

Benin Kingdom dazzles in grand cultural festival

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The ancient Benin Kingdom came alive on Saturday in a dazzling celebration of its rich cultural heritage as in-

digenes and residents of Edo State converged for a grand cultural festival marking the 10th coronation anniversary of the 40th Oba of Benin, His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II.

The festival, held at the Oba Akenzua Cultural Centre in Benin City, was part of activities lined up to celebrate the monarch's decade on the throne and honour the enduring history, traditions and cultural identity of the Benin Kingdom.

The celebration featured a colourful procession of participants from different parts of Edo State, who marched from the Scout Camp, opposite Ogba Market, to the Oba Akenzua Cultural Centre, showcasing the kingdom's rich cultural her-

itage and the pride of its people in their ancestral roots.

The procession added colour and vibrancy to the anniversary celebrations, as participants came together in a shared demonstration of cultural pride, unity and respect for the

traditional institution.

The large turnout of indigenes and residents underscored the significance of the milestone, reflecting the enduring bond between the Benin monarchy and its people

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>

The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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

PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1372

MONDAY 12TH, OCTOBER 2026.

₦200

Okpebholo to host mass renunciation of cultism today

OLIVER IJIOGBE

BENIN CITY

In a renewed push to confront cultism and youth-related violence, the Edo State Government will today Monday, October 12, 2026, bring youths willing to abandon cult-related activities to a public renunciation ceremony,

offering them an opportunity to turn away from violence and embrace a new path of peace, lawful conduct and productive citizenship.

The ceremony, scheduled for 11am at the Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub, Airport Road, Benin City, is expected to be hosted by Governor Monday Okpebholo as part of the state government's efforts to

tackle the menace of cultism and strengthen community security.

Organised by the State Special Security Squad, the exercise is designed to provide a public platform for youths who have resolved to renounce cultism to declare their decision and commit themselves to a peaceful and law-abiding lifestyle.

The development was

conveyed in an invitation letter dated October 5, 2026, signed by the Principal Security Officer to the Governor, Saturday Austin Oko, and circulated to journalists in Benin City.

The initiative is expected to encourage young people seeking to break away from cult groups to make a decisive turn towards constructive engagement, responsible citizenship and

meaningful contributions to society.

The government has urged youths involved in cult-related activities who are willing to turn over a new leaf to take advantage of the ceremony and publicly demonstrate their resolve to abandon violence and embrace peaceful co-existence.

Cultism and youth-related violence have remained major concerns in communities across Edo State, with implications for public safety, social stability

and the future of young people.

Tomorrow's ceremony is therefore expected to serve as a platform for participants to demonstrate their willingness to disengage from cult-related activities and pursue more productive lives.

Beyond the public declaration, the initiative also underscores the importance of creating opportunities for youths to make positive choices and reintegrate into society as responsible citizens.



FUNERAL MASS:

R-L: Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Senator representing Edo North Senatorial District, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, Speaker Edo State House of Assembly, EDHA Yekini Idaiye, Chief Judge of Edo State, Hon. Justice Daniel Iyobosa Okungbowa and a representative of Delta State Governor at the funeral mass of late Chief Dan Osi Orbih at Ogbona Etsako Central Local Government Area of Edo State

Okpebholo, dignitaries receive Orbih's remains, pay tributes

BENIN CITY/ OGBONA

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on Friday received the remains of Chief Dan Orbih, a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and former Chairman of the Governing Council of Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma, at the Benin Airport, as political leaders, associates and dignitaries paid glowing tributes to the late politician during his burial in Ogbona, Edo State, on Saturday.

The governor, accompanied by the Secretary to the State Government, Mr Umar Ikhilor, received Orbih's remains at about 9:55 a.m. before leading family members, friends, political associates and government officials

from the airport to his residence in Benin City for the lying-in-state ceremony.

Speaking at the residence, Okpebholo described Orbih's death as a great loss to Edo State, stressing that the deceased was more than a political associate to him.

"He was a brother," the governor said.

"At times like this, when the loss is difficult to bear, we can only turn to God for comfort and strength.

"I pray that God will give us all the courage and fortitude to bear this great loss. I also pray that God will protect the family, strengthen them during this difficult

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>

Cultism: Pastors commend Okpebholo on security, urge action on bad roads —Pg 2

Nigerian beauty queen clinches four awards at maiden Miss Continental World 2026 —Pg 3

"Time for Ukraine to get new president," says Trump after Zelensky condemns diesel deal —Pg 8

Adeshina sponsors women's high jump at athletic heat anniversary meet —Pg 11

NEWS



FIM 2026 HARVEST:

Edo State Gov., Sen. Monday Okpebholo (4th left) and Pastor Margaret Agbonifo (5th left) with some top officials of Edo State and dignitaries during the 2026 Harvest of Family Intercessory Ministry (FIM) International Inc., in Benin City on Sunday.



BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY:

L - R: Governor Monday Okpebholo and Pastor Obby Okeke, General Overseer of Christian Brethren Ministry (CBM) during Okeke's 65th birthday anniversary in CBM, Benin City, yesterday.

...Okpebholo receives Orbih's remains

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

period and provide them with the grace to carry on," he said.

In his tribute, the officiating priest, Rev. Fr. Palmer Ikponmwosa, described Orbih as a colossus of Edo politics, a master tactician, leader and kingmaker.

Other political leaders at the residence remembered the late politician as a man who spoke truth to power whenever the opportunity arose.

A PDP chieftain, Mr Pascal Ugbome, said Orbih demonstrated how opposition politics could be played with purpose, making it meaningful, productive and engaging.

According to Ugbome, Orbih was courageous enough to challenge even

his closest friends when they occupied positions of authority and abused or misused the opportunities entrusted to them.

Also speaking, an All Progressives Congress (APC) chieftain, Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu, described Orbih as a generous and compassionate man who extended assistance to many people.

"I can only imagine how all those who benefited from his kindness must be feeling following his demise," Ize-Iyamu said.

Dignitaries who attended the reception of the remains at the airport included Edo State Deputy Governor, Dennis Idahosa; Edo APC Chairman, Jarrett Tenebe; and former senator representing Edo South Senatorial District, Matthew Urhoghide.

Others included former

member of the House of Representatives, Samson Osaigie, and Edo APC Deputy Chairman, Sylvester Aigboboh, among other political leaders and sympathisers.

At the burial ceremony held on Saturday, October 10, 2026, in Orbih's hometown of Ogbona, Etsako Central Local Government Area of Edo State, prominent political leaders and dignitaries joined members of the family, friends and associates to bid the late politician and businessman a final farewell.

Among those who attended were the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Chief Nyesom Wike; Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the National Institute for Sports, Comrade Philip Shaibu; and Director-General of the National Directorate of Employment,

His Excellency Silas Agara.

Governor Okpebholo was also among the dignitaries who attended the funeral to pay their last respects to Orbih, who died on August 31, 2026.

The burial attracted prominent personalities from across the country, with mourners reflecting on the life, political engagements and contributions of the deceased to community development in Edo State.

Family members, friends and political associates remembered Orbih as a man of peace, integrity and generosity whose influence extended across political divides.

The tributes at both the lying-in-state ceremony in Benin City and the burial in Ogbona underscored the late politician's relationships with leaders across party lines and the impact he made during his lifetime.

Cultism: Pastors commend Okpebholo on security, urge action on bad roads

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Two popular clerics, Pastor Margaret Agbonifo and Pastor Obby Okeke, have commended Edo State Governor Monday Okpebholo for his administration's efforts to tackle insecurity, while urging him to address bad roads across the state.

The clerics spoke during the 2026 Harvest of Family Intercessory Ministries (FIM) International Inc., attended by the governor and top officials of his administration. The delegation also visited Christian Brethren Ministries (CBM) to celebrate Okeke's 65th birthday.

Agbonifo, the vision bearer of FIM, praised the governor for his efforts to combat kidnapping, cultism, banditry and other criminal activities in the state.

"I want to thank you for the way you are addressing insecurity across the state, especially the way you have fought kidnapping, cultism, banditry and other forms of criminality in the state. The state is very peaceful today," she said.

She attributed the improvement in security to what she described as the governor's courage, commitment and determination to confront criminal activities.

"Before your administration, Your Excellency, people were kidnapped, cult killings were everywhere in the state, and blood flowed freely in the state. But that is no longer the case today, as Governor Okpebholo has brought back peace to the state," Agbonifo said.

She, however, appealed to the governor to address the poor condition of roads, particularly those in the Government Reservation Area (GRA).

"Edo people want good roads. Please help address it," she said.

Similarly, the General Overseer of CBM, Okeke, thanked the governor for his administration's response to the kidnapping of victims at a vegetable market, which she said led to the arrest of the suspects within 24 hours.

She said the victims were close friends of the church and described the incident as traumatic, adding that the swift

arrests brought relief to those affected.

Responding, Governor Okpebholo said his administration had made progress in tackling crime and would sustain efforts to improve security across the state.

He said the government had procured more than 40 vehicles and motorcycles to strengthen security operations, adding that they would be deployed to strategic junctions to enable security personnel to respond quickly to distress calls.

The governor said the suspects involved in the vegetable market kidnapping were arrested within 24 hours, adding that his administration intended to maintain a similar response to criminal activities across the state.

On the condition of roads, particularly in the GRA, Okpebholo said five contractors had been identified to handle road construction projects in the area after the rainy season.

"Edo people are crying about bad roads in the GRA, and social media is full of complaints. But don't worry. Immediately after the rainy season, we will embark on massive work and put everything to rest," he said.

He added that the government would work on roads across the state to make them motorable, noting that poor planning and inadequate drainage had contributed to the condition of some roads.

"Edo roads were built without proper planning. There are no good drainages on roads in the GRA and other parts of the state. The drainages on some roads are already filled up, and nobody is desilting them," he said.

According to the governor, the administration would address the drainage problems as part of its road construction and rehabilitation plans.

He acknowledged that executing the projects would be challenging but said proper planning was necessary to achieve the government's objectives.

"Rain is an enemy to construction. After the rain, we will start our work, and Edo people will see that we have started our work and enjoy good roads across the state," Okpebholo said.

...Benin Kingdom dazzles

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

and the continued relevance of traditional institutions in preserving the history and identity of the kingdom.

Beyond the celebration, the festival highlighted the importance of safeguarding the Benin Kingdom's cultural heritage and transmitting its treasured customs and traditions to younger generations.

The 10th coronation anniversary of Oba Ewuare II represents a significant milestone in

the history of the ancient kingdom, providing an opportunity for reflection on its rich past and celebration of the cultural values that continue to define its people.

The festival was one of several activities organised to mark the anniversary, bringing together people from different communities to celebrate Benin history, strengthen cultural ties and reaffirm their commitment to preserving the kingdom's heritage for future generations.

NEWS

Nigerian beauty queen clinches four awards at maiden Miss Continental World 2026

OJO HAPPY /
AGHEDO IYOBOR

THAILAND

Nigeria has recorded a spectacular triumph on the global beauty pageant stage as its radiant daughter, Oma Iruomachukwu Osele, emerged the historic winner of the inaugural Miss Continental World 2026,

dazzling the international audience with beauty, poise, cultural elegance and outstanding personal distinction.

Osele clinched the coveted crown at the grand finale held on October 9, 2026, in Ayutthaya, Thailand, triumphing over contestants from different countries and hoist Nigeria's flag high on the world

...Unwana Sambo Essien shines in male contest

stage.

Her crowning moment was made even more remarkable by an extraordinary collection of honours, as the Nigerian queen also emerged Queen of Africa, won Best National Costume and received the Best Physique award, underscoring her exceptional performance and commanding presence

throughout the competition.

The historic victory represents not merely a personal accomplishment for Osele but also a moment of national pride, showcasing Nigeria's rich cultural heritage, the confidence of its young women and the country's growing influence in international beauty and fashion competitions.

With her elegance, composure and striking representation of Nigerian identity, Osele distinguished herself among the contestants, demonstrating that beauty pageantry, at its finest, offers a powerful platform for cultural diplomacy, national representation and the celebration of talent.

