

The real test of the interventions begins after the ceremonies.

For the CNG buses, priorities must include affordable fares, reliable service, adequate refuelling facilities and transparent management.

For the 5,000 women, success must be measured by the actual delivery of promised support and evidence of improved livelihoods.

Public accountability is not the enemy of government achievement; it is what makes achievement credible and sustainable.

Nevertheless, the significance of these initiatives should not be overlooked.

They address two issues that directly affect everyday life: the cost of transportation and the ability to earn a living.

Governor Okpebholo's challenge is to ensure that these programmes become dependable public services and lasting economic opportunities.

Ultimately, governance must be judged by what citizens experience: the money they save, the opportunities they gain, the businesses they sustain and the dignity they enjoy.

That is the promise behind the CNG buses and the empowerment of 5,000 women — and the standard by which Edo's SHINE Agenda must continue to be measured.

Eubaldus Enahoro was former Editor of the Nigerian Observer Newspaper

President Tinubu is the man to beat

ELVIS IRUH

As Nigeria inches towards the 2027 general election, one political reality is becoming clearer by the day to political foes and friends alike — President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is the man to beat. He is not joking about his re-election bid.

Unlike the era of Goodluck Jonathan of PDP who depended on power of incumbency to help him with the election.

President Tinubu is preparing for another fight with his close challengers including Atiku and Peter Obi.

It is not by accident. It is by design, by structure, and by mastery of the game.

President Tinubu came into office in 2023 at a time when the nation's economy was on life support. Subsidy was a bottomless pit, foreign exchange was a bazaar of arbitrage, and investor confidence was at its lowest. In two years, he has taken the difficult but necessary decisions that previous leaders avoided for political convenience. The removal of fuel subsidy and the unification of the exchange rate were painful pills, but they were the surgery Nigeria needed

to survive.

Today, the signs are emerging. FAAC allocation to states and local governments have tripled. States that could not pay salaries are now executing capital projects. The student loan scheme, the consumer credit corporation, the Renewed

Hope infrastructure fund, and the aggressive drive in solid minerals and CNG revolution are laying a foundation that will define the next decade.

Politically, President Tinubu remains the grandmaster. He controls the national structure of the ruling APC, he has successfully neutralized the opposition by strategic cooperation, and he has built bridges across the North, South South, South-East and South-West in a way no other contenders can boast of. The opposition remains fragmented, leaderless, and driven by personal ambition rather than a coherent alternative agenda for the country. While they argue on social media, Tinubu is building roads, bridges, railways and political alliances. Majority of the population are dissatisfied with the performance of President Tinubu but they don't see better option in the candidates vying to un-

seat him.

The 2027 election will not be decided by noise. It will be decided by structure, incumbency, performance, and reach.

On all four fronts, President Tinubu towers above any Those who wish to contest against him must first answer one question: What is your alternative plan that is better than Renewed Hope that President Tinubu is offering Nigeria's?

Thus far, we have heard slogans, not solutions.

Whether one likes him or not, President Tinubu has redefined governance as continuity with courage. He is not a perfect president, but he is a prepared president to face all challenges thrown at him. And in 2027, beating a prepared man with the power of incumbency, with control of 25+ states, with an economy finally turning the corner and will require more than wishful thinking of the opposition. Without a united front from the opposition, they do not stand a chance to come close to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu talk less of beating him.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is not just in the race for 2027.

He is the race. He is the man to beat.

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The opposition remains fragmented, leaderless, and driven by personal ambition rather than a coherent alternative agenda for the country.

COLUMN

When degrees deceive: The Anthony Kila controversy



Sometimes, I am distraught by the lengths to which some people will go to compromise the integrity of academic qualifications in pursuit of professional recognition, social status, public influence or a position of authority.

It is troubling in a country where millions of young people struggle and sacrifice to acquire genuine qualifications. A certificate should be evidence of learning and perseverance, not a costume worn to impress an audience.

Nigeria has witnessed such controversies before. In 1999, Salisu Buhari, then Speaker of the House of Representatives, became embroiled in a scandal over claims that he had attended the University of Toronto in Canada and held qualifications he could not substantiate. The controversy led to his resignation.

He was subsequently convicted in connection with certificate forgery and false declaration, a case that became an enduring warning about the consequences of misrepresenting one's educational background. The affair raised questions about scrutiny of people entrusted with public power.

More than two decades later, another controversy has brought academic integrity into the headlines.

I was miffed when I read about the investigation by Premium Times into Anthony Kila.

An investigation by Premium Times published on 3 October 2026 questioned Anthony Kila's claim to be a professor and a Jean Monnet Professor of Strategy and Development.

A further report, published on 10 October, alleged that several degrees and postgraduate qualifications he said he obtained from institutions in the United Kingdom and Italy could not be substantiated. The newspaper reported that some institutions said they had no record of his enrolment or did not offer the programmes he claimed to have completed.

"What a monumental embarrassment!" I murmured.

The allegations are grave. They must nevertheless be described accurately: they are findings reported by an investigative newspaper, not a substitute for a court's determination of criminal liability. Kila told the newspaper that he was gathering his academic and professional documents and contacting the institutions concerned.

His response and any further evidence should be considered fairly, but public concern is justified when institutions reportedly challenge claims that they conferred qualifications.

What makes this case especially troubling is the position Kila occupied as Pro-Chancellor of Michael and Cecilia Ibru University in Delta State. A pro-chancellor carries governance responsibilities in an institution whose purpose is to educate, examine, certify and prepare people for service.

When the credentials of someone holding such a position come under serious scrutiny, the question extends beyond the individual. It reaches the institution's appointment procedures,

its verification processes and its duty to protect public confidence in higher education.

Why, then, do people risk so much for titles and certificates they may not have earned? We cannot know an individual's motives without evidence, but features of public life may help explain the temptation.

First, there is the premium placed on titles. In some professional and social circles, "Doctor" or "Professor" can command immediate deference before a person has said anything of substance. A title may create the impression of authority, expertise and intellectual distinction. Where society is more impressed by the label than by the quality of a person's work, the label itself can become an object of pursuit. The danger is that the symbols of scholarship begin to matter more than scholarship.

Second, there is the competition for influence and opportunity. Academic credentials may help people qualify for appointments, consultancy work, board positions, speaking engagements and public recognition. If individuals believe that a longer list of qualifications will open doors that merit alone may not open quickly enough, they may be tempted to embellish their biographies. But an opportunity obtained through deception is built on an unstable foundation. The higher the position, the greater the potential damage when the truth emerges.

Third, there is the culture of credentialism. In an earlier column, I criticised Nigeria's troubling obsession with paper qualifications—a culture that prizes certificates over competence, titles over substance, and academic credentials over integrity and proven achievement.

Qualifications matter. Universities must maintain rigorous standards, and professional roles often require specialised knowledge. But certificates cannot replace integrity, sound judgement, experience or the ability to perform. Nor should a person's importance be measured by how many initials follow their name. When society worships credentials without asking what they represent, it creates a market for counterfeit prestige.

There is also the question of weak verification. No individual can sustain a false claim indefinitely if institutions, employers, governing councils and professional bodies consistently check the records behind it. A CV should not be accepted simply because it is attractively written or supported by an impressive photograph.

A claimed degree should be verified directly with the awarding institution, using reliable procedures and the candidate's consent where required. The greater the authority attached to an office, the stronger the obligation to confirm that its appointee meets the requirements.

This is not a call to treat every applicant as dishonest, but for responsible due diligence. Verification protects institutions, the public and honest applicants; a transparent process can also



ANTHONY KILA

distinguish authentic qualifications from false claims.

The consequences of academic fraud reach far beyond the person exposed. Genuine graduates work hard for their degrees, often while facing financial pressure, inadequate facilities and difficult personal circumstances. When someone allegedly invents a qualification, the achievement of those who earned theirs legitimately may be treated with suspicion.

A degree that should signify effort and competence becomes vulnerable to public cynicism. That is an injustice to students, lecturers, researchers and institutions that uphold standards.

There is a further danger when disputed credentials are attached to public commentary or leadership. Audiences may rely on a person's claimed expertise when assessing economic policy, governance, education or international affairs. A title can influence how arguments are received even before they are tested on their merits. If that title has been misrepresented, public trust is compromised.