Her Queen of Africa title

recognised her as the highest-placing African contestant in the competition, while the Best National Costume award celebrated the beauty, creativity and cultural significance of her traditional attire. Together, the honours amplified the Nigerian queen's triumph, placing African identity and cultural expression firmly in the international spotlight.

Failed-Bank depositors receive N69.65bn in NDIC payments

OJO HAPPY

ABUJA

The Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation has paid a cumulative N69.65 billion to insured depositors of failed financial institutions as part of efforts to protect bank customers and maintain confidence in Nigeria's banking system.

The Director of Strategy Development at the corporation, Gwa Uduak, disclosed the figure during the opening ceremony of the NDIC's 2026 Customer Service Week on Thursday in Abuja.

She said the corporation had also made payments to uninsured depositors through its bank liquidation activities.

The payments form part of the NDIC's mandate to protect eligible depositors when insured financial institutions fail and to facilitate the recovery and distribution of funds from liquidated banks.

The corporation operates through two major processes. The first involves reimbursing eligible depositors within the applicable insured limits, while the second involves recovering debts owed to failed institu-

tions and realising their assets to settle outstanding claims.

Under the NDIC Act 2023, the maximum insured deposit for deposit money banks is N5 million per depositor per bank, while different limits apply to certain other categories of insured institutions.

The corporation has also adopted technology-driven verification processes, including the use of Bank Verification Numbers, to identify eligible customers and facilitate payments.

The measures are intended to make the reimbursement process more efficient and reduce the difficulties experienced by customers whose banks have ceased operations.

The NDIC has continued to encourage affected depositors who are yet to receive their entitlements to complete the necessary verification and claims procedures.

The latest payment figure underscores the corporation's role in protecting depositors and supporting confidence in the financial system. However, the recovery of outstanding claims may depend on the verification of eligible customers and the recovery of assets belonging to failed institutions.

NBET activates N729bn debt settlement for power producers

OJO HAPPY

ABUJA

Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading Plc has commenced the settlement of approximately N729 billion in outstanding obligations owed to electricity generation companies and their associated gas suppliers under the Federal Government's power sector debt reduction programme.

The development followed the issuance and signing of N728.979 billion in Series 2 bonds under the Federal Government's N4 trillion Power Sector Multi-Instrument Issuance Programme.

NBET Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Akin Odeyemi, disclosed the

development in a statement issued on Friday.

According to the company, the settlement comprises N402 billion in cash bonds and N326.979 billion in non-cash bonds, structured in line with the approved framework.

The initiative forms part of efforts to address long-standing financial obligations that have weakened the liquidity of Nigeria's electricity industry.

Generation companies have faced mounting financial pressures arising from unpaid electricity invoices and other outstanding obligations. These challenges have affected their ability to maintain generating facilities, meet operational expenses and secure adequate gas supplies.



LAUNCHING:

Minister of Environment, Balarabe Lawal, (4th R); Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Environment, Salihu Usman, (5R); Director-General, National Council on Climate Change, Dr Teniye Majekodunmi, (3rd R); Professor of Global Climate Governance and Public Policy, University of Bristol, UK, Chukwumerije Okereke (4th R) and others during the report launch of the 3rd edition of the Subnational Climate Governance Performance Ratings and Ranking of Nigeria's 36 States by the Federal Ministry of Environment in Abuja.

FG: NNPC retail discount not subsidy, no public funds involved -Oyedele

AGHEDO IYOBOR

ABUJA

The Federal Government has clarified that the petrol retail discount being offered by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited is not a subsidy and will not reduce funds accruing to the Federation Account.

The Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, Taiwo Oyedele, made the clarification in a statement issued on Thursday in Abuja.

According to Oyedele, there is a clear difference between a margin discount and a subsidy.

He explained that every marketer adds a margin to the price it pays for fuel it sells. A margin discount means the retailer chooses to take a smaller margin, or no margin at all for a period, and passes the saving to the customers. The cost of the discount is borne by the retailer alone," he said.

"A subsidy is different. It is when government pays part of the price the consumer would otherwise pay. That money comes from public revenue — funds that would otherwise go to salaries, schools, hospitals and infrastructure.

"That is the regime this administration ended in 2023, and it is not coming back"

Oyedele said since October 1, 2026, motorists have been paying less for petrol at NNPC Retail Limited stations, following a discount on the company's retail margin.

"We welcome the relief this brings to households, commuters and transporters," he noted.

He stressed that the discount is not funded with public money.

"The discount is not funded by the federal budget or the Federation Account. NNPC Retail buys petrol from the Dangote Refinery and other suppliers at market prices, on commercial terms, then adds its retail margin to set the pump price," he said.

Oborevwo orders assessment, rehabilitation of dilapidated schools across Delta

BETTY IDIALU, WARRI

ASABA

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwo, has directed the immediate assessment and rehabilitation of dilapidated public primary and secondary schools across the state as part of efforts to improve the quality of education and provide a conducive learning environment for pupils and students.

The governor gave the directive during the inauguration of the Model Technical College, Oghareki, where he reaffirmed his administration's commitment to strengthening the education sector and equipping young people with practical and technical skills for self-reliance.

The newly inaugurated institution is equipped with modern technical workshops, accommodation and sports facilities designed to promote technical education and prepare students for employment and entrepreneurship.

Oborevwo also announced plans to inaugurate three additional model technical colleges before December 2026, signalling his administration's determination to expand access to skills-based education across the state.

As part of further support for education, the governor approved a N50 million education support fund for a student, Davina Ogheneovo.

He said the directive to assess and rehabilitate dilapidated schools was aimed at ensuring that pupils and students across Delta State had access to safe, functional and improved learning facilities.

The initiative is expected

to strengthen public education infrastructure while complementing investments in technical and vocational training.

Former Delta State Governor, Chief James Ibori, commended Oborevwo for what he described as developmental strides across the state.

Ibori also pledged support for President Bola Tinubu, Governor Oborevwo and other All Progressives Congress (APC) candidates ahead of the 2027 general elections, highlighting what he described as growing political alignment in the state.

**THE NIGERIAN
OBSERVER**
 THAT THE PEOPLE MAY KNOW

OBA EWUARE II AT 10

A DECADE OF ROYAL EXCELLENCE

Celebrating the

**10th Coronation Anniversary
& Birthday Anniversary**

of

HIS ROYAL MAJESTY

OMO N'OBA N'EDO UKU AKPOLOKPOLO

OBA EWUARE II, CFR
Oba of Benin

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

❖ **BE PART OF THE CELEBRATION** ❖

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

ADVERT RATES

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



SUBMISSION DEADLINE

October 18, 2026



BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES

Marcus Atoe: **08081986842**

Mrs. Doris Igbini: **08051177163**

❖ **LONG MAY HE REIGN** ❖

NEWS

Ekiti must build economy that sustains future generations

— Ex-gov candidate

EKITI

Legal practitioner and former governorship candidate in Ekiti State, Tope Adebayo, has said that the task before the present generation in the state is to strive to create an economy capable of sustaining opportunities for future generations.

Adebayo, who said successive administrations in the state had trod the lines of the founding

fathers and recorded landmarks, stressed the need to strengthen the foundations established in the last 30 years.

The member of the State Economic Management Team, inaugurated by Governor Biodun Oyejide in 2023, spoke in a keynote address in Ado Ekiti, the state capital, on Saturday, at a programme organised by the Ekiti State House of Assembly to mark the state's 30th anniversary.

Adebayo, however, chal-

lenged the state to move forward to building an economy that would give every citizen a genuine opportunity to prosper.

He said, "The next chapter of Ekiti's development should be defined by a transition from a 'Land of Honour' to a 'Land of Opportunity', where education, skills, infrastructure and entrepreneurship are deliberately connected to jobs, markets, investment and wealth creation.

"The ultimate measure of the state's development should not be the number of successful people it has produced, but how many more people can have the opportunity to become successful.

"The responsibility before

the present generation is to strengthen those foundations and create an economy capable of sustaining opportunities for generations yet unborn."

Adebayo said that successive administrations had contributed to the development of Ekiti in different ways, which needed to be acknowledged.

"An insightful reflection on our history is to recognise that the task of state-building is a continuum. One administration lays a foundation; another builds upon it. One strengthens the structure while another comes along with a mandate for expansion," he added.

The ex-governorship candidate described the

30th anniversary as an occasion to recognise that the present Ekiti "is the cumulative product of the sacrifices, policies, ideas and institutions built by successive governments and by citizens who have served this state in different capacities."

He, however, commended the Oyejide administration for what he described as its enviable and laudable achievements, saying, "The work that has already been done by the administration had brought about improvements in fiscal transparency and audit performance; reported progress in internally generated revenue, investment in roads

and transport infrastructure," among other efforts to improve the lives of Ekiti people and the state's business environment.

He lauded the Oyejide administration for focusing on consolidation of the progress made so far, scaling impact and strengthening systems capable of driving sustainable development.

He urged stronger collaboration among the executive, legislature, judiciary, traditional institutions, private sector and citizens, saying development could only be sustained when institutions worked together while retaining their constitutional responsibilities.

See your appointments as call to service, Owan East Chairman charges supervisors

LAMAI CASSIUS

EDO

The Executive Chairman of Owan East Local Government Council, Hon. Ernest Oyaale Aitalegbé, has charged newly appointed Supervisory Councillors in the council to see their appointments as a call to service and not a mere political reward.

The Chairman gave the charge while swearing-in the five supervisors at the council secretariat in Afuze.

He also tasked them to bring innovation, commitment and accountability to bear in their respective portfolios in line with his administration's developmental agenda aimed at uplifting the people of the local government.

Hon. Aitalegbé expressed confidence in their capacity to

deliver, noting that with a competent cabinet now in place, his administration is set to accelerate the implementation of its people-oriented programmes for the benefit of Owan East people.

Speaking on behalf of the appointees, Hon. Atairu Salami thanked the Executive Chairman and other leaders of the party for finding them worthy of appointment.

He assured the Chairman of their loyalty, dedication and commitment to duty, pledging to support the administration's drive to deliver good governance to the people.

Those sworn in are Hon. Kabiru Alasa as Supervisory Councillor for Agriculture and Natural Resources; Comrade Coker Lucky for Health and Environment; Hon. Afegbai Oghaime for Works and Infrastructure; Hon. Atairu Salami for Education; and Hon. Saheed Saliu for Youth and Sports.



INAUGURATION:

From left: Chairman, organising committee, Mr Kunle Olujobi; Chairman, Ibadan Boys High School Old Students 76 set, Pastor Ade Popoola; representatives of Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oloye Olufemi Ogunwale; Mogaji Adewole Bankole; and the Principal, Ibadan Boys High School, Mr Saidi Osunubi, during the inauguration of Vocational Training Centre at Ibadan Boys High School in Ibadan.

Stop deceiving Nigerians, ex-Osun lawmaker warns Atiku, Obi

OSUN

A former member of the Osun State House of Assembly, Olatunbosun Oyintiloye has warned the two leading opposition candidates in the forthcoming presidential election, ex-Vice-President Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi, against making campaign promises capable of causing public unrest.

In a statement obtained in Osogbo on Sunday, Oyintiloye lamented that Atiku and Obi were making unrealistic promises to attract votes from Nigerians.

Specifically, he said the declaration by the two presidential candidates in the upcoming 2027 elections – Atiku of the African Democratic Congress and Obi of the Nigeria Democratic Congress – to restore fuel subsidy, if elected, was unrealistic.

He insisted that all organs and tiers of government had already adjusted to life under the current no-subsidy re-

gime.

"It is practically impossible to return Nigeria to the era of fuel subsidy. Alhaji Atiku and Mr Obi should be mindful of the implications of whatever promises they are making to get the attention of Nigerians.

"The presidential candidate of the Peoples Redemption Party, Donald Duke, also promised to peg the pump price of petrol at N300 per litre if elected. How realistic is that?

"I appeal to the opposition candidates to be truthful to themselves and stop deceiving Nigerians. The majority of their promises are nothing but a recipe for public chaos.