The lesson is not that a person without a doctorate has nothing worthwhile to say; many people contribute intelligently without advanced degrees. The lesson is that nobody should need to invent credentials to make a case, and no audience should confuse a title with proof that an argument is correct.

The Kila controversy also demands questions of the university that appointed him. What documents were examined before he became Pro-Chancellor? Were the qualifications independently verified? Who was responsible for the checks, and what procedures will now be reviewed? These are legitimate governance questions, not a presumption that every allegation has already been judicially proved. Premium Times reported that Michael and Cecilia Ibru University suspended Kila after the initial report and removed references to him from its website.

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commis-

sion was also reported to have constituted a team to investigate the matter. An investigation must be allowed to establish the facts, and the institution should explain what safeguards it will strengthen.

The state has a role, too. Where evidence establishes forgery, false declarations or other offences, the law should apply without fear or favour. Yet accountability must follow due process. Social media outrage cannot replace evidence, and public condemnation should not become a licence for harassment. The standard must be consistent: neither prestige nor political connections should shield a person from scrutiny, and neither accusation nor unpopularity should remove the right to a fair hearing.

Universities and public institutions should adopt clear verification policies, document their checks and make senior appointments subject to transparent standards. Governing councils must not rely solely on biographies supplied by nominees. Media organisations should also verify the titles of regular contributors and interviewees instead of repeating a designation because another outlet has used it.

Editors have a duty to correct published descriptions when credible evidence shows that a title is unsupported. Professional bodies can contribute by setting clear rules for the use of academic and professional designations.

Individuals, meanwhile, should recover a more honest understanding of achievement. There is dignity in a qualification genuinely earned, but there is no shame in not possessing a degree one has never obtained. Experience, practical skill, integrity and a record of service can earn respect without an invented certificate.

A person who has not completed a programme can state that truthfully; a person who has acquired knowledge outside a university can demonstrate it through the quality of their work. Honesty may close some doors, but deception can bring an entire career crashing down.

The question I began with therefore

has a painful answer. Some people may come to believe that the rewards of appearing qualified outweigh the risk of being exposed. They may underestimate the persistence of journalists, the record-keeping of universities and the public's right to know.

They may also mistake temporary acceptance for permanent legitimacy. But records can be checked, institutions can be contacted and contradictions can be uncovered. No manufactured biography is beyond scrutiny forever.

The Salisu Buhari episode should have taught us that the higher the office, the greater the consequences of false claims. The allegations concerning Anthony Kila remind us that credential verification is not a bureaucratic formality; it is a safeguard for public trust, particularly when a person holds a senior role in an institution devoted to education. We should resist the temptation to turn either case into a spectacle or to pronounce guilt beyond the evidence. But we should be equally unwilling to shrug off serious questions about qualifications.

The challenge is to make verification routine, so that reputation rests on evidence and appointments command confidence rather than appearance of distinction.

Nigeria needs people who are educated, certainly, but it needs something even more fundamental: people who are honest about what they know, what they have achieved and the titles they are entitled to use.

A genuine degree is earned through study; a genuine reputation is earned through conduct.

Neither can be manufactured safely.

In the end, the most important credential is not the one printed on paper, displayed on a website or placed before a name. It is integrity. The qualification that no institution can confer on a dishonest person and no forged certificate can supply.

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Sports

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

10th Coronation Anniversary: Nigeria, Edo Chess Champions to Rack Brains in Honour of Oba Ewuare II

KEHINDE OSAGIEDÉ

As part of activities marking the 10th coronation anniversary of Oba Ewuare II, the Oba of Benin, chess champions from home and abroad will compete in a day-long tournament on Saturday in Benin city.

Tagged the "Royal Rapid Chess Classic 2026," the event is open to men and women in the Under-20, Under-14 and

Under-10 categories.

The seven-round rapid tournament runs from 9am to 6pm on Saturday, October 17, 2026, at the Prof. Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub on Airport Road, Benin city. Awards and souvenirs will be presented at the Palace of the Benin Monarch where the event is also expected to kick off.