"Presently, salaries and wages are based on the post-subsidy removal earnings of the government. With the restoration of fuel subsidy that these candidates are promising, will wages and salaries be reviewed downward? What will be the earnings of states in the wake of fuel subsidy restoration? What becomes of several ongoing government projects

awarded based on its current earnings? Nigerians are wiser," the ex-lawmaker queried.

He noted that the fuel subsidy removal and foreign exchange reforms introduced by the President Bola Tinubu administration had driven major fiscal adjustments.

He, however, admitted that the policies had placed considerable pressure on households and businesses.

Highlighting the gains of the subsidy removal, he said the increase in monthly allocations from the Federation Account had given state governments greater financial flexibility to meet their obligations, execute development projects and address infrastructure and social-service deficits.

Oyintiloye urged opposition candidates to support the Federal Government's efforts to reposition the economy or adopt alternative campaign strategies rather than make promises they would not be able to fulfil.

Tinubu will deliver more prosperity if re-elected — First Lady

LAFIA

The First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, has assured Nigerians that President Bola Tinubu will fulfil the from-reform-to-prosperity pledge of his Independence Day address if re-elected for a second term in 2027.

She said this in Lafia, Nasarawa State, at the North-Central Grassroots Mobilisation Network Grand Rally for the re-election of the President and Vice President Kashim Shettima, according to a statement signed by her Senior Special Assistant on Media, Busola Kukoyi.

The rally drew party members from across the North-Central zone.

It was also attended by the National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, Nentawe Yilwatda; Imo State Governor Hope Uzodinma; and governors from the zone.

The First Lady said the President's October 1 message, titled "From Reforms to Prosperity," showed that the era of reform

was giving way to one of prosperity.

"The Independence Day message of Mr President was titled 'From Reforms to Prosperity'. Therefore, Mr President is saying that they are going to reform the sector, but now is the time for prosperity, and we can see our economy is stabilising," she said.

She cited a falling exchange rate and returning investors as evidence, saying, "Foreign exchange is going down, and investors are coming back to Nigeria."

"Our farmers too, you can see all our governors here, they are doing infrastructural development like no other time before," she added.

The First Lady said the administration was also tackling food insecurity aggressively, pointing to a food bank programme she said had just been completed.

"As you see now, we have just finished the food bank programme, where we are helping every child and mothers who are pregnant and also breastfeeding.

"This is to ensure that they can have more nutritious food, and

also the children that are malnourished can get treatment and also get food to grow healthy," she said.

Mrs Tinubu added that young people in school were getting well funded.

She urged party members to take the message of the administration's reforms to their states.

"As we all go back to our various states, tell everyone that Mr President Bola Tinubu is a leader who is very bold.

"He will not stop by being at home to take difficult decisions. He is a leader who can be trusted to lead us into prosperity," she said.

She said things would change for the better if Tinubu and Shettima were returned to office, adding that the administration would "build a stronger economy, safer communities and a greater Nigeria."

"Therefore, vote for continuity, vote for capacity, vote for prosperity, vote for the re-election of Mr President and all the candidates of the APC from top to bottom," she said.

NEWS

SERAP sues CBN over \$6.23m election funds, N1.63tn others

ABUJA

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project has sued the Central Bank of Nigeria over its alleged failure to account for \$6.23m in election-related funds and more than N1.63tn in other public funds flagged in the Auditor-General of the Federation's 2023 annual report.

SERAP is seeking a court order compelling the CBN to account for the funds, disclose the beneficiaries and repayment status of affected transactions, and identify officials responsible for approving and disbursing the money.

The organisation disclosed this in a statement issued on Sunday by its Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare.

According to SERAP, the suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/2450/2026, was filed on Friday at the Federal High Court in Abuja following findings documented in Volume II of the Auditor-General's 2023 Annual Report, published on August 7, 2026.

The funds include \$6.23m linked to an allegedly fraudulent election-funding request purportedly made by former President Muhammadu Buhari, N1.25tn in unrecovered intervention loans to state governments, N116.18bn in loans to distressed and liquidated banks, and N262.86bn disbursed under the Anchor Borrowers' Programme.

SERAP is seeking "an order of mandamus to direct and compel the CBN to account for US\$6.23 million in allegedly diverted or unaccounted-for election funds and over N1.63 trillion in other public funds."

It is also asking the court to compel the apex bank to disclose the purposes, beneficiaries, repayment status and recovery measures relating to the funds, as well as the findings of its internal investigation into the alleged election-funding fraud.

The organisation further wants the CBN to identify officials and other persons responsible for approving and disbursing the affected funds and disclose any disciplinary

or administrative action taken against them.

SERAP is also seeking an order compelling the bank to disclose records concerning seven boxes of currency notes awaiting examination, unserviceable vehicles at its Lagos branch and a bullion van at its Abeokuta branch.

Explaining its position, the organisation stated, "The accountability of public institutions, including the CBN, is a crucial pillar of Nigeria's constitutional democracy. These allegations by the Auditor-General suggest grave violations of the public trust, the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution 1999 [as amended], the CBN Act, national anti-corruption laws and Nigeria's obligations under the UN Convention against Corruption."



PRESENTATION:

From left: Director Relief and Rehabilitation, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mr Abbani Garki; Director, Search and Rescue, NEMA, Air commodore Bature Usman and Deputy Governor of Rivers State, Prof. Ngozi Odu, during the presentation of relief materials to the flood victims in Rivers by the Federal Government in Port Harcourt.

NASSI to equip SMEs for global competitiveness

ABUJA

The Nigerian Association of Small Scale Industrialists is collaborating with Zamkah Technologies to equip small business owners in Nigeria with the skills, business connections and capacity needed to transform their enterprises into globally competitive brands.

The initiative will feature prominently at the association's 35th National Convention, scheduled for December 1, 2026, in Abuja, where entrepreneurs are expected to exchange ideas, explore business partnerships and identify opportunities to strengthen domestic production.

NASSI National President, Solomon Vongfa, disclosed this while speaking with journalists in Abuja on Sunday, describing the convention as a platform to help small business owners build sustainable enterprises and reduce their dependence on government.

He said the gathering would bring entrepreneurs together to discuss practical ways of improving business performance, expanding production and strengthening the contribution of small-scale industries to Nigeria's economy.

According to Vongfa, the partnership with Zamkah Technologies is part of efforts to prepare local businesses for a more competitive marketplace by improving their capacity to grow beyond their immediate environments.

"The convention is a deliberate platform to interact

with small business owners, cross-fertilise ideas and identify areas of collaboration that can strengthen the economy and reduce overdependence on government," he said.

He added that the engagement would create opportunities for entrepreneurs to establish business alliances, access training and improve their operations through workshops, seminars and other capacity-building programmes.

Vongfa said NASSI would also use the convention to advance discussions on policies and business models capable of making small enterprises more competitive, particularly in an economy where access to finance, skills and reliable business support remains a challenge for many operators.

"As an organisation, one of our key functions is to advocate government policies that make it easier to run small businesses in Nigeria. The convention will explore possible avenues for developing business models that suit individual enterprises and make them competitive," he added.

The NASSI President identified access to finance, improved product quality and the development of entrepreneurial skills as critical requirements for building businesses that can compete beyond Nigeria.

He said the association was committed to promoting locally manufactured goods through trade fairs, exhibitions and other platforms that connect producers with potential customers and business partners.

Benin Monarch opens food, craft festival as part of 10th coronation anniversary

BENEDICT OKATE
BENIN CITY

The Oba of Benin, Omo N' Oba N' Edo, Uku Akpolokpolo, Ewuare II, has opened a food and craft festival in Benin City, Edo State, as part of activities marking his 10th coronation anniversary.

The festival, which commenced on Friday at the newly transformed Oba Akenzua Cultural Centre, brought together artisans, food vendors, fashion designers, entertainment enthusiasts and other participants to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the Benin Kingdom.

The monarch, who will mark 10 years on the throne of his ancestors on October 20, 2026, was represented at the opening ceremony by the Chairman of the Coronation Anniversary Committee and former Deputy Governor of Edo State, Chief Lucky Imasuen.

Also present was Chief Osaro Idah of the Obazelu N' Iweguae group of Benin.

Following the opening ceremony, Imasuen and Idah inspected the various exhibition stands and interacted with vendors showcasing their products and services.

The festival featured a wide range of locally produced goods and creative enterprises, including handmade crafts, fashion designs, shoemaking, confectionery and professional manicure and pedicure services.

Food lovers were also treated

to a variety of traditional Benin delicacies alongside continental dishes, highlighting the diversity of the city's culinary offerings.

The event further featured musical performances, royal art displays and photographic exhibitions, while guests and palace functionaries took the opportunity to relax, socialize and reflect on the monarch's decade-long reign.

Beyond its festive atmosphere, the event provided a platform for local artisans, entrepreneurs and food vendors to display their skills, products and services to a wider audience.

The festival also underscored the role of cultural celebrations in preserving indigenous traditions, promoting local creativity and providing opportunities for small businesses to reach potential customers.

Organized as part of activities commemorating Oba Ewuare II's 10th coronation anniversary, the event reflects the enduring significance of Benin's cultural heritage and its place in the kingdom's contemporary social and economic life.

As preparations continue towards the anniversary on October 20, the food and craft festival offers residents and visitors an opportunity to engage with the kingdom's artistic traditions, culinary heritage and cultural identity.

The celebration marks a decade since Oba Ewuare II ascended the ancient throne of the Benin Kingdom in 2016.

PDP rallies supporters in Kwara, takes campaign to grassroots

ILORIN

The Peoples Democratic Party in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State on Saturday held a mega rally across major communities in the area, with a massive crowd turning out to demonstrate support for the party and its candidates ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The rally, convened by the PDP Chairman in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Mallam Abdulkadir Issa, and his executive committee, was organised as part of the party's voter sensitisation, mobilisation, and awareness campaign, as well as to appreciate residents for their continued support.

The procession commenced at the Omoda Roundabout and moved through Odeadana, Alore, Oloje, Itamerin, Pakata, Idigba, Gaa Aremu, and Adeta, before proceeding through the Agbo-Oba, Surulere, Adabata, and Agaka communities.

It finally terminated at Oja Oba, near the palace of the Emir of Ilorin, after covering a significant portion of the local government area.

The crowd continued to grow as the procession moved from one community to another, with residents joining along the route. Despite the long distance covered, participants remained energetic, maintaining the rally's momentum until its final destination.

The exercise witnessed the participation of PDP members from the 12 political wards in Ilorin West, alongside community leaders, marketers, transporters, youths, women, and other residents.

The rally was also used to canvass support for the party's candidates, including the governorship candidate, Engr. Sulaiman Bolakale Kawu; Kwara Central Senatorial candidate,

Senator Saliu Mustapha; House of Representatives candidate for Asa/Ilorin West Federal Constituency, Prof. Abdulfatai Aremu; and the party's candidates for the two State Assembly constituencies in Ilorin West, Abdulhammed Tunji and Mallam Alfanla.

Speaking at the event, Tunji thanked PDP members and residents for the massive turnout and show of support.

He assured stakeholders that a PDP government would bring fresh hands, new ideas, and purposeful leadership aimed at improving the living standards of the people.

The convener, Issa, commended PDP members across the 12 political wards for their commitment and mobilisation.

He also lauded residents for the warm reception given to the campaign train, noting that the enthusiastic response in areas such as Pakata, Idigba, and Adeta demonstrated the growing popularity of the PDP in the area.

He stated that the reception was particularly significant because the rally passed through communities with strong political relevance, reflecting the party's expanding grassroots support.

Also speaking, the PDP Kwara Central Senatorial District Chairman, Alhaji Isiaka Babatunde Owolabi, praised the party leadership for providing an alternative platform to the ruling All Progressives Congress administration.

Owolabi attributed the growing support for the PDP to widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of the APC government in the state.

He alleged that the administration had lost focus and track of the needs of the people, describing it as divisive and disconnected from the challenges confronting ordinary citizens.

NEWS

2027: Protest, relief as INEC releases final candidates' list

ABUJA

The release of the final list of candidates for the 2027 general elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission has sparked mixed reactions following the omission of prominent opposition figures, including a former Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Isa Pantami; Ogun State Peoples Democratic Party governorship candidate, Ladi Adebute; and the Nigeria Democratic Congress governorship candidate in Kano State, Aminu Gwarzo.

While the Ogun PDP accused the ruling All Progressives Congress of mounting

pressure on INEC to exclude its candidate, Pantami's camp urged supporters to remain calm. Gwarzo, a former Deputy Governor of Kano, is yet to react.

There was jubilation among supporters of politicians whose names came under scrutiny following a recent Supreme Court ruling that raised doubts about their qualification.

INEC published the names of candidates contesting the presidential, governorship and National Assembly elections on its website on Saturday, marking a significant stage in preparations for the 2027 polls.

A review of the list shows

that it contains 18 presidential candidates.

Among the prominent figures whose names appeared on the list were President Bola Tinubu of the APC, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar of the African Democratic Congress, Peter

Obi of the Nigeria Democratic Congress, Omoyele Sowore of the African Action Congress and Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde, listed under the Allied Peoples Movement.

The list also includes governorship candidates across 26 states, including Abia, Ad-

amawa, Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kwara, Lagos, Nasarawa, Ogun, Oyo, Plateau, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe, Rivers and Zamfara.

A further review of the

published names showed that while several candidates whose nominations had attracted attention made the final list, others were absent, leaving their political camps to confront questions over their participation in the elections.

Police arrest 23 suspected cultists in Bayelsa, recover weapons

YENAGOA

The Bayelsa State Police Command has arrested 23 suspected cultists in connection with cult-related violence, attempted murder and breach of public peace in Yenagoa and its environs.

The Commissioner of Police, Ajao Saka Adewale, disclosed this during a press briefing in Yenagoa, saying four people had been killed in recent cult-related attacks and reprisals involving rival groups.

Adewale said the incidents were recorded in Igbogene, Onopa, Ovom, Agudama, Amarata, Swali and Akenfa, prompting the command to intensify intelligence-driven operations and visibility patrols across identified flash-points.

He said the operations, carried out by the Anti-Cultism Unit, Violent Crime Response Unit and other tactical teams, led to the arrest of 23 suspects and the recovery of firearms, ammunition, dangerous weapons and substances suspected to be illicit drugs.

"The Command will not allow criminals to dictate the atmosphere in our communities," Adewale said.

"We will pursue offenders within the bounds of the law, wherever they may seek refuge. We shall continue to deepen intelligence-driven policing, visibility patrols and strengthen community partnerships."

Giving details of the arrests, the commissioner said operatives of the Anti-Cultism Unit arrested two suspected cultists during coordinated operations conducted between September 23 and October 5, 2026.

One of the suspects, identified as Tarimie James, 24, from Ovom community, was arrested near St. Anglican Church in Ovom. The police said a locally fabricated Ber-

etta pistol was recovered from him.

According to Adewale, James allegedly confessed to being a member of the Icelanders Confraternity. He was said to be on remand awaiting trial.

Another suspect, Ezeikiel Joel, 24, from Igbogene community, was arrested with a pump-action gun, other weapons and a drum allegedly used during cult meetings. The police said he confessed to belonging to the Kue Klux Klan's Men (KKK) Confraternity.

The commissioner said the Violent Crime Response Unit arrested five suspects on October 5 in connection with cult attacks and reprisals that left some victims with life-threatening injuries.

The suspects were identified as Zaidamun Paul, Anthony Okorie, Godsgift Angel, Richman Kudi and Victor Kelsy. Adewale said a Beretta pistol, axes, cutlasses and knives were recovered during the operation.

He added that police operatives recovered a locally made revolver pistol and three rounds of live 9mm ammunition at Ugbogene on October 6.

The weapon was allegedly abandoned by a suspect who fled through a nearby swamp after sighting police operatives. The commissioner said efforts were ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspect.

Adewale further disclosed that eight suspects were arrested during joint operations conducted on October 7 and 8 in Akenfa, Igbogene and Swali communities over alleged cultism and breach of public peace.

Among them was Baratua-Pre Bara, 30, who was arrested in Akenfa and allegedly confessed to being the number two member of the Icelanders Confraternity in Yenagoa. The police said he was expected to be arraigned on Monday, October 12.

PRESENTATION:

Some relief materials presented to flood victims by the Federal Government through the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Rivers by the Federal Government in Port Harcourt.



Police arrest two in Jigawa over vandalism of streetlight, transformer

DUTSE

The Jigawa State Police Command has arrested two suspects over the alleged vandalism of a streetlight cable and an electrical transformer in New Gwaram and Auyo Local Government Areas of the state.

This was contained in a statement made available to journalists in Dutse, the state capital, on Sunday by the Police Public Relations Officer, Shi'isu Adam.

According to Adam, the first suspect was arrested on September 25, 2026, for allegedly cutting the armour cable of a streetlight at New Gwaram Town.

He gave the name of the suspect as Aminu Musa, 38, of New Gwaram Town, Gwaram LGA.

The PPRO said, "The suspect, who is an operator of a streetlight generator in the area, was arrested by police operatives while committing the act."

Adam stated that the suspect was brought to the police station while the scene was visited and relevant exhibits were recovered.

He added that "preliminary investigation was conducted and the case has been charged to court for prosecution."

Similarly, the PPRO said on September 29, 2026, the police received information from Ayan village, Auyo LGA, that a second suspect had been arrested by residents.

He identified the suspect as Laminu Sha'aibu, 26, of Gumuwa Village, Kafin Hausa LGA.

"The suspect was arrested at

Maskangayu Village, Auyo LGA, in possession of vandalised transformer coils and was about to be lynched by a mob," he stated.

Adam said that upon receiving the information, police operatives rushed to the scene where the suspect was rescued and taken to the nearest Pri-

mary Health Centre for medical attention.

He explained that the suspect was treated and subsequently discharged, while the vandalised transformer was recovered.

"During the investigation, the suspect stated that he had spent three nights disman-

ting the transformer without being detected," Adam said.

The police spokesperson noted that the Command has continued with necessary investigative procedures to establish the circumstances of the offence and determine whether other persons were involved.

2027: Gbenga Daniel's brother backs Yayi, dismisses ancestry controversy

ABEOKUTA

The younger brother of former Ogun State Governor, Gbenga Daniel, Olola Daniel, has backed the All Progressives Congress governorship candidate in the state, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, popularly known as Yayi.

He also dismissed the controversy surrounding the senator's ancestry as a distraction ahead of the 2027 governorship election.

Daniel, who is the convener of Ogun Progressive People and the Progressive People Diaspora Coalition for Yayi, said political discussions should focus on candidates' records, experience, policy proposals and capacity to address the needs of the electorate rather than controversies over their ancestry.

He stated this in a statement issued on Sunday, alleging that the controversy was being amplified by opposition elements to divert public attention from Adeola's governorship ambition.

According to him, the people of Ogun State deserved issue-based political engagement that prioritised govern-

ance, development and public accountability.

He recalled that his family faced similar allegations when his elder brother declared his intention to contest the 2003 governorship election in the state.

He said, "Our political history in Ogun State shows that controversies of this nature are not new. When my elder brother declared his intention to contest the governorship election in 2003, our family faced similar allegations."

"However, such controversies should not be allowed to overshadow the critical issues of governance, development and accountability. The people deserve a meaningful discussion about the future of Ogun State."

The OPP convener maintained that Adeola had met the constitutional requirements to contest the governorship election, describing the allegations against the senator as political propaganda.

He added that "The voters must be ready to assess aspirants based on verifiable records, qualifications, experience and clearly defined plans for the state."

"My decision to support Sen

Adeola is informed by the senator's public service record, legislative experience and development priorities.

My optimism is that an Adeola-led administration would implement policies aimed at improving residents' welfare and accelerating development at the grassroots."

Daniel also disclosed that Ogun Progressive People had operated as a political support group since 2022, with established grassroots structures across the state. He said the Progressive People Diaspora Coalition for Yayi was formed following consultations among Ogun indigenes living abroad who believed Adeola should be considered for the state's highest political office.

According to him, the two groups were working together to mobilise support for Adeola and other APC candidates ahead of the 2027 general elections.

"Our activities are focused on political engagement, public awareness, strategic collaboration and grassroots mobilisation. We believe that constructive engagement and effective mobilisation are essential to achieving our political objectives," he said.

FOREIGN NEWS

"Time for Ukraine to get new president,' says Trump after Zelensky condemns diesel deal

US President Donald Trump has said he thinks "it's time for Ukraine to get a new president" as he responded to Volodymyr Zelensky's criticism of the US diesel deal with Russia.

The Ukrainian president warned a new deal to release millions of tonnes of Russian diesel into the US would provide Moscow with money to continue its war against his nation, calling it a gift to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Trump told reporters outside the White House on Saturday that Zelensky "wants to make problems for the world" by continuing to authorise attacks on Russian refineries.

"He'd better damn well stop," Trump said, before suggesting Ukraine should "get a new leader who can make a deal".

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 the country has been under martial law, meaning elections are suspended.

Global fuel supplies, including diesel, have been severely limited by the war against Iran launched by the US and Israel, which led to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly a fifth of the world's oil products usually flows.

Russia - a major producer - and Ukraine have recently intensified their strikes on each other's energy infrastructure and transport facilities, further straining energy markets.

"We said, 'you can do whatever you want to Russia, don't hit the refineries', because that's a world problem that's caused," Trump continued.

"He could have made many deals and for some reason, he never does."

Putin's envoy Kirill Dmitriev described Trump's intervention as "iconic and historic", saying that Ukraine "needs leadership actually focused on peace".

The US president confirmed on Friday that an agreement had been reached with Moscow to suspend sanctions on Russian diesel exports until 7 April.

Zelensky reacted by saying it would allow Moscow to raise new funds to source new military equipment to continue the war.

He also accused Moscow of taking the deal "to mean they can keep fighting, to mean they keep dropping bombs on cities" following deadly new strikes on Zaporizhzhia.

The Ukrainian president spoke to several allies on Saturday to discuss the latest developments, calling for "real

decisions to protect lives in Ukraine" and to protect European security.

A Downing Street spokesperson said UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham had spoken to Zelensky and offered his "complete solidarity".

The pair had agreed Russia should acquiesce to "an immediate energy ceasefire" and end its attacks on shipping in the Black Sea, the spokesperson said, as "this would immediately release more energy and food supplies into the global

market".

News of the US-Russia diesel deal was also met with criticism by EU's foreign affairs chief Kaja Kallas, who echoed Zelensky in saying that suspending sanctions "provides Moscow with more revenues

to wage war", adding: "This is not the time to ease pressure on Russia, and Europe won't."

She said European foreign ministers intended to approve the biggest set of sanctions on Russia since the start of its full-scale invasion on Monday.



An estimated 100,000 young recruits have been conscripted by the junta since early 2024

Delhi braces for more protests as 'cockroach' group's leaders released

A court in the Indian capital has ordered the release of top leaders of the Gen Z-led Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) even as the city braces for protests for a second day with thousands of security personnel deployed and roads barricaded.

Abhijeet Dipke - who began the movement in May after India's Chief Justice likened some jobless young people to "cockroaches" - and other leaders had been detained on arrival in Delhi on Saturday to lead protests seeking electoral reforms.

Police refused them permission to protest and unprecedented curbs were in place to thwart the protesters from reaching the venue. But thousands did try - media reports said 7,000 were detained and released late at night.

The CJP - which is not registered as a political party in India - is seeking electoral reforms just months before crucial state elections. It has also demanded the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over allegations of manipulating voters' lists - which the Election Commission has denied.

On Sunday morning, the CJP lawyer Ratna Singh said she had been informed by the police that Dipke and two other senior

CJP leaders - Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka - will be produced before the magistrate by the police seeking their remand "to maintain public peace".

She later posted on X that the three had been set free by the court "on the condition that they will not engage in breach of peace for one year" - it's not clear what that means and whether the CJP leaders can take part in protests.

Saturday saw dramatic developments as police officials boarded the flight to detain Dipke, Das and Ranka as their plane landed.