The event is organised by AABV Ltd under the supervision of Mr. Lucky Imasuen, Chairman of the 10th Corona-

tion Anniversary Celebration Committee.

According to the organisers, the winner takes home the star prize of N350,000, while the best Edo indigene and best veteran players will each receive N50,000.

The chess tournament, a football competition and other sporting events are part of the build-up to the anniversary, which climaxes on Tuesday, October 20.

SWAN calls for fair, credible NBBF elections to strengthen basketball governance

KEHINDE OSAGIEDÉ

The Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) has called on the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) to ensure a free, fair, credible and transparent electoral process in its forthcoming October 15, 2026 election, stressing that the integrity of the exercise will be crucial to strengthening confidence in the federation and advancing basketball development in the country.

SWAN President, Mr. Isaiyah Benjamin, in a statement signed by the Association's Secretary-General, Amb Iken-na Okonkwo, emphasised the need for an inclusive electoral process guided by the NBBF constitution, established regulations and the principles of fairness, accountability and equal opportunity for all eligible aspirants.

President Benjamin maintained that a credible election would provide a solid foundation for effective governance and sustainable basketball development.

He urged the federation to ensure that electoral procedures are clearly communicated and that all eligible stakeholders are

given the opportunity to participate in accordance with the applicable rules.

The SWAN President also called on all parties involved in the electoral process to demonstrate maturity, embrace peaceful engagement and uphold mutual respect and sportsmanship before, during and after the election, noting that the collective interest of Nigerian basketball must remain paramount.

"An election conducted in an atmosphere of fairness, transparency and accountability will strengthen confidence in the federation and reinforce the collective commitment of stakeholders to the growth of Nigeri-

an basketball. The interest of the game must remain paramount before, during and after the election," Benjamin said.

Beyond the election, Benjamin expressed SWAN's readiness to establish a stronger and more structured working relationship with the NBBF to improve the visibility, promotion and overall development of basketball in Nigeria.

He noted that constructive engagement between sports administrators and professional journalists was essential to communicating policies, promoting competitions and showcasing the achievements of Nigerian players, coaches and teams.



D'TIGERS

FIBA correspondence sparks fresh Questions over International board representation

The controversy surrounding the October 15 Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) elections has taken another turn, following a letter from federation president Engineer Ahmadu Musa Kida that has raised fresh questions about the process of determining the international representative on the federation's incoming board.

Read also: Arewa Youths Assembly Expresses Gratitude to Tinubu Over Campaign Council Appointment

In a letter dated October 12, 2026, and addressed to the chairman of the NBBF Electoral Committee, Kida disclosed that he had engaged the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) over the issue of international representation and was still awaiting an official response.

The development has raised concerns about the handling of the position reserved for the most senior Nigerian holding an elected position within a FIBA body, particularly amid the dis-

pute over the eligibility of retired Col. Sam Ahmedu, President of FIBA Africa Zone 3.

Ahmedu, who has challenged aspects of the electoral process, is at the centre of the controversy over who should occupy the international representative's seat on the NBBF Board for the 2026-2030 tenure.

Kida's letter states that the issue was discussed during a physical meeting with the FIBA on September 18, 2026, on the sidelines of the FIBA Women's World Cup.



Morocco welcomes Africa to Tangier for ITTF Africa Championships 2026

As anticipation builds for the ITTF Africa Championships Tangier 2026, from 18 to 25 October 2026. The Royal Moroccan Table Tennis Federation (RMTTF) has assured that Tangier 2026 will be a befitting showcase of African table tennis — one that

exemplifies the sport's quality, talent, and growing stature across the continent.

Speaking ahead of the continental showpiece, Royal Moroccan Table Tennis Federation (RMTTF) President Anas Ziati described hosting the ITTF Africa Championships 2026 as a great honour for Morocco. He emphasised that the event places the nation on a pedestal as a unifying force, bringing African nations together through sport and fostering closer relationships among member associations.

"Morocco is proud of its African identity, and delighted to host this major event. We look forward to strengthening cooperation, exchanging expertise and working together for the development of our sport in Africa," Ziati said.