'Cockroach' leaders say they have been detained ahead of march

Police had refused permission for the protest to take place at Jantar Mantar, a landmark in the Indian capital, and the city was in a virtual lockdown to prevent the protesters from reaching the venue.

At least 45 metro stations were shut and Delhi's main railway stations were shut with major train services cancelled. Many protesters attempting to travel from outside were de-boarded en route.

Much of Delhi looked like a city under siege on Saturday, with roads barricaded and offices, shops and restaurants shut.

Young men live in fear of being snatched off the streets and sold to Myanmar's army

Authorities in Myanmar have been ordered to aggressively fulfil the military's recruitment quotas, leading to corruption, extortion and abductions

You do not stay out after dark if you're young and able-bodied in Hpa-An, the capital of Myanmar's southern Karen state. In recent months this has become conventional wisdom.

"I worry, but I have to go out to work," says the 26-year-old tuk tuk driver, who asked that his real name be omitted out of fear for his safety. "My family call me all the time and remind me not to drive passengers too far; to be careful who I take as a passenger... I have to be vigilant all the time."

"People are panicked and frightened," he explains. "Some people I know have been taken."

Locals say plain-clothed members and supporters of the Myanmar junta have been roaming the streets of Hpa-An, arbitrarily arresting people in their teens, 20s and 30s and forcing them into military service.

According to leaked documents seen by BBC Burmese, authorities have been ordered to aggressively fulfil the military's recruitment quotas across jurisdictions, bolstering the junta's ranks as it endures a war of attrition against ethnic militias, pro-democracy groups and civilian-led resistance movements.

Zaw Min is the only one among his siblings who is at the age of recruitment. Many other "kids" his age have fled, he says - to Thailand, or the homes of relatives further afield. Those who remain are often under strict instructions from their parents: be home before dusk.

Myanmar has been locked in a bloody civil war since February 2021, when its own military launched a coup d'etat and ousted democratically elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Three years later, following a string of humiliating losses, plummeting morale and soar-

ing rates of desertion, the junta enacted a mandatory conscription law that required all men aged 18 to 35 and women aged 18 to 27 to serve at least two years under military command. Those who refuse face up to five years in prison.

The enactment of the law "represents one of the most severe and impactful actions taken against the entire civilian population since the military coup", according to Maj Naung Yoe, military affairs official at the Myanmar Defense and Security Institute (MDSI) and a former military officer who de-

fected and joined the anti-coup Civil Disobedience Movement.

Hpa-An is the latest to be caught in a dragnet that's already ensnared an estimated 100,000 young recruits over the past two-and-a-half years - many of them via coercion, extortion and abductions.

"Security forces track young people's movements to arrest them, force them into service under the pretext of statutory military eligibility, extort money through threats of detention, and arrest individuals during guest-list inspections," Naung Yoe says.

US murderer Christa Pike discharged from hospital 10 days after failed execution

US death row inmate Christa Pike has been discharged from hospital following her botched execution at the end of last month, her lawyers have said.

Pike, 50, has been sent back to the prison where she has spent the last 30 years and is continuing to receive medical care, according to a statement from her lawyers on Saturday.

She survived two lethal injections of the drug pentobarbital on 30 September, which left her in a critical condition.

Pike regained consciousness earlier this week and began speaking - stunning experts, medical staff and her lawyers.

Her case is now in uncharted territory as she is thought to be

the only person to have survived an execution attempt by lethal injection. I've seen nearly 500 executions - but never one like Christa Pike's

I interviewed Christa Pike 20 years ago - I can't stop thinking about her

Pike's lawyers said in their statement that she was "grateful to the first responders and her medical team for their care in these extraordinary circumstances".

It is unclear what medical care Pike is receiving now that she is back in prison but her lawyers previously said she faced a "long road to recovery".

The Tennessee Department of Correction is yet to say why the execution did not go as

planned, though it has defended the method it used.

At a court hearing on Wednesday, Tennessee Assistant Attorney General Will Ayers told the judge he did not know whether the state intends to try to execute her again.

The judge ordered the state to preserve all evidence related to the failed injections. That evidence could lay the groundwork for a future lawsuit against the state.

Pike was 18 when she and her then-boyfriend, Tadarly Shipp, beat, tortured and killed 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer, whom they had met at a job training camp for low-income young people.

FOREIGN

NEWS

Twelve killed and 300 injured in airport attack in Saudi capital Riyadh

At least 12 people have been killed and 309 injured in an attack on the international airport in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, local authorities say.

The deaths included four Saudis, two people from Bangladesh and one person each from the US, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Sudan and Egypt, the Saudi civil aviation authority confirmed.

Operations at King Khalid International Airport have been suspended after the attack, which was the deadliest in the kingdom since May 2015.

A Saudi-led military coalition later vowed to respond to the at-

tack, which it called a "war crime" and blamed on Yemen's Houthis.

The Houthis have not commented on Saturday's attack but did say they were behind strikes on the same airport on Thursday that killed three people and damaged a plane.

Three other people were killed in separate Houthi attacks on two different Saudi airports on 6 and 7 October.

Fighting has recently escalated between Yemen's Saudi-backed government forces and the Houthis, who are backed by Iran and control most of the country.

As well as the strikes on Ri-

yadh's airport, a projectile also fell near King Fahd International Airport in Dammam in eastern Saudi Arabia on Saturday, the Saudi-led coalition said.

In Saturday's statement, the Saudi civil aviation authority said some of the injured were "in critical condition" and damage to the airport was being assessed.

More than a dozen ambulances were seen rushing to the airport, an eyewitness told the Reuters news agency.

Saudi-led coalition spokesman Maj Gen Turki al-Maliki later said the attack on one of the passenger terminals resulted in deaths and

injuries among civilian passengers and airport staff.

He described the attack as a "full-fledged war crime".

An eyewitness told Reuters they had seen "injured [people] in front of my eyes" fleeing from gate 401 after it was hit.

António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, said he was "deeply shocked" by the attacks which he called a "violation of international law" that "must cease immediately".

In a statement on X, Kuwait's foreign ministry called the strikes a "heinous and cowardly attack". The attacks were also condemned

by Egypt, Palestine and Qatar.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio strongly condemned recent attacks on Saudi Arabia as he confirmed an American citizen was killed in the strikes.

Speaking to reporters, US President Donald Trump indicated he may join the Saudis in carrying out strikes against the Iran-backed Houthis.

"We just found out about the recent attack, so we'll make a decision. We move very quickly."

For the second time in less than a month, schools in Riyadh have switched to remote learning for the week.

Western embassies in Saudi Arabia warned their citizens to stay away from the Riyadh airport. The UK Foreign Office told British nationals to avoid the area "until the airport is secure". The US embassy has told staff they

must seek "special authorisation" to use the airports in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam.

Several Gulf airlines said they had cancelled their flights to and from the airport, with Kuwait Airways citing the "security situation" there.

The Houthis say they are targeting Saudi Arabia over its support for government forces in Yemen's civil war.

The conflict worsened after the Houthis seized strategically important stretches of the Red Sea coast in a rapid offensive.

That included the port of Mokha on the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which is the narrowest point of the Red Sea and a choke-point for global shipping. Yemeni pro-government forces have since said they had "secured" the strait at the southern end of the Red Sea.

Four dead and thousands without power after Hurricane Isaías lashes US

Four people have died and hundreds of thousands are without power after Hurricane Isaías battered parts of the southern US with powerful winds and heavy rain.

Officials reported two deaths each in the states of Alabama and Florida, which included people who were killed when trees fell on their houses.

An estimated 500,000 people in total were without power in several states as of Saturday evening, according to tracker PowerOutage.

Isaías made landfall in Florida late on Friday with maximum sustained winds of 105mph (168km/h) before being downgraded to a post-tropical cyclone.

The storm felled trees and ripped the roofs off buildings. Alabama, Florida and Georgia all declared states of emergency ahead of its arrival, while both Florida and Alabama issued mandatory evacuation orders to thousands of people.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Simon is bearing down on Mexico's Pacific coast and has strengthened to category four. It is expected to make landfall sometime overnight.

Tropical Storm Rachel, also in the Pacific Ocean, is expected to hit southern California later on Saturday.

The roof was blown off an apartment complex in Milton, Florida

Two deaths related to Isaías were reported in Florida's Escambia County. A woman was killed when a tree fell on her house, local Sheriff Chip Simmons said.

Joey Williams told NewsNation his wife had died in the storm. He said they went outside to snap pictures of the damage but, when they went back into their home, a tree fell through the roof and trapped them.

"I was able to squeeze out. My wife didn't make it," Williams told the outlet.

Simmons later reported that a man had died from carbon monoxide poisoning after running a generator in a garage that was not properly ventilated. Four other people who were in the same house were taken to hospital.

Officials had to rescue people in vehicles that became submerged by floodwaters. The Florida National Guard shared pictures of a truck stuck in a flood ditch, saying soldiers "stopped, swam to the vehicle and pulled its occupants to safety".

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said flooding was a continued risk and warned of a "very hazardous situation".

In Florida, the storm tore through houses

In neighbouring Alabama, a sheriff was injured when a tree fell on him as he was responding to a car crash.

"Unfortunately, we have also learned that two Alabamians have lost their lives," Governor Kay Ivey said in a post on X,

without giving further details on the circumstances of the deaths.

She also said officials were concerned about "spinoff tornadoes" in the state from the strong winds and heavy rain.

"As we approach the weekend and any travel plans, make sure you have reliable information as conditions develop," she said.

In Charleston, South Carolina, officials asked people to stay home on Saturday night as high tide is expected to reach 7.5ft (2.3m).

"After dark, floodwater is much harder to see and it's impossible to judge how deep it is from behind the wheel," the city said.

The storm is expected to continue to weaken as it travels to the north-east, but the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Noaa) warned that the Carolinas and Georgia could see floods from up to 10 inches (25cm) of rainfall.



THE SCENE AT RIYADH AIRPORT AFTER THE STRIKE:

Russian glide bomb attack kills at least 20 people

Russia has attacked the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia with five glide bombs, killing at least 20 people including four children, local officials said.

The glide bombs hit residential buildings in the southern city on Saturday morning. At least 32 others were injured in the attack, with more still missing and believed to be under the rubble.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the attacks on Zaporizhzhia were Russia expressing "its thanks" for a deal announced by US President Donald Trump last night easing sanctions on Moscow to import Russian diesel.

He added that 13 other regions had come under attack overnight, arguing this demonstrated Russia took "any easing of pressure to mean they can keep fighting".

Photos and videos from the site of one of the strikes in Zaporizhzhia show an apartment block mostly destroyed.

"The ground floor was hit, and the floors above just collapsed," acting Mayor Regina Harchenko told Ukrainian television from the scene.

She said more than 80 workers were involved in ongoing search and rescue operations which are expected to continue throughout the day.

The rescuers regularly stop to listen for any noises made by survivors who could be under the rubble.

Harchenko said Russia had struck at "our very heart" and "our littlest ones" were among those killed, adding that their deaths were "awful grief for their families. For the city."

Zaporizhzhia is a major regional centre with more than 700,000 residents. It is located less than 10 miles (16km) from the front line and is frequently attacked by Russian drones and missiles.

Zelensky was quick to criticise Trump's deal with Russia, calling it a gift to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Analysts view the deal

as an attempt by the US president to allay domestic concerns about high fuel prices ahead of the upcoming mid-term elections.

Zelensky wrote on social media on Saturday that Russian attacks on energy facilities in the capital, Kyiv, demonstrated Russia's "true intentions".

"Russia's choice is war. And they will be ready to end it only when they feel that their ability to drag the war out is diminishing.

"Unfortunately, the signals Russia received yesterday were entirely different – signals suggesting that it could simply keep attacking. And this needs to be corrected."

Both Russia and Ukraine have stepped up attacks on infrastructure in recent months, as Moscow's full-scale invasion, launched in 2022, drags on.

On Thursday, at least 33 people were killed in another Russian glide bomb attack on two civilian buses in Kramatorsk, in the eastern Donetsk region.

The day before, 22 people including five children died as a Russian missile hit an apartment block in the town of Pryluky, east of Kyiv.

The number of civilian casualties in Ukraine jumped by 55% in the first eight months of this year, according to the UN.

Russia has also stepped up its attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure as winter approaches, a strategy it has undertaken in previous years. Kyiv has repeatedly accused it of targeting Ukraine's civilian population, which Moscow denies.

For its part, Ukraine has increasingly adopted a policy of striking infrastructure often deep inside Russia that is crucial to its economy, including several oil refineries and terminals.

Several strikes on data centres owned by Yandex have left the tech giant struggling to maintain services.

Kyiv says its strikes are aimed at curtailing revenue streams for Russia's war machine.

Drone strike by Sudan paramilitary kills 41 near Ethiopian border, rights group says

A drone attack by Sudan's paramilitary forces has killed 41 people in the country's Blue Nile region bordering Ethiopia, a rights group has said.

The strike by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) targeted a camp for displaced people in the state's Abu Shandi area on Friday, Emergency Lawyers said.

The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ocha) said it was "appalled by horrifying reports" it said initial reports suggested most of the casualties were women and children.

The Sudanese army and paramilitary forces including the RSF have been locked in a power struggle since 2023, a conflict

that has killed hundreds of thousands and displaced more than 14 million from their homes.

It has also created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, with millions of people needing medical help.

The army controls much of Sudan's central and eastern regions, while the RSF is headquartered in the western region of Darfur and also controls areas in the south.

Both sides have been accused of using drone attacks.

Ocha said in a statement that the area reportedly struck on Friday had been "under sustained attack in recent weeks, displacing thousands of civilians and exposing many more to grave harm".

Edo CJ commends Okpebholo, reveals revenue base, case flow

By BERNADETTE IDALU

BENIN CITY

Edo State Chief Judge (CJ), Hon. Justice Daniel Iyobosa Okungbowa on Friday, October 9, thanked Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo for the purchase and distribution of 5 (Five) Green Maria Toyota Hilux Vehicles to Correctional Centres across Edo State to aid the conveyance of inmates to court.

The CJ who thanked the governor for his kind gesture during the Special Court Session marking the opening of the 2026/2027 legal year held at the Ceremonial Hall, New High Court Complex, Sapele Road, Benin City, also commended the Edo State Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Prof. Roland Otaru (SAN), for his impactful presence throughout the jail delivery exercise to all the Correctional centres across the three senatorial areas of Edo State.

The CJ said due to the justice delivery system in Edo State, the visitation led to the subsequent release of 45 eligible inmates across custodial centres based on identified administrative, procedural or financial barriers that had illegally kept them in captivity.

The CJ while giving his account of stewardship during the year in review mentioned training programmes, administration of criminal law interventions and collaborations put in place, nomination of dedicated judiciary personnel for award, as well as carrying out disciplinary measures against erring judicial officers to curb excesses.

The CJ declared over one billion naira as generated revenue for the 2025/2026 legal year in review, a declaration

which caused awe among present legal luminaries, members of the Bar and the Bench, and representatives of the Executive and Legislative Arms of Government.

The CJ, proceeded with the breakdown of generated revenue for the Year in Review, declaring the sum of #847,281,573.96 thousand (Eight hundred and forty-seven million, two hundred and eighty one thousand, five hundred and seventy-three naira, ninety-six kobo) as generated revenue from fees, while the sum of

#172, 813, 835.11k (One hundred and seventy two million, eight hundred and thirteen thousand, eight hundred and thirty five naira, eleven kobo) got generated from fines.

The CJ in his analysis observed that compared with previous years, this was the first time the Edo State Judiciary generated revenue of over one billion naira during a set year in review.

The CJ released the data base of the state in the administration of criminal justice with the review of the case flow data of dispensed and pending cases across courts in Edo State.

The CJ in his case summary stated that in the Criminal division of the High Court, there were 3,340 cases brought forward; 2,166 were filed, 872 cases were disposed of with 4, 634 cases pending.

In the Civil Division of the High Court, the CJ said there were a total number of 9, 141 cases brought forward with a total number of 3, 875 cases filed within the year in review, with 2, 485 cases disposed of and 10, 581 cases still pending.

At the Magistrates Court, Justice Okungbowa said a total number of

2, 307 cases were brought forward while 4, 958 cases got filed with 4,864 cases disposed of and 2, 401 cases pending.

A case review of the Small Claims Courts by the CJ showed a total number of 42 cases were brought forward; 153 cases got filed with 102 cases disposed of and 93 pending.

ing.

3, 832 cases were brought forward in the Area Customary Courts; 13,216 cases got filed while 12, 619 cases were disposed of and 4, 429 cases are pending.

At the District Customary Courts, the CJ said a total number of 311 cases were

brought forward with a total of 380 cases filed and 267 cases disposed of and 424 cases pending.

At the Multi-Door Court House, the CJ in his address upheld that a total number of 78 Court referred cases got filed; 60 walk-in matters got filed; 24 referred cases were re-

solved; 24 referred cases were unresolved; 58 walk-in cases were resolved; 13 walk-in cases were unresolved; 107 referred cases are pending while 46 walk-in cases are ongoing. He said 48 referred cases were already concluded same as 71 walk-in cases.



UNVEILING:

L-R: Hon. Donald Okogbe, Member representing Akoko-Edo II at the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA) and representative of Mr. Speaker, Yekini Idiaze; Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Prof. Roland Otaru standing in for Governor Monday Okpebholo; Hon. Justice Efe Ikponmwonba and Edo State Chief Judge, Hon. Justice Daniel Iyobosa Okungbowa as he gets set to unveil manuals - Edo State Judiciary practice direction on the use of artificial intelligence in court proceedings, as well as artificial intelligence guidance for judicial officers in Edo State Judiciary.

Oba of Benin remains a distinguished monarch -Atshelege

By BENEDICT OKATE

OLOGBO

The Iyatsere of Warri Kingdom and Chief Executive Officer of Ologbo Hospital Limited, High Chief Johnson Atshelege, JP, has congratulated the Oba of Benin, Omo' N'Oba N'Edo Uku' Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, CFR, on the 10th anniversary of his coronation.

In a statement made available to newsmen, High Chief Johnson Atshelege described

the anniversary as a significant milestone and an opportunity to celebrate the Benin monarch, the rich heritage of the Benin Kingdom and the enduring role of traditional institutions in Nigeria.

He said Oba Ewuare II remains a distinguished monarch saying his decade on the throne represented not merely the passage of time but a period of dedication to preserving Benin history, culture and traditions.

According to High Chief Johnson Atshelege, Oba Ewuare II has continued to discharge the responsibilities of the ancient Benin throne with

dignity, wisdom and a strong sense of duty.

"Your Majesty, I celebrate you today not merely as a great monarch, but as a father, a custodian of history and a worthy representative of the enduring strength and dignity of our traditional institutions," Atshelege said.

The Iyatsere of Warri kingdom also commended the Oba of Benin for his commitment to preserving Benin traditions and values, describing his respect for the cultural heritage of the people as worthy of admiration.

"May the years ahead bring

Your Majesty greater joy and fulfilment. May your reign continue to be remembered with pride, and may the legacy you are building endure for generations yet unborn," he said.

High Chief Johnson Atshelege said he, his household and the people of Ologbo were joining the Benin royal family and well-wishers across the world to celebrate the monarch's 10th coronation anniversary and expressed hope that the anniversary would usher in renewed peace, unity and prosperity in the Benin Kingdom.

2027: 18 Candidates to contest presidential election - INEC.

BENIN CITY

By OLIVER IJIOGBE.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has listed 18 candidates for next year's presidential election.

The candidates were named in the commission's final list published on Saturday, 10th October, 2026.

Among those listed are President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC), former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Peter Obi of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), and Omoyele Sowore of the African Action Congress (AAC).

Also on the list is Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, who is contesting under the platform of the Allied Peoples

Movement (APM).

Meanwhile, in Delta State, concerns over the Supreme Court's ruling on the requirement of at least 21 days of party membership ahead of primaries have reportedly been allayed.

Hon. Victor Ochei is listed as the NDC's senatorial candidate for Delta North, while Senator Ovie Omo-Agege is listed as the party's candidate for Delta South.

The development comes days after the APC called on INEC to enforce the Supreme Court's ruling on the 21-day membership requirement, which arose from a Labour Party-related case, across political parties.

The implications of the ruling for political parties and their candidates are expected to remain a key issue as preparations intensify for the 2027 general elections.



UNVEILING:

Edo State Chief Judge, Hon. Justice Daniel Iyobosa Okungbowa (5th Left) hold copies of the unveiled AI manuals. He is flanked by Edo State Attorney General Prof. Roland Otaru, Member EDHA, Hon. Donald Okogbe, Chief Charles Edosomwan, NBA Chairman and retired Judges.

Banditary news in Edo North: Implications of fake news and citizen journalism



BANDITS

OTONO MUHAMMAD

In this age of instantaneous transmission, where the smartphone has supplanted the town crier and the WhatsApp status rivals the front page, two formidable forces now shape the conscience of society: fake news and citizen journalism. To comprehend their implications is to hold a mirror to our collective psyche, for within that reflection lies both the promise of democratized information and the peril of mass delusion.

Fake news, in its most clinical definition, is the deliberate fabrication or distortion of information masquerading as factual reportage, designed to deceive, inflame, or manipulate public perception for ideological, political, or economic gain. It is falsehood adorned in the garb of truth, a counterfeit currency circulating in the marketplace of ideas. Citizen journalism, by contrast, is the noble democratization of the press — the act by which ordinary citizens, unshackled from the confines of newsroom orthodoxy, capture, report, and disseminate events through digital platforms. It is the voice of the witness, the power of the ubiquitous camera, the collapse of the monopoly on storytelling. When practiced with integrity, it is journalism's most inclusive evolution. When practiced with recklessness, it becomes the conduit through which fake news achieves its deadliest velocity.

The daily realities of their consequences unfold before us with

harrowing regularity, etching themselves into the social fabric like acid upon metal. Yesterday, the entire Edo North Senatorial District — that vast geographical space stretching from Etsako West to Akoko-Edo, Etsako Central, Etsako East to Owan West and mainstream back to Etsako West LGA hosting the oldest polytechnic in the entire South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria, Auchi Polytechnic Auchi — was plunged into a theatre of panic. An obvious fake news broke and spread like harmattan bush fire: "Bandits are in town kidnapping school children." In seconds, the digital wildfire leapt from group chat to group chat, from status to status, until it eclipsed reason and ignited primal fear. The town ran helter skelter, irrespective of age, tongue, sex, or community. Grandmothers who could barely walk abandoned their wares. Students fled classrooms mid-lesson. Traders locked shops and bolted. Auchi, that serene citadel of learning, was almost a telling reflection of the day the Biafra army invaded the innocent town in 1967 during the Nigeria Civil War. Terrible!

Imagine the anguish, the visceral trouble and pain that parents endured at the outbreak of that phantom alarm. Those without mobility of their own ran until exhaustion claimed their limbs. A woman fainted in her desperate sprint toward her little child's school, her body collapsing under the weight of terror manufactured by a lie. Homes were emptied, hearts were fractured, and an entire

district was held hostage by fiction. No bandit came. No child was taken. Yet the wound inflicted by that falsehood was real, deep, and collective. That is the insidious implication: fake news does not need bullets to kill; it murders peace, it assassinates trust, it paralyzes entire economies with a single fabricated line.

Till this moment of putting this write up together, no community across the clans reported any visibility of bandit or kidnapper following the broken fake news. All this came from citizen journalism where anyone who can afford a handset and credit card writes what pleases him or her without minding the implication or consequences like the entire Senatorial District suffered innocently yesterday. Imagine, how many pupils could have suffered injuries from falls in their desperate bid to escape home, including teachers who abandoned lesson plans to become unwilling refugees from rumor. The classroom, that sanctuary of intellect, was converted overnight into a runway of fear — all orchestrated by unverified thumbs.