Tangier will welcome players from nearly 30 countries, alongside coaches, officials and delegations from across the continent, for a week of competition that will showcase the depth of talent in African table tennis. With continental

titles at stake, the championships will also provide tickets to the global stage, as athletes vie for qualification places at the ITTF World Championships Finals in Astana in 2027.

Ziati assured participants that Morocco is prepared to provide favourable conditions for competition while offering them an opportunity to experience the country's hospitality and cultural richness.

"We are committed to providing the best conditions for your stay, competition and overall experience. We hope you will also enjoy the beauty, culture and hospitality of Tangier and take home wonderful memories from Morocco," Ziati added.

The 2026 edition marks Morocco's return as host, a decade after the continental showpiece was held in Agadir in 2016. Hosting the event once again offers the North African nation an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to African table tennis and its capacity to stage major international competitions.



ITTF AFRICA CHAMPIONSHIPS TANGIER 2026 PLAYERS

Sports FEATURE

Bring the Eagles home: Why Lagos is the answer

DOUGLAS BAYE-OSAGIE
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For too long, Nigerian football has been trying to get a real home.

We have wandered from Uyo to Kaduna to Calabar to Benin to Asaba to Abuja. From the Godswill Akpabio Stadium to quiet, comfortable arenas, chasing form, chasing luck, chasing a feeling we left behind. We have struggled to qualify for tournaments which were a stroll in the past. But when we look back at our glory days in the 80s and 90s, our national team has an address in Nigeria, and that address has always been Lagos.

The news that the Teslim Balogun Stadium is back should not be treated as a footnote. It should be a national football decision. It is time to bring the Super Eagles home.

We must thank the Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, for the beautifully refurbished Teslim Balogun Stadium. With its green, lush grass, modern seats and improved facilities, Lagos has again shown why it sets the pace. The stadium is ready, and it is befitting of the Super Eagles.

And the timing could not be more perfect. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has confirmed that the 2026 edition of its annual awards ceremony will take place in Lagos, Nigeria, on December 7 at the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and Creative Arts, formerly the National Theatre, in Iganmu.

That is not a coincidence. That is confirmation. Africa is already coming to Lagos to celebrate its best. That CAF chose Lagos for its biggest night of the year signifies a city determined to return to the centre of African football and reclaim the glory of the national team. The continent's eyes will be on Lagos in December. The question is: will our own Super Eagles be home to welcome them?

Lagos is not just a city. It is the spiritual headquarters of Nigerian football. Every great football nation has a spiritual home. Brazil makes history at the Maracana, where their soul lives. England has Wembley, the sacred home that no Three Lions team needs a map to find. Argentina has the Monumental in Buenos Aires, where they bury opponents with noise and passion. Germany has the Olympiastadion in Berlin, where legends are crowned. These countries don't just play at these stadiums, they draw power from them. Nigeria had that, and we abandoned it.

This is where our legend was built. At the old National Stadium in Surulere, Nigeria became invincible. From the early 1980s to the mid-2000s, for almost 25 years, the Super Eagles did not lose a competitive match in Lagos. It was a fortress in the truest sense. Teams did not come to Lagos to play Nigeria; they came to survive Lagos.

That unbeaten run was not luck. It was Lagos itself. The noise, the talking drums, the traders who shut their shops early, the thousands who trekked to the stadium under the sun, the famous Lagos pressure that sat on the necks of opponents before the referee even blew his whistle. When you played in Lagos, you felt 20 million people breathing down on you. That kind of pressure does not break real players; it builds them.

And that pressure is what made legends. Legends were not just discovered in Lagos, they were formed in Lagos.