Beyond such episodic hysteria, the chronic implications corrode society incrementally. Public trust in genuine institutions erodes, for when lies proliferate, truth becomes suspect. Security agencies are distracted from real threats as they chase digital ghosts. Community cohesion frays, as neighbors begin to view one another through lenses of suspicion seeded by unverified broadcasts. Educational

systems are disrupted, health centers are overwhelmed by psychosomatic patients, and the civic space becomes a battlefield where rumor reigns and reason retreats.

Citizen journalism, when yoked to ethical responsibility, could be the antidote. The same phones that spread panic can document facts, verify locations, interview authorities, and calm nerves. But without media literacy, without editorial conscience, the citizen journalist becomes an accidental arsonist — striking matches in a room soaked with public anxiety. The implication, therefore, is clear: freedom of expression without responsibility is not liberty; it is license. And license, in the information age, is more destructive than censorship.

The trauma that gripped Edo North yesterday must not be allowed to dissolve into forgetfulness, for it must birth a covenant of caution and collective responsibility among all who call this Senatorial District home. To residents across Owan East, Akoko-Edo, Etsako East, Etsako West Etsako Central and Owan West, let verification be your first reflex before dissemination. Pause, call the school, call the police, call the community leader. If you cannot confirm it in three minutes, do not forward it in three seconds, and treat every unverified broadcast as potential poison until proven otherwise.

Honestly, to parents, the school must be your first line of communication, not WhatsApp rumors, and

you must insist that every school establishes a verified parents' channel with designated officials so that in moments of panic you may walk with calmness rather than chaos, teaching your children evacuation discipline lest fear trample them more cruelly than any phantom bandit. To stakeholders — traditional rulers, religious leaders, security agencies, school administrators, LGA chairmen, and media houses — the hour demands rapid-response information desks in each LGA that flood the public space with verified truth faster than the lie travels, a partnership with Auchi Polytechnic's Department of Mass Communication to run quarterly media literacy clinics in every ward, and a communal insistence that consequences must follow those who deliberately manufacture panic, for freedom must never become a shield for social arson.

In the final reckoning, fake news and citizen journalism are not merely media phenomena; they are moral tests. They ask each of us: will you be a carrier of panic or a custodian of truth? Edo North's near-tragedy yesterday must serve as a clarion call. Let no more mothers faint for lies. Let no more towns run from shadows. In the age where everyone can broadcast, everyone must also become an editor of conscience.

• Otono Muhammad, is a Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi muhaotono1@gmail.com

Sports

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

Adeshina Sponsors Women's high jump at Athletic heat Anniversary meet

Nigeria's high jump record holder, Temitope Adeshina, has thrown her weight behind the development of emerging athletes by sponsoring the women's high jump event at the Athletic Heat 10th Anniversary Meet.

The competition, scheduled for Saturday, November 7, 2026, at the YabaTech Stadium in Lagos, will see the top four finishers in the women's high jump share a total prize purse of N200,000.

Under the prize-money arrangement, the winner will receive N100,000, while the second-place finisher will earn N50,000. The third and fourth-place athletes will take home N30,000 and N20,000, respectively.

Adeshina's gesture comes after an impressive 2026 season in which she won both the ICAA Indoor and Outdoor High Jump titles for Texas Tech Track & Field, further cementing her status as one of Nigeria's leading athletes on the international stage.

A Commonwealth Games bronze medallist and two-time African Championships

silver medallist, the Nigerian star has continued to distinguish herself in international competitions while inspiring a new generation of athletes.

Her sponsorship of the women's high jump event reflects a commitment to giving back to the sport and creating opportunities for upcoming athletes to showcase their talents.

The initiative also forms part of Athletic Heat's 10th anniversary celebrations, which highlight the competition's decade-long contribution to athletics and the development of emerging talents.

Athletes interested in participating in the anniversary meet have been encouraged to register through A3 Tickets.

With Adeshina's support, the women's high jump event is expected to provide an additional incentive for competitors seeking recognition and financial rewards as they pursue their athletics ambitions.

The Athletic Heat 10th Anniversary Meet will be held under the theme, "10 Years of Impact. A Legacy That Keeps Running."



TEMITOPE ADESHINA

NJF backs NSC's reorganization efforts, as Nigeria moves to restore stability in Judo Federation

The International Judo Federation (IJF) has welcomed the steps being taken by the National Sports Commission (NSC) to address governance issues within the Nigeria Judo Federation (NJF), expressing support

for a transparent, fair and inclusive electoral process.

In a letter dated October 9, 2026, and addressed to the Director General of the NSC, Hon. Bukola Olopade, the IJF acknowledged the Commission's

communication on the administrative status of the federation and noted the dissolution of the NJF Board, the establishment of a Caretaker Committee and the transitional arrangements put in place to facilitate fresh elections.

The letter, signed by IJF Secretary General, Dr. Lisa Allan, acknowledged the Caretaker Committee's mandate to amend the NJF Constitution and convene an electoral General Assembly. It also noted that members of the committee had undertaken not to contest in the forthcoming election.

The international body welcomed the NSC's efforts to resolve the federation's governance challenges, while expressing confidence that the electoral process would comply with applicable regulations and requirements.

"We welcome the steps being taken to address the governance matters within the NJF and support the efforts to ensure a transparent, fair and inclusive electoral process," the letter stated.

The development represents an important step in the Commission's efforts to restore administrative stability, strengthen governance and create a credible pathway towards an elected board for Nigerian judo.

The NSC had approved the constitution of a Caretaker Committee following the dissolution of the federation's board. The committee is charged with overseeing the federation's day-to-day administration, reviewing its constitution to reflect requirements of the IJF, convening an Annual General Meeting for approval of the amended constitution, and organising elections to usher in a duly elected board.



JDO

Joshua Baba resurvents, rejoins Bendel Insurance in Lagos

A week after being declared AWOL (Absent Without Official Leave), goalkeeper Joshua Baba has resurvented with Bendel Insurance of Benin.

According to a statement signed by Kehinde Osagiede, the Director, Media & Communications of Bendel Insurance, Baba resurfaced in Lagos Saturday and joined the team at its hotel as the Benin Arsenal prepare to face Sporting Lagos in their Matchday 8 fixture of the 2026/27 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) season, Sunday in Lagos.

Osagiede said the management considers it necessary to promptly inform the public and all football stakeholders of the player's return.

Bendel Insurance FC had earlier declared Joshua Baba AWOL following his failure to return to the club after the expiration of an approved period of recovery leave.

Baba was last seen shortly after the commencement of the 2026/27 NPFL season on August 30, 2026, when he sustained a knock during the club's encounter against Warri Wolves in Benin City.

Following the injury, the goalkeeper was granted a two-week recovery period and subsequently travelled to Plateau

State to visit his family.

He was expected to resume training and report back to the club in mid-September 2026. However, he failed to return as expected and only resurfaced in Lagos without prior notification to the club.

"As a player under a valid contractual agreement with Bendel Insurance until the end of 2027, Baba is bound by the obligations stipulated in his contract and the applicable regulations governing professional football in Nigeria," Osagiede said.

He added that the club would take all necessary disciplinary and administrative measures in accordance with his contractual obligations and the relevant rules and regulations of the Nigeria Premier Football League and the Nigeria Football Federation.

Meanwhile, the management of Bendel Insurance has expressed appreciation to members of the media and other key stakeholders who have played various roles since the club issued its earlier statement declaring the goalkeeper AWOL.

He stressed that Bendel Insurance remains committed to upholding the highest standards of discipline, professionalism, and accountability in all its dealings.



JOSHUS BABA

Enugu govt reassures readiness to host 2026 National Sports Festival amid postponement fears

The Enugu State Government has reaffirmed its readiness to host the 23rd edition of the 2026 National Sports Festival, scheduled to commence on November 27, amid growing concerns among stakeholders over preparations for the national sporting event.

The assurance was given by the State Commissioner for Works, Hon. Benjamin Okoh, state this

while on an inspection tour at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, one of the facilities expected to play a key role in the festival.

Okoh expressed confidence in the state's preparations, maintaining that the government remained committed to ensuring that the facilities required for a successful hosting of the competition were ready for the event.

However, despite the govern-

ment's reassurance, uncertainty continues to surround the festival, with stakeholders and participating states expressing concerns over the pace of preparations as the scheduled commencement date draws closer.

One of the major issues raising questions about the readiness of the host state is the reported delay in the commencement of registration for

athletes and officials expected to participate in the competition.

The situation has fuelled fears of a possible postponement, as sports administrators, athletes and other stakeholders await further clarity on the arrangements for the festival.

The concerns have also drawn comparisons with the postponement of the Interim Games in Lagos, which was

reportedly linked to inadequate sporting facilities. The development has heightened calls for early intervention to prevent a similar situation from affecting the National Sports Festival.

With less than seven weeks to the scheduled opening, attention is increasingly shifting to the National Sports Commission (NSC), which is expected to play a crucial role in

assessing the state of preparedness and determining the next course of action.

As anticipation builds across the sporting community, stakeholders will be watching closely for an official position from the NSC on whether the festival will proceed as scheduled or whether adjustments to the timetable may become necessary.

NEWS EXTRA

Edo CP assures corps members of safety amid abduction fears

Mike Osarogiagbon

Amid growing fears over reports of corps members being abducted in parts of the country, the Edo State Commissioner of Police, CP Patrick Daaor, has assured NYSC members serving in the state of adequate protection throughout their service year.

CP Daaor gave the assurance during a visit to the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) orientation camp in Okada, headquarters of Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State, on Thursday, October 8, 2026.

In a statement issued on Friday, the Edo State Police Command's Public Relations Officer, ASP Eno Ikoedem, said the police commissioner reaffirmed the command's commitment to safeguarding the lives and property of corps members serving across the state.

"During the visit, CP Daaor delivered a goodwill address, where he interacted with the management and corps members and reaffirmed the commitment of the Edo State Police Command to the safety, security and well-being of corps members serving across the State," ASP Ikoedem said.

She said the state police boss was received by the Edo State NYSC Coordinator, Mr Fasina Adedotun, alongside other officials and staff members of the orientation camp.

ASP Ikoedem added that the commissioner delivered a goodwill address and interacted with camp management and corps members during the visit.

She said the visit also featured a musical performance by the NYSC camp band, which added colour to the occasion.



News

OUR OBA; OUR IDENTITY: A decade of Oba Ewuare II and the continuity of Benin civilization

This October, the Benin Kingdom commemorates the 10th coronation anniversary of His Royal Majesty, Omo N' Oba N' Edo, Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, Ogidigan. His ascension to the ancient throne on October 20, 2016, as the 40th Oba in a dynastic succession that predates colonial historiography, was more than a ritual of succession. It was an ontological reaffirmation of a people whose identity is inseparable from monarchy.

In contemporary discourse on Nigerian nationhood, identity is often framed as a contest between tradition and modernity. The Benin experience refutes this binary. The institution of the Oba remains the central organizing principle of Edo identity.

I. THE THRONE AS AN ARCHIVE OF IDENTITY

European visitors in the 15th and 16th centuries documented Benin City as a marvel of urban planning, with its massive earthworks — the Iya — regarded as the largest man-made earth structure in pre-colonial Africa. The famed Benin Bronzes were not mere decorative objects; they were historical records, legal codes, and

spiritual iconography.

The Oba is the custodian of this archive. He is the embodiment of Edo as a civilization. The linguistic, spiritual, and aesthetic norms of the people — from the esoteric language of the palace chiefs (Iwebo, Iweguae, Ibiwe) to the cycle of royal festivals such as Ugie Erha Oba, Igwe, and Emobo — derive legitimacy and continuity from the throne. To remove the Oba from Benin history is to render Benin history unintelligible.

II. TEN YEARS OF EWUARE II: RECONCILIATION, RESTITUTION AND MORAL AUTHORITY

A critical assessment of the last decade reveals three defining pillars of the reign of Oba Ewuare II.

a) Reconciliation as Statecraft: One of the earliest acts of Oba Ewuare II was the political reconciliation of Edo State's fractious political class in 2016. This act recalled the traditional role of the Oba as the source of peace — a supra-political father figure whose authority transcends partisan contestation.

b) The Restitution Movement: Perhaps the most globally significant contribution of this reign has been

the systematic international advocacy for the repatriation of Benin artefacts looted during the punitive expedition of 1897. His Majesty's intervention elevated the discourse from museum acquisitions to a question of international justice and cultural restitution. The recent returns from Cambridge University, the Smithsonian, and the German government must be understood within this sustained royal diplomacy.

c) Moral Governance: In 2018, His Majesty took the unprecedented step of invoking spiritual sanctions against human trafficking syndicates who exploited Edo youth. By revoking oaths sworn by victims, the Oba demonstrated the potent intersection of traditional spiritual authority and contemporary human rights advocacy.

III. RESPECT FOR THE THRONE IS RESPECT FOR OUR HERITAGE

At this historic juncture, it is imperative to make a solemn appeal to all Edo sons and daughters, at home and in the diaspora: let us continue to accord the institution of the Oba of Benin the profound respect it de-

serves.

This respect must not be mistaken for mere protocol or nostalgia. Respect for the institution of the Oba is respect for the Benin cultural heritage itself. The throne is the vessel that has carried our history, our values, our arts, our language, our laws, and our worldview across centuries of disruption, colonization, and globalization.

When we stand when the Oba speaks, when we defer to palace protocol, when we defend the throne against ridicule and trivialization on social media and in contemporary discourse, we are not merely honouring an individual. We are protecting the integrity of a civilization. To desecrate or diminish the institution is to diminish ourselves, for without the Oba, we risk becoming a people with a history but without an anchor, a people with artefacts but without meaning.

Therefore, let this 10th anniversary rekindle in every Edo person an unwavering commitment to uphold the dignity, sanctity and reverence of the throne of our fathers.

IV. THE MONARCHY AND THE NIGERIAN STATE

Traditional institutions in Africa are not vestiges of a disappearing past but resilient centres of legitimacy. In a multi-ethnic federation struggling with identity cohesion, the Benin monarchy provides a model of cultural stability that supports, rather than subverts, the modern state. It provides psychological security and a sense of belonging that bureaucratic structures cannot.

IDENTITY AS RESPONSIBILITY

The 10th anniversary, therefore, is not merely a celebration of longevity; it is a call to cultural responsibility. The imperative for the Edo person in this second decade of Oba Ewuare II's reign is to translate reverence into practice: to ensure intergenerational transmission of the Edo language, to support the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage, and to live by the values of Ovbioré — truth, justice and righteousness — that the throne symbolizes.

Oba gha to kpere, Ise!

• By A. O. Okungbowa, Esq. Ph.D (Constitutional Law) MBA (Artificial Intelligence), Head of Service, Edo State.

NEWS

Edo First Lady urges parents to invest in girl child education, reject child marriage

Edo State Government has called on parents and guardians to invest in the education of the girl child and reject child marriage.

The Coordinator office of the first lady, Mrs Edesili Okpebholo Anani made the call at an event to commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child in Government House, Benin City.

The Coordinator office of the first lady, Mrs Edesili Okpebholo Anani urged parents to support their children, particularly the girl-child, to pursue their education and fulfil their potential.

Mrs. Anani said the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo was committed to removing barriers that hinder the progress of the girl child.

She stressed that parents should allow girls to recognise their value and pursue their dreams rather than subjecting them to early marriage.

"Marriage is good when the time is right. Our Constitution stipulates that a girl must be 18 years and above before marriage," she said.

The Coordinator also urged children to take their education seriously, discover their potential and develop the confidence to pursue their aspirations.

The Keynote speaker and former Deputy speaker, Edo State House of Assembly, Maria Edeko, explained that child marriage was unacceptable and the Edo State Child Rights Law provided protection for children.

She warned that early marriage

ly pregnancy and childbirth.

Two parents, Mr. Okosun Gabriel and Hajia Atine Umar, condemned child marriage and encouraged parents to provide proper care, guidance and education for their children.

Some students who participated in the event, Osayande Williams of Umelu Senior Secondary School, Okefe Vivian of Great Oxford International Group of Schools and Afolabi Peace Oluwabunmi of Ihogbe College, said the event had taught them the importance of self-confidence, self-worth and pursuing their aspirations.

The International Day of the Girl Child is observed annually on October 11 to promote girls' rights, equal opportunities and empowerment worldwide.

Media Unit Office of the First Lady Edo State October 11, 2026.



SPORTS



Edo FA unveils Oba of Benin's Coronation anniversary Gold cup in Benin City.

Edo FA hunts Super Eagles talent, as Oba Ewuare II's 10th Coronation Tournament kicks off Oct 12

EDWARD OSEGHE

The Edo State Football Association (Edo FA) is targeting emerging talents for Bendel Insurance and Nigeria's Super Eagles as eight teams prepare to battle for honours in the 10th Coronation Anniversary Football Tournament of the Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II.

The week-long competition, organised in partnership with QSL Gas and Power, will run from October 12 to 18, 2026, in Benin City, combining grassroots talent discovery with youth empowerment and the celebration of Benin's rich cultural heritage.

Edo FA Chairman, Fred Newton Erhunmwunse, said the tournament underscores the association's commitment to developing young footballers and creating opportunities for them to advance to higher levels of the game.

He spoke at the draws and press parley held on Saturday, October 3, 2026, at the Media Centre of the Samuel Ogburn Stadium, Benin City, which attracted football stakeholders, sponsors, team representatives and journalists.

Erhunmwunse described Oba Ewuare II, the Omo N'Oba N'Edo, Uku-Akpokpoko, as a revered custodian of Benin history, culture and tradition whose commitment to the welfare and advancement of Edo people, particularly the youth, remained

a source of inspiration.

"The Edo FA is particularly honoured to associate this tournament with the 10th Coronation Anniversary of His Royal Majesty, Oba Ewuare II, Oba of Benin.

"As an Association, we recognise that our responsibility goes beyond organizing competitions. We are committed to creating opportunities through which young footballers can develop their talents, acquire discipline,

gain valuable competitive experience and contribute positively to their communities," he said.

The chairman described the competition as the association's contribution to celebrating the monarch's milestone while advancing football development and empowering young people.

"Our own way of celebrating His Royal Majesty through football is this tournament, and we believe that at the end of the day His Royal Majesty will be

happy with football development in Edo State and youths will be empowered also.

"This is one of the many tournaments Edo FA is organizing, and I believe that as the tournament begins, we will have good football games and discover talents that will represent not only Bendel Insurance in Edo State, but also talents that will represent Nigeria's Super Eagles," Erhunmwunse emphasised.

Inter Milan cruise past Parma as De Bruyne fires Napoli to victory

Inter Milan continued their impressive start to the Serie A season with a commanding 3-0 victory over Parma on Saturday, while Kevin De Bruyne scored twice to inspire Napoli to an identical

win against Frosinone following the international break.

Inter took control early at the San Siro, with Petar Susic opening the scoring before Hakan Calhanoglu converted a penalty and Marcus Thuram

added a third, all within the opening 31 minutes.

The victory lifted Cristian Chivu's side to 16 points from six matches, strengthening their position at the top of the standings.

"After a three-week break, we didn't know how things would go. We've worked well during this period, the players have trained well. I'm happy," Chivu said.

For Parma coach Alberto Gilardino, the defeat marked a disappointing start to his tenure following Carlos Cuesta's departure in late September.

"Parma started well, but when you are naive, you pay the price," Gilardino said, stressing the need for his players to remain composed and make better decisions during matches.



NAPOLI PLAYERS

SENEGAL 2026 Race: Referees admit error, say Nigeria and Ghana match ended 3-3

Moroccan referee Driss Lamghaidar and his officiating team has admitted their error in allowing for extra time and penalties in Saturday's 2026 CAF Beach Soccer Africa Cup of Nations qualifying match between Nigeria and Ghana in Kaduna.

Dignitaries and spectators

in the stands were befuddled when Lamghaidar and his assistants ordered for extra time, and later on penalties, in the first leg encounter that had ended 3-3 in regulation time.

At a meeting on Saturday night, Lamghaidar admitted he had erred in taking the game to extra time and subsequently pen-

alties, as it was only a first-leg encounter, with the second leg and decider to come on Sunday, 18th October in Keta, Ghana.

This means the fixture is still delicately-poised and both teams now have to all to play for in the return.

Isa Hamza Manga netted a hat-trick for Nigeria, while Mawuli

Sosu scored twice and Wise Nyamadi once for the Black Sharks.

The Nigeria Football Federation had swung into action immediately after the match to demand an explanation for the extra time and penalties, which is an anomaly for a two-match fixture in which only the first leg had been played.

Super Falcons begin recovery training, set sunday media Parley

Super Falcons have resumed training ahead of their second-leg encounter against Comoros in the qualifiers for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

The team returned to training on Saturday, a day after securing a 2-0 victory over Comoros in the first leg of their second-round qualifying tie.

The recovery session took place on Saturday afternoon at the Otunba Dipo Dina International Stadium as the nine-time African champions continued preparations for the return fixture.

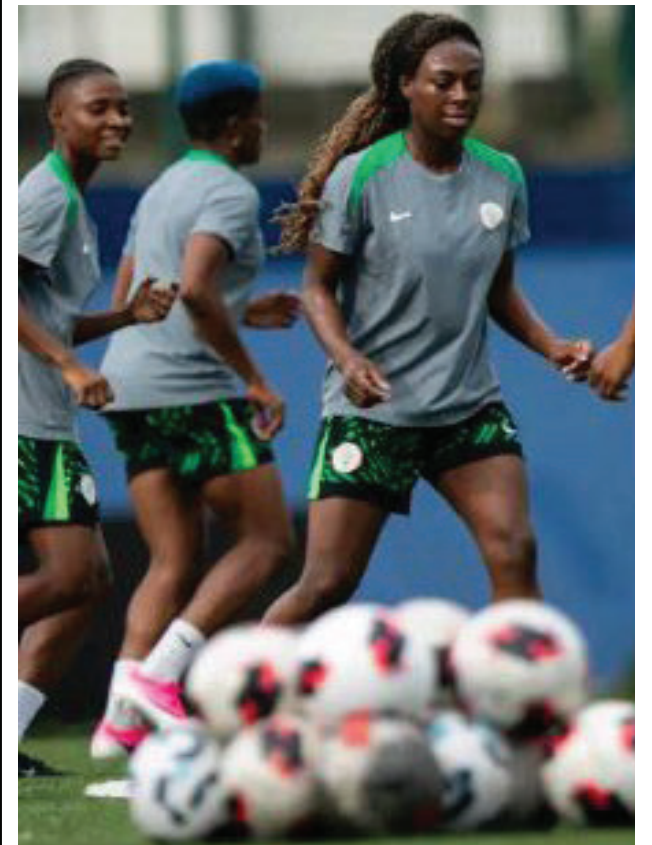
Meanwhile, the Super Falcons have scheduled a media parley for Sunday to engage jour-

ists and sports content creators ahead of the decisive encounter.

The session will hold from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the poolside of AM2PM Hotel, providing media representatives with an opportunity to interact with the team.

The overall winner of the tie between Nigeria and Comoros will advance to face Morocco in the third round of the African qualifying campaign for the 2028 Olympic Games.

The Super Falcons will be aiming to consolidate their first-leg advantage and secure progression to the next round as they pursue qualification for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.



SUPER FALCONS

NBBF Election: Electoral Committee disqualifies Ayo Bakare

Igoche Mark gets till Monday to perfect papers

One of the figures in the Nigeria basketball circle, coach Ayo Bakare has lost his chance of contesting the Presidency of the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) after being disqualified.

According to report, the Electoral Committee of the NBBF returned a "not qualified" verdict on Bakare and barred him from from contesting the position of the president.

The report says Ayo Bakare got disqualified because he returned his nomination form late by twelve minutes on the due date and time of returning of the forms.

However, another aspirant, Igochee Mark was lucky as he has been given a second chance to perfect his nomination.

Mark, who did not accompany the return of his nomination form with his tax clearance was given till Monday to fulfill that requirement.