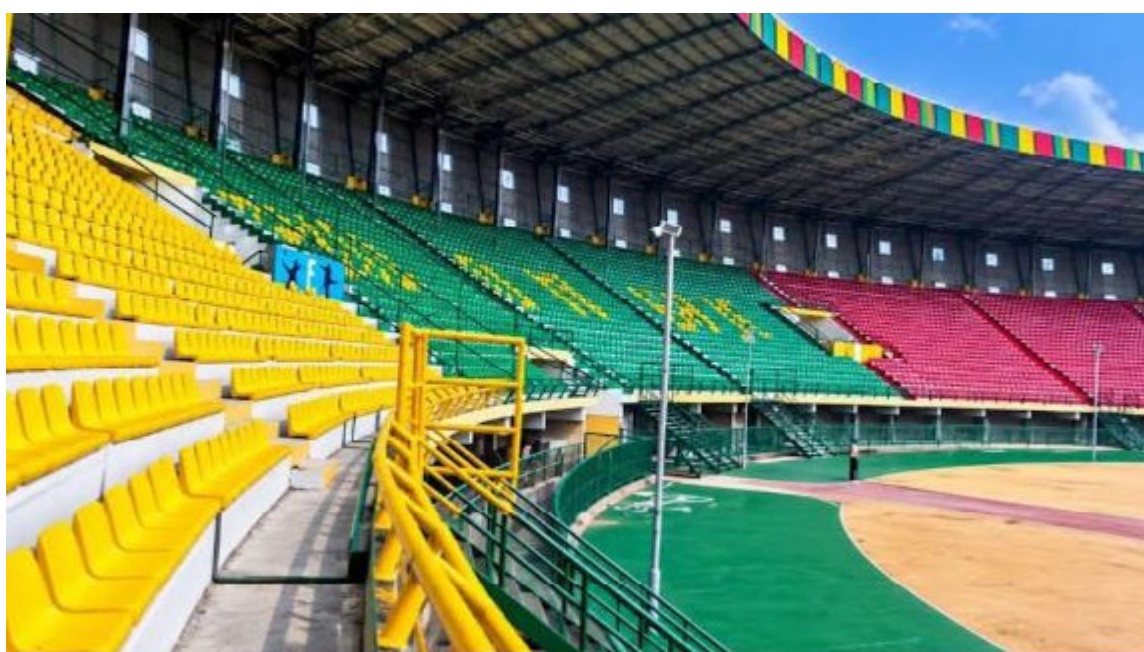
TESLIM BALOGUN STADIUM

Christian Chukwu marshalled the defence there. Segun Odegbami flew down the wing and became Mathematical. Sylvanus Okpala, Henry Nwosu, Stephen Keshi, Jay-Jay Okocha who made the ball talk, Mutiu Adegboju, the great Rashidi Yekini, Sunday Oliseh — they all became superheroes wearing green and white in Lagos. Lagos did not just host them; Lagos anointed them.

Here is the painful truth: this generation of Super Eagles has never really played under that pressure. Victor Osimhen, Ademola Lookman, Alex Iwobi, Ola Aina — they have carried Nigeria across the world, but they have never felt a true, roaring Lagos crowd behind them in a competitive game. They have played in good stadiums with polite crowds. They have never played where a misplaced pass is booed and a brave tackle is worshipped like a goal.

Maybe that is why we have not gotten the results we want. Maybe that is part of why we missed two World Cups and the Olympics. We removed our best weapon — our crowd. We made the Super Eagles comfortable, and comfortable teams do not qualify.

Even after winning the AFCON in 2013 with a Sunday Mba-inspired victory, we failed to qualify for back-to-back AFCONs in 2015 and 2017, while



trying out Calabar, Kaduna and Uyo as makeshift venues for qualifiers. We had the same talent, the same badge, but we had lost our home. This was definitely not about the players, it was about the atmosphere and planning.

Bringing football back to Teslim Balogun also makes football sense. In an

era when 90 percent of our squad flies in from Europe, Lagos is logic. No connecting flights to Uyo. No wasted hours in transit to Abuja. They land at Murtala Muhammed International Airport and are in camp within an hour. They sleep better, recover faster, and Eric Chelle gets an extra training session to drill his pressing, high-intensity philosophy.

For Chelle, Lagos is the perfect ally. He is a coach who wants intensity. What better place to demand intensity than a stadium that will demand it with him? Lagos will not accept laziness or sideways football. The fans will push, shout, drag the team forward when legs are tired. That is not hostility. That is accountability. And this team needs it.

And Lagos is not just ready for the Eagles, Lagos itself is ready for football again. For the first time in 32 years, Lagos will have three clubs in the top flight at the same time - Ikorodu City, Sporting Lagos and Inter Lagos - in the 2026/27 NPFL season. It is a restoration of a glory that was lost. It takes us back to 1992 and 1993, when Lagos ruled Nigerian football with four top-flight

clubs at once - Stationery Stores, Julius Berger, First Bank FC and ACB Lagos - turning Onikan Stadium into a weekly theatre of Lagos derbies.

Then as the 90s wore on corporate football died and Lagos was left with only Mountain of Fire Ministries carrying the flag for years. Now the city that gave us the Flamingo Flamingoes and the Bridge Boys is buzzing again with privately-owned clubs built for the modern era. If Lagos can sustain three clubs in the top flight, it can certainly sustain the Super Eagles and bring an electric atmosphere.

The refurbished Teslim Balogun sits in the shadow of the National Stadium, a daily reminder of when Nigeria never lost at home. And now, with the National Theatre reborn as the Wole Soyinka Centre ready to host Africa's football royalty in December, the message from Lagos is clear: the city is ready for its glory days again.

We have tried everything else. We have tried polite. We have tried quiet. It did not work.

Let's try home.



Maybe that is why we have not gotten the results we want. Maybe that is part of why we missed two World Cups and the Olympics. We removed our best weapon — our crowd. We made the Super Eagles comfortable, and comfortable teams do not qualify.

SPORTS



Joshua eyes historic third World Title, vows to stay calm against Fury

British-Nigerian heavyweight boxer Anthony Joshua has vowed to remain composed and avoid emotional decisions when he faces Tyson Fury on December 11, saying he will not repeat the mistakes Deontay Wilder made during his trilogy against the British rival.

Joshua believes discipline and patience will be crucial when the two former world heavyweight champions meet at the sold-out Principality Stadium in Cardiff, with the bout scheduled to be broadcast live worldwide on Netflix.

Fury defeated Wilder twice and drew once in their three-fight rivalry, with the Ameri-

can's aggressive approach often leaving him vulnerable to the British boxer's ability to withstand pressure and recover.

Speaking to The Ring's Mike Coppinger, Joshua said Wilder's determination to finish Fury whenever he hurt him often resulted in unnecessary energy expenditure, allowing his opponent to recover and regain control of their encounters.

"Wilder took those fights very personally, and that could be quite exhausting, especially when you hurt someone and try to finish them," Joshua said.

"You lose a lot of energy, and then Tyson comes back. Wilder could have gotten the job done if he was a bit more calm, cool

and collected. He could have learned from that. Wilder tried to take him out of there, while Fury just managed to weather the storm and come back."

Joshua insisted that frustration or the temptation to force an early stoppage would not dictate his strategy against Fury, stressing that he intends to maintain a clear head throughout the contest.

"I do not believe that would be me. I am going to keep a calm head," he added.

Beyond the rivalry, Joshua has the opportunity to secure a place in heavyweight boxing history. Fury's promoter, Frank Warren, has said the World Boxing Association su-

per heavyweight belt will be at stake in Cardiff.

Victory would make Joshua a three-time world heavyweight champion, placing him in an exclusive group that includes Muhammad Ali, Michael Moorer, Lennox Lewis and Vitali Klitschko. Evander Holyfield won the heavyweight championship four times.

The title became available after Oleksandr Usyk vacated it. Murat Gassiev, the WBA's leading contender, had been expected to move up for the opportunity, but the anticipat-

ed Fury-Joshua showdown appears to have taken precedence.

Both Joshua and Fury have previously lost their world titles to Usyk, adding another dimension to their upcoming encounter.

Meanwhile, Warren has hinted at the possibility of heavyweight unification fights in 2027, with the winners of major title contests potentially meeting to determine the division's leading champion.

Warren, who is also promoting the rematch between Daniel Dubois and Fabio Wardley

for the World Boxing Organisation heavyweight title, said his stable's position in the division could pave the way for unification bouts.

"We have got three of the four heavyweight champions on our roster, and we are going to make unification fights next year," he said.

Joshua heads into the contest with a professional record of 30 victories, four defeats and 27 knockouts. Fury, meanwhile, has recorded 36 wins, two losses and one draw, with 25 victories by knockout.



ANTHONY JOSHUA AND TYSON FURY

Mustapha Abdullahi elected NBBF president

Dr Mustapha Abdullahi has been elected President of the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF), defeating former D'Tigers captain Olumide Oyediji and former international Ejike Ugboaja in Thursday's election in Abuja.

Abdullahi secured 40 of the 48 votes cast to emerge victori-

ous, while Oyediji polled eight votes. Ugboaja failed to secure any votes.

Former presidential aspirant Igoche Mark had withdrawn from the race on Wednesday, citing concerns over the fairness and credibility of the electoral process.

Abdullahi's election ushers in

a new administration at the federation, with the Director-General of the Energy Commission of Nigeria set to succeed outgoing president Musa Kida.

In a related development, Ugo Udezue emerged as NBBF Vice-President unopposed, having been the sole candidate for the position.

SWAN constitutes 3-man Lagos caretaker committee

The National Executive Council (NEC) of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) has constituted a caretaker committee to oversee the affairs of its Lagos State Chapter.

In a statement by SWAN President Mr. Isaiah Benjamin, through the Secretary-General of the Association, Amb. Ikenna Okonkwo, the new caretaker committee, approved by the NEC, will be led by experienced sports journalist Mr. Patrick Omorodion as Chairman for the next three months.

Other members of the three-person committee are Mr. Oni Afolabi, who will serve as Secretary, and Ms. Anulika Menanya, as a member.

The constitution of the committee represents the national leadership's determination to address outstanding administrative issues in the Lagos State Chapter, restore stability and unity among members, and create the necessary conditions for a smooth transition to an elected executive.

Among its key responsibilities, the committee is mandated to identify and recover properties and official assets belonging to the Lagos State Chapter, establish proper records of recovered items, and submit an inventory to the National Secretariat.

It is also expected to promote reconciliation and strengthen relationships among members, while working with the Nation-

al Secretariat to review and verify the chapter's membership register in preparation for the forthcoming election.

As part of the electoral process, the committee will facilitate arrangements for establishing the Lagos State SWAN Electoral Committee (SWANECO), subject to the NEC approval and in line with the Association's Statutes and electoral guidelines.

The committee will also maintain regular communication with the National Secretariat, provide updates on its activities, and ensure that relevant administrative records and chapter assets are properly documented for handover to the duly elected leadership.

NFF, NSC reportedly agree improved \$75,000 monthly Chelle deal

Nigeria head coach Eric Chelle is reportedly keen to finalise negotiations over a proposed improved contract worth \$75,000 per month before Nigeria's 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying double-header against Tanzania in November.

According to a report by BSN Sports published on October 13, the Franco-Malian tactician is frustrated by delays in formalising the agreement, despite an alleged understanding with Nigerian football authorities.

Nigeria are scheduled to host Tanzania in Uyo on November 11 before travelling for the return fixture four days later. The two matches could prove crucial to the Super Eagles' efforts to strengthen their position in the AFCON 2027 qualifying campaign.

The reported contract delay has been linked to the resignation of the Nigeria Football

Federation executive committee in September, which allegedly disrupted the process of concluding negotiations.

However, the report indicates that the NFF and the National Sports Commission have since held discussions and agreed on an improved financial package for the former Mali national team coach. The proposed terms have not yet been formally signed, according to the report.

Chelle is reportedly earning \$50,000 monthly under his existing arrangement, meaning the proposed \$75,000 package would represent a \$25,000 increase in his monthly remuneration.

The report, however, contains an inconsistency concerning the expiration of his current contract, stating that it is due to expire in January 2026 despite the negotiations taking place in October 2026. The contractual timeline re-

quires clarification.

The uncertainty comes as Nigeria prepare for a demanding period in their AFCON qualifying campaign, with the Tanzania fixtures offering an opportunity to improve their position and restore confidence following recent disappointment.

Resolving the contract issue before the November matches could provide greater clarity over Chelle's future and allow attention to focus on preparations for the crucial encounters.

Neither the reported monthly figure nor the proposed agreement should be treated as final until the relevant football authorities formally confirm and sign the contract.

For now, the negotiations remain a developing issue as the Super Eagles approach a decisive stage in their bid to qualify for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations.