

'One-man, one-vote' will deliver 2.5m votes in Edo for Tinubu's re-election —Gov Okpebholo

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor Monday Okpebholo has said that the practice of "one man, one vote" will enable President Bola Tinubu to secure 2.5 million votes from the state in the 2027 presidential election.

The governor spoke in Be-

nin City during a one-million-youth march organised by the City Boy Movement in support of his administration and President Tinubu's re-election.

The governor said Edo residents were aware of what he described as the benefits of the Tinubu administration's economic reforms to the state.

He said the state's monthly wage bill had risen above

N7.8 billion, arguing that ongoing development projects and payment of salaries would have been difficult without increased revenues resulting from reforms by the Federal Government.

"We are paying so much on salaries and at the same time, development is ongoing, projects are ongoing. Look at our flyover, if not for the reforms of the pres-

ident, where will we get money for all this?" Okpebholo said.

"You can see how many primary healthcare centres we have built since we came into office, over a hundred and eight across the state."

On education, the governor said his administration had renovated more than 87 primary and secondary schools across the state and increased

subvention to higher institutions from N41 million to more than N700 million.

"How could we have gotten this money, if not the man President Bola Tinubu that is courageous enough to have removed the fuel subsidy," he said.

Okpebholo also cited Tinubu's tenure as governor of Lagos State, saying the president had introduced reforms there

that, in his view, improved the state's administration.

He criticised unnamed political opponents who he said were responsible for past mismanagement of public resources and accused them of promising to restore fuel subsidy for their own benefit.

"Those people that believe

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The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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#200

Benin-Abraka Road: Okpebholo threatens to arrest contractor over abandoned project

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, has threatened to arrest the contractor handling a section of the Benin-Abraka Road for allegedly abandoning the project after receiving payment from the previous administration.

The governor stated this while addressing members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Orhionmwon and Uhumwode local government areas during his ongoing tour to strengthen the party ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Okpebholo said he has taken a critical look at the condition of the road but was constrained by contractual agreements en-

tered into by the previous administration.

He disclosed that the road was awarded to two contractors, with one of them currently making progress on its section, which he said was about 75 per cent complete.

According to him, the second contractor, whom he alleged was a friend of Obaseki, had abandoned the section as-

signed to the company despite receiving payment.

"Following the agreement that was signed by Obaseki's administration, that road construction project was paid for before I became governor. Despite the payment by the previous administration, the contractor still abandoned the road, allowing motorists to suffer untold hardship passing through

the road," Okpebholo said.

He added: "That road was given to two contractors. One of them is working and is doing his job and has gotten up to 75 per cent completion, while the other, who is a friend to Obaseki, has abandoned his section and has become the problem causing hardship on the road."

The governor said he had previously avoided comment-

ing publicly on the project but was compelled to address the matter after hearing complaints during his visit.

"Those in the diaspora don't know what is happening and for me as the governor, I never wanted to speak on the issue of this Benin-Abraka Road, but what I heard today has prompted me to speak on the issue. I am going to arrest that contractor," he said.

Okpebholo was accompanied by APC leaders and senior

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Obasanjo, Jonathan, Gowon pay tribute to late Cleric William Okoye

ABUJA

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo has described late Rev. William Okoye as a statesman of faith and fearless voice of truth.

Obasanjo stated this in a tribute read by Bishop Godwin Isaac at the Night of Tributes for Okoye, held at the National Christian Centre, Abuja, on Friday.

Okoye, former General Overseer of All Christians Fellowship Mission (ACFM), was also a former Chaplain of the Aso Rock Villa Chapel.

Obasanjo said Okoye's death had created a monumental void across the nation, recalling their close working relation-

ship between 1999 and 2007.

He said Okoye, who served as his chaplain, provided wisdom and guidance during high-pressure situations, beyond his spiritual responsibilities.

"As my chaplain, he was a steady, fearless, and uncompromising voice of truth," Obasanjo said.

He said Okoye understood that genuine gospel ministry must address the material realities confronting the people.

Obasanjo recalled that Okoye served on the Presidential Advisory Council on Youth Affairs and represented the FCT at the National Political Reform Conference.

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



ON GOING MOBILISATION TOUR:

Edo State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo (2nd left above) addressing members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) during a mobilisation visit to Orhionmwon and Uhumwode Local Government Areas of the state at the weekend.

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NEWS

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government officials during the visit, which also took him to Ig-uomo-Nisi in Uhumwode Local Government Area, where he interacted with party members and mobilised support for APC candidates ahead of the 2027 elections.

The Edo APC Chairman, Jarrett Tenebe, commended party members for turning out

in large numbers to support the governor and the party.

Tenebe also thanked voters for their support during the last local government elections and urged them to continue supporting the governor.

He called on party members to work towards delivering the 2.5 million votes the APC in Edo has promised President Bola Tinubu in the January 2027 elections.

'One-man, one-vote' will deliver...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

they can steal Nigeria's money are telling you they will restore subsidy, because it is from that subsidy they make their money from," he said.

"People that sold our assets in this country without proper accountability, are they the ones that want to rule Nigeria? Those with supermarket, let them continue to do their commodity business."

Okpebholo has repeatedly said he wants Edo to deliver 2.5 million votes for Tinubu in 2027. He made a similar appeal to newly elected chairmen and vice chairmen of the state's 18 local government areas in Sep-

tember.

A youth representative at the march commended the governor for what he described as improvements in security across the state, saying this was helping to build investors' confidence.

He said the march was organised to demonstrate the youths' loyalty to Okpebholo and Tinubu and mobilise support for APC candidates in the 2027 elections.

The 2.5 million-vote target is a political pledge by Okpebholo. Previous reports have quoted opposition figures questioning the feasibility of the target, while the governor and his supporters have continued to defend it.

Obasanjo, Jonathan, Gowon pay...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

He also served on the Christian Pilgrims Welfare Board and held leadership positions in the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN).

Obasanjo said Okoye served as Chairman of CAN and PFN in Abuja, while also serving as CAN National Director on National Issues.

Former President Goodluck Jonathan said he met Okoye while serving as Governor of Bayelsa State and worshipping at the Aso Rock Villa Chapel.

Jonathan who was represented by John Kennedy Opara, former Executive Secretary of Nigerian Pilgrims Commission (NCP)

recalled that Okoye was then Deputy Chaplain to Rev. Obaje and later served as Chaplain during Jonathan's presidency.

He said Okoye eventually requested to leave the Villa Chapel and recommended Ven. Obioma Onwuzurumba as his successor, alongside Archbishop John Oyedade.

"Nigeria will miss you. Your family will miss you. The church will miss you. You stood for integrity," Jonathan said.

Former Head of State, Gen. Yakubu Gowon, described Okoye as a pioneer of Nigeria Prays and praised his leadership, integrity, humility and commitment.

Gowon, who was unable to attend physically because of a trip to the United Kingdom, delivered his tribute virtually.

He said Okoye's memory

would remain evergreen, recalling his support for the Nigeria Prays movement since its inception in 1996.

Sen. Victor Umeh, who represented Mr Peter Obi, described Okoye as a brother from the same local government area in Anambra State.

Umeh said Okoye prayed for peace during Anambra's political crisis and worked to promote stability in the state.

Pastor Mrs Toyin Okoye, wife of the deceased, thanked God for her husband's life, describing him affectionately as "Mine".

She said Okoye told doctors at the hospital that he was not afraid of death and appreciated those who prayed for and visited him.

She particularly acknowledged Pastor Enoch Adebayo and other Christian leaders who supported the family during the period.

"Your life of integrity touched lives, including my own life.

"You have fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith," she said.

Dr Paul Enenche, founder of Dunamis International Gospel Centre, said Okoye was passionate about Nigeria's spiritual and physical wellbeing.

Enenche said Okoye believed God would raise Christians who would contribute significantly to the transformation of Nigeria.

The President of CAN, Archbishop Daniel Okoh, described Okoye as a preacher, trainer and mentor who dedicated his life to God and humanity.

2027: Inter-ethnic groups in Edo canvass for President Tinubu's re-election

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

Members of various Inter-ethnic nationalities in Edo State have embarked on a massive road walk across Benin metropolis to canvass for support and votes for the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu come 2027.

The road walk took participants from the King square in Ring road through mission road and terminated at the Ministry of Education as various inter-ethnic nationalities in Edo State canvassed for votes for President Tinubu to ensure he wins a second term to enable him continue his developmental stride.

The coordinator of the road

walk and the first Commissioner for Inter-ethnic relation who hails from Enugu State and Anayochukwu Oli said the 2.5 million votes promised President Tinubu will be delivered during the forthcoming general election.

He said the victory for the candidates of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in the general election will be a very wide margin in all the seats that will be contested for.

He noted that the group will continue to sensitize the people about the good works of President Tinubu and the need to return him for a second term to complete his developmental agenda that will put the nation in the threshold of history.

"We would continue to sensitize our people in Edo State,

letting them know about the good works of the President and his good intentions for Nigeria. His reforms might be difficult but it's for the growth, development and stability of the Nigeria economy.

"I urge all of us to continue to preach to others, showing them the developmental stride of our President and our governor and the need to vote for continuity to ensure development is spread across Nigeria".

The commissioner thanked the President for his educational policy that has created the platform for students to access interest free loans that has supported their education ensuring all access education no matter the financial status of their parents.

Speaking to journalists after the road walk, President of Niger Delta Indegene in Edo State Elder Pius Iyamu said the road walk is to galvanize support for the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"This road walk we just concluded today shows that the Niger Delta Indegene and other Indigenous nationalities living in Edo State are on ground for President Tinubu.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **INEGBEDION MAGDALENA IKHAYERE** now wish to be known and addressed as **EIMIUIH MAGDALENA INEGBEDION TIMOTHY**. All former documents remain valid. Concern authorities and the general public should please take note.



WPRF 2026 ROAD WALK:

A cross section of the Edo State Chapter of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) during its stop-over in *The Nigerian Observer* while undertaking a WPRF 2026 Road Walk in Benin City on Saturday.

Edo NIPR conducts awareness campaign on 13th World Public Relations Forum

LUCKY PIETY AND
EKHABAFE BELOVED

BENIN CITY

The Edo State chapter of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), on Saturday, embarked on a public awareness road walk in Benin City ahead of the 13th World Public Relations Forum (WPRF) scheduled to hold in Abuja from November 15 to 21, 2026.

Speaking at the stop-over of the awareness road walk in the Nigerian Observer, The Chairman of the NIPR chapter, Dr. James-Wisdom Abbulimen, said the campaign aimed at taking the message of responsible communication to the streets and creating awareness about Nigeria's hosting of the international forum.

Abbulimen described public relations as a strategic profession that manages communication, builds and sustains relationships, protects reputation, earns public trust and helps prevent conflicts and misunderstandings between organisations and their stakeholders.

He said the road walk was or-

ganised against the background of the 2026 WPRF theme, "Responsible Communication: The Voice of the World," stressing that responsible communication was critical to effective leadership, peaceful coexistence, good governance and sustainable development.

He expressed confidence that the forum would provide an international platform for public relations practitioners, communication experts, government representatives and other stakeholders to deliberate on the role of responsible communication in addressing contemporary challenges.

He said the event would hold alongside the 37th African Public Relations Association (APRA) Conference, adding that the gathering will further strengthen professional collaboration and provide opportunities for stakeholders to share ideas and experiences in strategic communication.

Abbulimen disclosed that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, would serve as the Chief Host, while the President of Zambia, His Excellency Hakainde Hi-

chilema, is scheduled to deliver the Presidential Keynote Address.

He said the forum is expected to attract more than 3,000 delegates from over 126 countries, describing it as a significant opportunity for Nigeria to showcase its public relations and communication industry, professional expertise and cultural heritage to the international community.

The NIPR chairman said the Edo road walk was not merely ceremonial but part of efforts to deepen public understanding of the importance of public relations and encourage stronger partnerships among government institutions, the media, the private sector and the general public.

He urged stakeholders and residents to support the initiative and embrace ethical and responsible communication, noting that effective communication remained essential to building trust, managing relationships and promoting national development.

Abbulimen assured that the State would play an active role in the global gathering, saying the

awareness campaign will continue in Abuja during the forum.

Receiving the delegation, the General Manager of The Nigerian Observer, Hon. Peter Odiboh, represented by the Editor of *The Observer*, Andy Asemota, lauded the professional body for recognising the newspaper as historic and important platform for public information and civic communication.

According to him, the request of the chapter for partnership showed that the newspaper's vision aligns with the commitment of NIPR to promote professional excellence, ethical communication and strategic use of communication for national development.

The 13th World Public Relations Forum, organised by the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management and hosted by the NIPR, is expected to place Nigeria at the centre of global discussions on public relations, strategic communication, ethical leadership, trust, professional collaboration and sustainable development.

NEWS

Jonathan celebrates Bayelsa at 30, urges residents to pursue greater development

PHILIP JEREMIAH EKE.

YENAGOA

Former President Goodluck Jonathan has urged the people of Bayelsa State to acknowledge the progress recorded since its creation while working collectively to achieve greater development.

Jonathan made the call at a dinner and award ceremony organised as part of activities marking the 30th anniversary

of the creation of the state.

The former president, who was among the personalities honoured at the event, said although Bayelsa had yet to attain its desired level of development, its creation had given the people a distinct political identity and a homeland they could call their own.

"We may not have reached where we are supposed to be, but I'm happy where we are. I'm happy that Bayelsa State was created, and we have

gained tremendously," he said.

Jonathan recalled that Bayelsa was created on October 1, 1996, by the then Head of State, Gen. Sani Abacha, alongside Ebonyi and Ekiti states.

He said the creation of the state was significant because it gave the people a distinct identity and provided them with a political home they could call their own.

"Bayelsa State was created for us to at least give us identity as young people, and that has giv-

en us a home that we can say this is our own," he said.

Jonathan urged young Bayelsans not to focus only on the challenges confronting the state but to recognise the progress made and contribute to building a better future.

He stressed that sustainable development would require visionary leadership, proper planning and continuity of purpose among successive administrations.

The former president re-

called an initiative he introduced while serving as governor of the state in 2006, when secondary school students were invited to write essays projecting what they wanted Bayelsa to become in 25 years.

According to him, the exercise produced "beautiful essays" and demonstrated the importance of giving young people the opportunity to articulate their vision for the future of the state.

"As long as we have a vision and as long as we have leaders, governors that have vision, that have plan for the state, one will hand over to the other one, and God willing, we'll get to where we want to be," Jonathan said.

He congratulated the state government and the anniversary committee for recognising individuals who had contributed to the development of Bayelsa State and the wider society.

According to him, choosing recipients for awards was often difficult, recalling his experiences in selecting Nigerians for national honours during the 50th anniversary of Nigeria's independence and the centenary celebration of the amalgamation of the country.

The former president dedi-

cated his award to his former boss and friend, the late Chief DSP Alamieyeseigha, whom he credited with giving him the opportunity to begin his political career as deputy governor.

"For me, my own award, I have dedicated it to my friend and my boss, Chief DSP Alamieyeseigha, because he brought me in as a deputy governor. If I did not start that journey as a deputy governor, no way I would have gone to where I am," he said.

The former president commended the organisers for honouring individuals who had contributed to the development of the state and society, saying such recognition would encourage others to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

He added that recognising deceased contributors would also bring pride and honour to their families.

President Jonathan thanked Governor Douye Diri, his wife, the Deputy Governor, diplomats, ambassadors and other dignitaries for attending the anniversary dinner, saying the 30th anniversary celebration should serve not only as a moment to reflect on Bayelsa's journey but also as an opportunity to remember the contributions of past leaders and citizens while inspiring current and future generations to contribute to the state's continued growth and development.

**30TH ANNIVERSARY:**

From left: Wife of the former President, Dame Patience Jonathan; former President Goodluck Jonathan; Gov. Douye Diri of Bayelsa and his wife Gloria, during the 30th Anniversary Dinner and Award of Legacies Night in Yenagoa on Friday.

Delta Police arraign 22 suspected cultists, secure remand orders

AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

The Delta State Police Command has arraigned 22 suspected cultists arrested during separate operations in Eku and Owhegbo communities as part of ongoing efforts to curb cultism and related criminal activities across the state.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Bright Ede, disclosed this in a statement, saying that more than 15 suspects arrested in Eku were subsequently taken into custody by operatives of the Command Anti-Cult Unit (CACU), Sector 2, Ozoro.

According to Ede, the suspects were arraigned before the Federal High Court, Warri, on September 25, 2026.

He said seven other suspects arrested in Owhegbo by operatives of the unit were also arraigned before a Chief Magistrate Court.

The suspects were charged with offences bordering on conspiracy and membership of

an unlawful society, specifically the Supreme Vikings Confraternity, also known as "Aroba-ga."

The respective courts subsequently ordered that the suspects be remanded in correctional custody pending further proceedings.

Those arraigned include Best Enarisa, 45; Alex David, 33; Precious Onokponu, 30;

Joel Odafe, 19; Zino Oghene, 33; Oghenero Gabriel, 35; and Ofego Omaoke, 25, alongside other suspects.

The Commissioner of Police, Delta State Command, CP Samuel E. Erale, psc, mnips, said the command would continue to pursue cultism cases beyond arrest through diligent investigation and prosecution in accordance with the law.

Erale also warned persons involved in cult-related activities to desist from such acts and urged them to turn away from criminal activities.

He called on parents, community leaders and other stakeholders to support the police by providing credible and timely information that could help prevent cult-related activities and associated violence across the state.

DESOPADEC boss urges Delta youths to embrace politics, prepare for leadership

AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC), Chief Festus Ochonogor, has urged youths in the state's oil-producing communities to take an active part in democratic politics and prepare themselves for leadership.

Ochonogor made the call at the third edition of the Del-

ta State Oil Producing Areas Youth Summit held at Unity Hall, Governor's Office Annex, Edjebe, Warri.

The summit, themed "Consolidating Renewed Hope and the M.O.R.E Agenda Through Youth Unity and Good Governance in Delta State," brought together youths from the state's six major oil-producing ethnic nationalities to deliberate on political participation, leadership, peace and development.

Represented by the Executive Director of Projects, DESOPADEC, Dr. Ebenezer Okorodu, who is also the Ota

of Ancient Olomu Kingdom, Ochonogor said active participation in democratic politics would provide young people with the experience and exposure needed to assume leadership positions in the future.

He said youths who remained committed to the political process could rise through the ranks to become commissioners, lawmakers, senators, governors and even president.

The DESOPADEC boss also commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for what he described as courage and decisiveness in implementing policies that had strengthened

the capacity of state and local governments to finance development projects.

He equally praised Delta State Governor Sheriff Oborewori for ongoing development projects across the state, particularly in the areas of roads and other infrastructure.

Ochonogor also defended Oborewori's decision to leave the Peoples Democratic Party for the All Progressives Congress, saying the governor's alignment with the Federal Government could provide opportunities for Delta State to attract more benefits from the centre.

Benin residents alarmed over hotels housing children

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

Residents of Benin City, Edo State, have raised concern over what they described as an emerging social problem in which some young boys and girls, including children believed to be of secondary-school age, allegedly use hotels and short-stay facilities as meeting points for sexual activities, drug use and other behaviour harmful to their wellbeing.

The residents warned that, if left unchecked, the development could expose children to sexual exploitation, substance abuse, trafficking and other forms of violence, while weak-

ening parental supervision and community values.

They called on parents, hotel operators, community leaders, security agencies and the Edo State Government to strengthen surveillance and child-protection measures around hotels and other facilities where minors may be exposed to harmful activities.

A Child-protection advocate in Benin City, Mrs. Eunice Osagie, said the presence of unsupervised children in hotels raises questions about how operators verify the ages and identities of guests, whether staff are trained to identify signs of child exploitation, and how suspicious activities involving minors are reported to authorities.

Residents also urged parents to have difficult conversations with their children rather than relying solely on punishment, while paying closer attention to their movements, friendships, online activities and unexplained spending.

They called on hotel owners and managers to take greater responsibility for activities on their premises, rather than viewing their facilities simply as businesses.

For many residents, the concern goes beyond what happens inside hotel rooms. They said it is about what happens to children when spaces intended for adults become places where school-age children regard as safe havens.



UNFORGETTABLE

A Legacy of Service and Benevolence

The family of Chief MCK Orbih announces the funeral arrangements for Chief Daniel Osi Orbih, whose passing leaves a profound void in the family and in the hearts of the many lives he touched through his service, generosity and humanity.



CHIEF DANIEL OSI ORBIH KSM, DSSRS

(1961 – 2026)

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7
Requiem Mass
Catholic Church of the Assumption,
Asokoro, Abuja
4:00 p.m.

Night of Tributes
Bola Ahmed Tinubu International
Conference Centre, Abuja
7:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9
Vigil Mass
St. John's Catholic Church,
Ogbona, Etsako Local Government
Area, Edo State
4:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10
Funeral Mass
St. John's Catholic Church,
Ogbona, Etsako Local Government
Area, Edo State
10:00 a.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11
Thanksgiving Mass
St. John's Catholic Church,
Ogbona, Etsako Local Government
Area, Edo State
10:00 a.m.

Francis Udukhomoi Orbih, Esq.
For the Family

NEWS

LAMAI CASSIUS

AUCHI

The Executive Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Area, Hon. Romeo Alaoye Omoike, has called on residents, particularly young people, to see themselves as stakeholders in the future of Nigeria and contribute positively to the development of their communities.

Hon. Omoike made the call at an event marking the nation's 65th Independence

Invest in Nigeria's future, Omoike urges youths at independence celebration

Day celebration in Auchi, the administrative headquarters of the local government.

He said the return of the Independence Day celebration was part of his administration's broader approach to reconnecting the people with the values of patriotism, unity, responsibility and service to the nation.

The Chairman noted that the celebration was revived after years of lull to bring together school pupils, traditional institutions, security agencies, community leaders, artisans and residents to commemorate the nation's independence anniversary.

He urged residents of the local government to sustain peaceful coexistence, respect constituted authority and promote initiatives capable of strengthening unity and development across the area.

Omoike stressed the importance of government-community collaboration in tackling challenges confronting Etsako West, particularly illicit drug activities and poor environmental sanitation.

According to him, government cannot successfully address the problems of drug abuse, illicit drug sales and environmental degradation without the active cooperation of residents, community leaders, traditional institu-

tions and other stakeholders.

"Our administration's campaign against illicit drugs and our drive to improve sanitation are not solely government responsibilities, but collective tasks requiring the cooperation and vigilance of the entire community," he said.

He therefore called on communities to work closely with the council by providing relevant information, supporting lawful enforcement efforts and taking ownership

of sanitation initiatives in their respective areas.

Traditional rulers and community leaders at the event also reaffirmed their commitment to supporting initiatives that promote peace, development, environmental responsibility and social cohesion in Etsako West.

Highlight of the celebration was the distribution of the Nigerian National Flag to security agencies, educational institutions and other relevant organisations across the local government area.

Afe Babalola rewards Ekiti farmers

ADO-EKITI

The Chancellor of Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti, Aare Afe Babalola, has announced plans to establish an Ekiti Farmers' House to promote large-scale and productive modern farming in the state.

Babalola disclosed this in Ado Ekiti on Saturday at the 2026 Afe Babalola Agricultural Expo, with the theme, 'AI for every farmer: Farming Smarter, producing more and earning better', where farmers from the 16 local government areas of the state showcased their farm produce.

He said the annual agricultural expo, which began in 2015, was founded on his vision of making agriculture popular and acceptable as a noble profession, particularly against the backdrop of some people abandoning farming for white-collar and menial jobs.

The ABUAD founder, who is also a farmer, appreciated farmers in the country and Ekiti State for forging ahead despite challenges associated with farming in Nigeria, including kidnapping, robbery and herdsman invasion.

He said, "The proposed Ekiti Farmers' House will have a secretariat which will be inviting members for meetings and allies' matters.

"In addition, and in partnership with the state government and the 16 local government areas of the state, the Farmers' House will acquire modern farm implements including ridgers, ploughs and harvesters which the Ekiti Farmers' House will be renting to farmers at low rates.

"Through this scheme, farmers will be able to hire agricultural implements

from the local government to engage in large-scale and productive modern farming.

"This way, Nigerians, particularly our youths and university graduates, will imbibe modern agriculture. It is possible. It is practicable, and it is achievable. This will encourage more people to take to farming in the overall interest of the country," Babalola said.

As part of his encouragement for farmers, Babalola presented cash rewards to outstanding farmers from the different local government areas of the state at the event.

The overall best farmer in Ekiti State received the star prize of N2m, while the best three farmers in each of the 16 local government areas received N350,000 in total, broken down into N200,000 for first place, N100,000 for second and N50,000 for third.

In addition, two youths from each of the 16 local government areas, who were trained in plantain chips production, packaging and marketing under the Afe Babalola Youth Empowerment programme, received equipment to start the business, courtesy of the ABUAD Chancellor.

The ABUAD founder advised the winners to "invest whatever you win wisely and judiciously, bearing in mind that the richest people in the world today started from nothing", while urging the youths to make the best of the training and equipment they had received to improve their lives.

The Oore of Otun Ekiti and Paramount Ruler of Mobaland, Oba Adekunle Adeagbo, hailed the ABUAD Chancellor for the annual agricultural expo and his consistent encouragement of farmers.

**CONVENTION:**

From left: Vice Chancellor, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Prof. Bond Anyaehie; Chairman of the Convention, Sen. Anyim Pius Anyim; Guest Speaker/Managing Director, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Malam Ali M Ali; and the Global President, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Alumni Association, Prof. Ikechukwu Innocent, during the 2026 International convention of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Alumni Association in Abuja.

2027: APC Chieftain pledges support for Anamero's re-election

LAMAI CASSIUS

AUCHI

A chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ward 2, Etsako East Local Government Area, Dr. Audu Abubakar, has pledged his support for the re-election bid of Rt. Hon. Sunday Dekeri Anamero, member representing Etsako Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives.

Dr. Abubakar made the pledge when he paid a solidarity visit to the lawmaker in his office in Abuja. He commended Anamero for his effective representation and developmental interventions across Etsako Federal Con-

stituency.

He assured the federal lawmaker of the unwavering loyalty and support of Ward 2, promising to deploy his resources to mobilize grassroots support for an overwhelming victory for the party in the ward and in Etsako East in general.

According to him, "Ward 2 is fully ready to work for Rt. Hon. Anamero's re-election. We have resolved to remain united and to put in the nec-

essary work to ensure APC secures victory in the 2027 general elections."

Dr. Abubakar said the visit was aimed at strengthening the party's structure at the ward and federal constituency levels to guarantee total victory for all APC candidates at the polls.

In his response, Rt. Hon. Anamero thanked Dr. Abubakar for his leadership and commitment to the growth of the party in Etsako

East. He stressed that unity and early preparation remain critical to electoral success.

The lawmaker further called on party leaders and stakeholders across Etsako Federal Constituency to close ranks and work as one united and indivisible family.

Both leaders agreed to deepen party cohesion and grassroots engagement across the federal constituency ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Experts urge youths to turn socio-economic challenges into solutions

LAGOS

Experts have urged youths in Nigeria to see the country's socio-economic challenges as opportunities to initiate and build transformative solutions rather than just lamenting on social media platforms.

They made the call during the fifth edition of the Nasir Giwa Mentorship Conference held in Lagos State with the theme, 'Building the Future: The Urgency of Now', at the weekend.

The event, which coincided

with the 10th year of establishing NGM, drew hundreds of undergraduates, young professionals, business leaders and entrepreneurs, serving as a catalyst for action, bridging the gap between classroom theory and real-world execution.

Addressing participants, the founder of NGM, Nasir Giwa, reminded the youths that periods of national difficulty historically offer the most fertile ground for innovation and enterprise.

"Stop lamenting. Stop being in the midst of those who are wasting their time arguing on social media. Spend that quality time doing something, spend

that quality time collaboratively with your other friends, and be part of a mentorship platform.

"Whatever is happening in Nigeria today, we should take it as an opportunity. There are so many things we can do with what Nigeria is going through today," he said.

Also speaking, the Group Managing Director, Sahara Power Group, Mr Kola Adesina, urged the younger generation to shun despair.

While drawing an analogy to the ongoing national conversation on domestic oil refining, he stressed the need for the youth to refine their innate refinery.

NYSC kidnap: Osun NURTW decries insecurity on highways

OSOGBO

The National Union of Road Transport Workers, Osun State Chapter, has raised the alarm over growing security threats along major travel routes across the country following the abduction of prospective National Youth Service Corps members travelling to their orientation

camps.

The union called on the Federal Government and security agencies to urgently strengthen security on major highways and intensify efforts to rescue the abducted youths, some of whom were reportedly graduates of institutions in Osun State.

The Acting Chairman of the Osun NURTW, Kazeem Oyewale, popularly known as Asiri

Eniba, expressed concern that the incident had heightened anxiety among the victims' families, friends and the wider community.

In a statement released on Saturday, Oyewale urged the FG, the NYSC, state governments and security agencies to take immediate and decisive measures to address the security challenges confronting travellers nationwide.

NEWS**Ogun APC committee chair knocks Atiku over call for subsidy return****ABEOKUTA**

The Chairman of the Planning Committee of the 2027 APC Presidential and Governorship Campaign Committee in Ogun State, Kayode Oladele, has criticised the fuel subsidy proposal unveiled by the presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, describing it as an attempt to repack an old policy under a new name.

Oladele, a former federal lawmaker, said in a statement on Sunday that Atiku's proposal for a "capped, budgeted production subsidy" on petrol refined in Nigeria raised

fundamental questions that could not be answered merely by changing the terminology from consumption subsidy to production subsidy.

The former Vice President and the 2027 presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress had said that only petrol refined domestically, including products from modular refineries, would qualify for the proposed intervention, while imported petrol would be excluded. He also promised that the costs and payments would be published and independently audited.

Oladele, however, said the important question was not what Atiku chose to call the

programme, but who would ultimately pay for it and how much it would cost the Nigerian taxpayer.

"A subsidy remains a subsidy. You may call it production subsidy, targeted subsidy, capped subsidy or give it any sophisticated economic description you like. Once the government is required to absorb part of the cost of petrol so that it can be sold below what the market would otherwise determine, public resources are being committed to make up the difference.

"The critical questions therefore remain unanswered: What is the subsidy rate? What quantity of petrol will qualify?

What is the annual expenditure ceiling? Where will the money come from? And what mechanism will guarantee that whatever benefit government gives to refiners will actually reach ordinary Nigerians at the filling stations?"

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The one-time acting Chairman of the Federal Character Commission noted that similar questions had been raised by the APC Presidential Campaign Council, which asked Atiku to disclose the proposed subsidy rate, spending ceiling, eligible volumes, funding source and safeguards against diversion and fraudulent

claims.

He said that the campaign council had also questioned how such an intervention would operate within Section 205(1) of the Petroleum Industry Act, which establishes market-based pricing for petroleum products.

Oladele explained that "The fundamental difference between President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's approach and Atiku's proposal is that the President is attempting to restructure the energy and transportation economy rather than return government to permanently underwriting fuel consumption.

"President Tinubu took the difficult decision to confront a subsidy system that had be-

come enormously burdensome to the public treasury. Such structural reforms inevitably come with adjustment pressures and nobody should pretend otherwise.

"What Nigerians should therefore ask Atiku is simple: after all our experience with subsidy, is the solution really to create another subsidy programme?"

Oladele also faulted Atiku's criticism of the Federal Government's transportation initiatives, saying the opposition candidate was ignoring the administration's attempt to diversify Nigeria's transportation energy base through Compressed Natural Gas and other alternatives to petrol.

**ANNIVERSARY:**

From left: President, League of Women Voters of Nigeria (NILOWV), Irene Awunah-Ikyegh; Chairperson, NILOWV FCT, Comrade Sandra Ogbonna; Guest Speaker, Barr. Lydia Odeh; and the Chairperson, Anniversary Planning Committee, Chizoba Ogbeche during the NILOWV FCT Chapter 30th Anniversary Celebration at the weekend in Abuja.

Zamfara begins road project to boost farming, security**GUSAU**

The Zamfara State Governor, Dauda Lawal, has flagged off the construction of the 95-kilometre Yandoton Daji-Cediya-Doka-Yan Waren Daji-Hayin Alhaji Bedi-Unguwar Joji-Yan Kuzo-Tsafe Road in Tsafe Local Government Area.

A statement by the governor's spokesperson, Sulaiman Idris, on Sunday, said Lawal performed the official flag-off of the project in Tsafe town on Sunday.

According to the statement, the governor said the road would improve connectivity and boost economic activities, particularly for farmers in the area.

The statement partly read, "Zamfara State Governor His Excellency, Dr Dauda Lawal has flagged off the Yandoton Daji-Cediya-Doka-Yan Waren Daji-Hayin Alhaji Bedi-Unguwar Joji-Yan Kuzo-Tsafe Road, comprising a 94-kilometre road in Tsafe LGA.

"At the official flag-off by

His Excellency Dr Dauda Lawal in Tsafe Town on Sunday, the 4th of October, 2026, the Governor disclosed that the road will ease connectivity and affect the local economy for farmers.

"The road is to be constructed by Sky Construction Company and Setraco Construction Company Limited."

According to the statement,

the Commissioner for Works, Lawal Bungundu, said the administration's commitment to infrastructural renewal was part of its mission to rebuild the state and ensure that Zamfara residents benefited from improved road connectivity.

"The construction of this road in Tsafe LGA will ensure the commuting of farm produce, as it connects many

farmlands, and it will affect the economic activities of the state.

"The road will ensure the smooth transportation of farm produce and also develop agricultural output. This will work in line with our administration's investment in critical infrastructure to enhance the productivity of our people", the statement quoted Bungundu as saying.

2027: Oluremi Tinubu to lead 20,000 women APC summit in Abuja**ABUJA**

Nigeria's First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, is expected to lead a major mobilisation of women stakeholders in Abuja on Monday as the All Progressives Congress begins to intensify its grassroots campaign ahead of the 2027 presidential election.

The Women Stakeholders' Mobilisation and Empowerment Pre-Inaugural Campaign Roll-Out, organised by the Women Mobilisation Directorate of the APC Presi-

dential Campaign Council, is expected to attract more than 20,000 women from across the country.

The event, according to a statement on Sunday, is scheduled for 8 am at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre, Abuja, and is themed "Renewed Hope Agenda 2.0: From Reforms to Prosperity," with the mobilisation message, "One Voice, One Movement, One Choice, One Mandate 2027."

The campaign's women mobilisation directorate has

separately said it is targeting 40 million votes from women for President Bola Tinubu and Vice-President Kashim Shettima in the 2027 election. The directorate's Director, Dr Betta Edu, disclosed this ahead of Monday's summit, saying the structure was also expanding grassroots mobilisation across the country.

The gathering is expected to bring together women leaders, professionals, entrepreneurs, political stakeholders, community representatives and grassroots organisers to discuss political participation, mobilisation and government programmes being presented

by the APC as part of the Tinubu administration's record.

Speaking ahead of the event, a member of the APC Presidential Campaign Council Women Mobilisation Planning Committee, Princess Gloria Akobundu, said programmes introduced by the Federal Government had affected education, infrastructure, social protection, consumer credit and youth empowerment.

Akobundu specifically cited the Nigerian Education Loan Fund, CREDICORP, infrastructure projects, cash-transfer programmes, digital-skills initiatives and other interventions, arguing that the admin-

istration's policies should be consolidated through a second term.

She said, "NELFUND has provided an opportunity for Nigerian students who ordinarily may not have been able to afford tertiary education to access interest-free loans."

Current NELFUND figures show that the scheme had processed 1,659,853 applications as of September 2026, while total disbursements reached N372.62bn as of October 3. Of the amount, N192.89bn had been paid to beneficiary institutions as institutional fees, while N179.73bn had gone to students as upkeep allowances.

Fadahunsi donates transformer to Osun community, seeks support for Tinubu**ARIMORO (OSUN)**

The Senator representing Osun East Senatorial District, Senator Francis Fadahunsi, has donated and energised a 500KVA transformer to residents of Peace Highland Community in Arimoro, Ilesa West Local Government Area of Osun State.

Fadahunsi, who also serves as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Industries, noted that the donation was part of his commitment to reducing poverty and delivering the dividends of democracy to his constituents.

This was contained in a statement made available to newsmen on Sunday.

Speaking on the lawmaker's behalf, his Head of Media and Public Enlightenment, Mr Omole Omo-Osodi, commended the people of the community for their patience and commitment to good governance.

He urged the people to ensure the safekeeping of the transformer, as he also

called for their support for candidates of the All Progressives Congress in the upcoming 2027 elections.

"On behalf of my principal, Distinguished Senator Francis Adenigba Fadahunsi, I congratulate the people of Peace Highland Community for their patience and commitment to good governance. Your trust in Senator Fadahunsi has paid off and will continue to pay off.

See more Punch stories on Google.

"I urge you to maintain this transformer as your personal property. Today, the 500KVA transformer has been energised for your use. Protect it and guard it as you would your personal property.

"I urge you all to come out in your numbers on January 16, 2027, and vote for the progressive candidates of the APC. Vote for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, vote for Distinguished Senator Adenigba Francis Fadahunsi, OFR, and vote for Hon. Emmanuel Olusanya Omirin for continuity," Fadahunsi stated.



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LONG MAY HE REIGN

NEWS**“Imansuangbon does not need to die over election”- Mayaki****• Says ADC should campaign instead of singing war songs**

By ADAMS JOHNSON

BENIN CITY

The Director of Media of the Edo State APC Campaign Council, John Mayaki, has said African Democratic Congress (ADC) chieftain Kenneth Imansuangbon does not need to die or go to jail for his party to win an election, urging him instead to take his party's message to the electorate.

Mayaki was reacting to remarks attributed to Imansuangbon at an ADC meeting in Edo Central, where he reportedly said he was ready to die or go to jail if that would make his party win and sang that there would be “no gentlemen” in the 2027 election.

Mayaki said: “Imansuangbon does not need to die. He will not die. He does not need to go to jail either. Nobody is after him.

“Nigeria already has enough problems without politicians volunteering to die or go to jail because of an election.

“What he and his ADC need to do is far less dramatic: open the gate and campaign. You can't be hiding inside one room with gated fence and you want people to vote for you.”

He accused the ADC of what he described as “political laziness”, saying the party should devote more energy to building structures, reaching communities and persuading voters rather than engaging in political theatrics.

“There is something almost laughable about declaring political war from inside a fenced and gated compound. If you like, it is like declaring war while hiding under the bed,” Mayaki said.

“You are singing ‘no gentlemen’, but where is the battle?”

“Not on the streets of Ubiaja. Not in Uromi. Not in Ewotimi. Not in Ekpoma. Let alone Benin City.

“Not in the markets. Not in the villages. Not from door to door and not at the polling units where political structures have to be built and voters persuaded.”

Mayaki said serious electoral mobilisation required party structures, agents, canvassers and sustained engagement with voters across communities, wards and polling units.

“In the APC, we are already doing the required legwork, while the ADC is engaging in war songs. We are organising while they are threatening,” he said.

Mayaki also said if party members drawn from different parts of the state could still be accommodated in one room, the ADC should be more concerned with expanding its support base than escalating its rhetoric.

“Perhaps the immediate assignment should be expansion, not escalation,” he said.

“Build the structures. Reach the wards. Reach the polling units. Meet the voters. Persuade the people.

“A handful of believers shouting ‘no gentlemen’ behind a gate may excite themselves inside the room, but elections do not take place inside that room.

“The voters are outside.”

Mayaki also questioned what Imansuangbon meant by the “no gentlemen” declaration, saying democratic contests should be fought through ide-

as, organisation and persuasion.

“So what exactly does ‘no gentlemen’ mean?” he asked.

“Democracy is already a contest. There is no need to militarise its vocabulary.”

“Before declaring that there will be ‘no gentlemen’ in 2027,

ADC should get into the political trenches.

“Open the gate. Come outside. Campaign. Persuade the people.

“The voters are outside, not under the bed”.

**SWEARING-IN**

A cross-section of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members taking oath of allegiance, during the swearing-in of 2026 NYSC Batch C Stream I Orientation Course in Abuja on Friday

Idahosa: Edo education, security priority under Okpebholo

By BERNADETTE IDALU

BENIN CITY

Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, has reaffirmed the state government's commitment to education, saying the sector remains a priority under the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo.

Idahosa stated this on Saturday, October 3, while representing Governor Okpebholo as Special Guest of Honour at the 12th National Annual Dinner and Secondary School

Auditorium Launch Appeal Fund organised by the Government College Ughelli Old Boys Association (GCUOBA), Benin Branch.

Speaking against the backdrop of the keynote address delivered by Prof. Douglass Omotor, titled “From Legacy to Global Relevance: Transforming Government College Ughelli Through Strategic Partnerships, Alumni Engagement and Artificial Intelligence,” Idahosa said Edo State had a compelling story to tell about its progress in the education sector.

The Deputy Governor said

the Okpebholo administration had continued to pursue its education agenda through the SHINE Agenda, describing the governor as committed to advancing the sector.

“Education is a priority to Edo State Government,” Idahosa said, noting that one of the administration's early interventions was the recruitment of 5,000 teachers into the state's education system.

He commended the Government College Ughelli Old Boys Association and the school for their contributions to education and for producing prominent personalities

who have distinguished themselves in various fields.

According to him, the achievements of the school's alumni reflect the values of excellence, discipline and leadership upon which the institution was founded.

Idahosa also linked the administration's policies to efforts to address insecurity in the state, saying the government had recorded a reduction in crime-rate indices.

He maintained that the administration's policy direction had helped bring crime in Edo State to what he described as its barest minimum.

Delta expands infrastructure in varsities as enrolment rises - Aniagwu

By AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

Delta State Government has stepped up infrastructural development across its four state-owned universities to cope with the rising students' enrolment and better learning environment.

Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads and Public Information), Mr Charles Aniagwu, disclosed this after inspecting the Faculty of Management Sciences and Social Sciences building at they Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba.

Aniagwu, who inspected the projects alongside the Commissioner for Higher Education, Prof. Nyerhovwo Tonukari, and the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Samuel Aghalino, said the new facilities were part of the infrastructural expansion programme of Governor Sheriff Oborevwori's administration across the state-owned Universities.

He said the increasing number of students seeking ad-

mission into the state-owned universities has made the provision of additional lecture halls, offices and other facilities imperative.

According to him, the government was not only focused on recruiting and retaining staffs but was equally concerned about providing the infrastructure required to support the growing student population.

Aniagwu said similar projects were being executed in the other state-owned universities, particularly institutions established around the same period as Dennis Osadebay University, with projects spread across the three senatorial districts.

“What we have observed is that there are few things they need to put finishing touches to. On the whole however, we are very much impressed with the quality of work”. He said.

The commissioner stated that the administration would remain focused on governance and project delivery despite the increasing political activities ahead of the 2027 elections.

Expert urges deeper capital market to drive \$1trn economy goal**LAGOS**

An investment expert, Mr Chukwudi Nga, has called for a deeper and broader development of Nigeria's capital market to effectively finance the country's ambition of achieving a one trillion dollar economy by 2030.

Nga, Managing Director of Morgan Capital Investment Ltd., said this in an interview with the NAN in Lagos on Thursday.

He noted that the call was particularly pertinent as Nigeria marks its 66th independence anniversary, with just four years left to achieve its one-trillion-dollar economic

ambition.

He said that although Nigeria had established the basic institutions, regulatory framework, infrastructure and products needed for a modern capital market, the market was still not deep enough to meet the financing needs of the economy.

According to him, the next phase of development requires more quality listings, stronger liquidity, a wider domestic investor base and greater mobilisation of long-term savings into productive investments.

“We have built a capital market with the basic institutions, regulation, infrastructure and products required to play a major role in financing

the next phase of our economic development.

“But the market is still not deep enough relative to the size and financing needs of the Nigerian economy,” he said.

Nga said the market had recorded significant developments, including the transition to a T+1 settlement cycle, which took effect on June 1.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) said the transition was aimed at improving market efficiency, reducing counterparty exposure, enhancing liquidity and aligning the Nigerian market with international standards.

He also cited Nigeria's return to FTSE Russell Frontier

Market status in September as another positive development.

“These improvements in foreign exchange liquidity, capital repatriation and market accessibility has strengthened the market's attractiveness to investors,” he said.

Nga said the developments were important for investor confidence but noted that the country needed to translate the reforms into greater mobilisation of long-term capital for businesses and infrastructure.

He said more companies should be encouraged to access the market through equities, corporate bonds and commercial papers, while infrastructure projects could make greater use of infrastructure bonds, Sukuk, project bonds and asset-backed securities.

FOREIGN

NEWS

Why pastors may not be seen - or heard - preaching on Ghana's buses for much longer

Before the morning rush begins, the sound of praise and worship fills the Neoplan bus station in Ghana's capital, Accra, as a group of Christians gather to prepare to evangelise on vehicles taking travellers across the country.

Amid drumming and dancing, Boateng Bismark James leads 13 worshippers, nine men and four women, in prayer for drivers and passengers travelling to destinations across Ghana.

Ghana is a predominantly Christian country where preach-

ing on public transport is widespread.

On long-distance buses, pastors can often be seen - and heard - preaching the gospel.

Sometimes they stand in the stairwell next to the driver, at others they walk up and down the aisle reading from the Bible and calling on sinners to repent at the tops of their voices. They do not stop even if the trip lasts for several hours.

The faithful sometimes offer money to the preachers to sup-

port their endeavours.

But a new law means this familiar practice could be coming to an end.

Anyone found preaching in public service vehicles faces up to eight months in prison, a fine of up to \$52 (£39) or both.

The new regulation, passed by parliament in May, and which has started to be enforced in recent weeks, targets preaching and hawking on vehicles while they are in motion, classifying both as a nuisance and citing the

safety and comfort of passengers.

Boateng, a 61-year-old pastor at Gospel Light church, has been preaching on commercial vehicles leaving Neoplan station since 2023.

"I preach on commercial vehicles because not everyone is able to go to church on Sunday. There are a lot of passengers who need our message of salvation to repent from their sins. We even heal the sick on some buses," he told the BBC in Twi, a local language.

Wearing a clerical collared shirt, Boateng moves through rows of buses loading passengers before boarding one bound for Kumasi, Ghana's second-largest city.

We speak to him before the bus departs to avoid breaking the law.

Some travellers listen closely as he delivers his message. Others try to ignore him, browsing their phones, making calls or chatting among themselves.

"Some passengers are very

happy with my message. Some even say they have never heard the message in church, but through my preaching they now know it is in the Bible," he says.

The new rules have divided opinion.

Critics say preaching on moving vehicles is a nuisance and a safety risk, as it could distract the driver, while supporters argue that evangelism is a Christian duty and should be protected under the freedom of religious worship.

Fuel shortage in Sudan drives up prices, burdening ordinary people

Sudan is grappling with a fuel shortage driven by global oil disruptions tied to the Middle East conflict and by domestic import restrictions.

This has impacted public transport, freight and factory production, while higher transport costs have pushed up food prices for ordinary people.

"The movement of goods and people has stopped, and the market is totally paralyzed, we need solutions, not promises," said Khartoum resident Mohamed Hassan.

Prime Minister Kamil Idriss has ordered extra supplies of

petroleum products to service stations to ease shortages and improve availability.

A central bank requirement for importers to deposit the equivalent of 200 kilograms of gold has also restricted participation in the import market.

But analysts point to deeper challenges, including the prolonged shutdown of the al-Jaili refinery, foreign exchange shortages, and difficulties financing fuel imports.

Amid the ongoing civil war, the supply crunch has driven a surge in black market fuel trade across government-held areas.



PREACHING:

Preaching on commercial buses was first prohibited in Ghana 2012, but the law banning it has now been beefed up

Kyiv bridge hit in further Russian drone attack as German chancellor makes surprise visit

Major bridges in Kyiv have been hit by Russian drone strikes for four consecutive days, as Moscow ramps up attacks on critical infrastructure in Ukraine's capital.

Two people were injured when the Pivnichnyi (Northern) Bridge was struck on Sunday morning for the second day in a row, while the Pivdennyi (Southern) Bridge was hit multiple times earlier in the week.

The latest attack came as German Chancellor Friedrich Merz made a surprise visit to Kyiv in a show of support against Russia's continuing full-scale invasion.

Russia's military said it would be intensifying strikes on Kyiv and other Ukrainian regions. It earlier said it had hit the two bridges used to transfer Ukrainian troops.

Video footage of Sunday's strike, verified by the BBC, shows cars moving on Pivnichnyi Bridge as a drone crashes into it before exploding, creating a ball of fire. A cloud of black smoke can be seen rising above the bridge.

Other videos and pictures have emerged on social media showing a gaping hole in the middle of a traffic lane on the bridge.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said two people were injured in the latest Russian attack. He earlier said that the Pivnichnyi Bridge's roadway was hit.

Kyiv's eight bridges across the wide Dnipro River link the

western (right) and eastern (left) parts, and many of the capital's estimated three million residents rely heavily on the metro lines and trains to travel across the city.

Some 500,000 vehicles use the bridges every day.

The two struck bridges are still standing - but the damage and restrictions to traffic and public transport have caused gridlock in parts of the capital at times.

"To get from the left bank to the right one and back - it's just hell," Kyiv resident Roman said on Sunday.

Large numbers of commuters cross the river, especially on weekdays. Repair teams are working to fix the damage and officials say they are planning temporary pontoon bridges, ferry services and even a tunnel under the river to keep Kyiv connected.

Klitschko also said a separate Russian drone strike had damaged a heating main, adding that there would be a temporary lack of hot water in the north-eastern Desnyanskyi district as a result.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday morning Russian drones had also attacked a warehouse in the north-eastern region of Sumy, killing one person.

Meanwhile, in the central city of Dnipro, six people were injured after a communications facility was struck, he said.

Ukraine's Air Force said that overnight Russia had launched

135 drones, including 52 jThe Russian foreign ministry on Saturday repeated a warning for foreign citizens, including diplomats, to leave Kyiv.

Responding to the warning, EU ambassador Katarína Mathernová wrote on X on Sunday: "The EU Delegation is staying.

Threatening us will not stop Europe's support for Ukraine. It only reminds us why that support matters!"

German ambassador to Ukraine, Boris Ruge, reacted to Mathernová's post with: "Amen - we're staying".

In Friday's attack, a Russian

drone hit cables of Kyiv's Pivdennyi bridge

Earlier attacks on the Pivdennyi Bridge prompted Kyiv's defence council to hold a crisis meeting on Friday.

Klitschko warned that the city was now in a "very dramatic situation" as Moscow was bat-

tering its "critical infrastructure, logistics, housing" and other key facilities.

Experts say Russian drones are unlikely to bring down the bridges - but repeated attacks will force their closure and risk weakening their structure, making them unusable.

Loud explosions heard in Yemeni capital amid reports of Saudi strikes

Loud explosions were heard in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa on Saturday, as the Houthis reported airstrikes in the area by Saudi forces.

Al-Masirah TV, a Houthi-affiliated media outlet, reported "Saudi aggression" against the capital, without providing details on the targets or casualties.

The channel had earlier reported missile strikes on the telecommunications network in the north-western governorate of Saada, a Houthi stronghold.

Saudi Arabia bombed the Yemeni capital on Thursday night for the first time since renewed fighting broke out between the two sides in July, the Houthis claimed.

After several years of calm, Yemen was plunged back into civil war in July.

It is pitting the Iran-backed Houthis, who control most of north-west Yemen, against the country's internationally recognised government, which is backed by neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

Based in the city of Aden, the government controls much of

the country's south and east -- a region that is larger but less populated.

Hostilities were reignited after four years of a fragile truce when Iran sent a plane to Sanaa carrying a Houthi delegation.

The flight did not seek authorisation from Saudi Arabia, contravening a practice in place for a decade.

Riyadh retaliated with strikes on Sanaa airport, and in response the Houthis attacked Saudi territory for the first time since 2022.

Since then, fighting has intensified with the Houthis launching a lightning offensive which saw them seize control of coastal regions along the strategic Bab al-Mandab strait.

They have also struck multiple Saudi targets including oil infrastructure and the capital Riyadh while also announcing a naval blockade on Saudi ships in the Red Sea.

Fighting in recent days has centred on Taiz, where 80 combatants in the conflict were reported dead on Friday by sources on both sides.

The battle for Taiz is taking

place on several fronts, including highlands overlooking coastal areas recently seized by the Houthis.

On Saturday, it was being reported that a large plume of smoke and fires was seen rising near an oil facility in the Saudi capital, Riyadh.

Saudi Arabia has reportedly requested help from the United States, a call so far rebuffed by US President Donald Trump.

Meantime, the United Nations says at least 150,000 people have fled their homes in Yemen due to renewed fighting that has killed hundreds.

This follows the rapid advance by the Iran-backed Houthi fighters' down the country's western coast to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in recent weeks.

The rebel group has been involved in clashes with Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces.

"We came under attack by the Houthis at around 6pm., and we left our home with nothing but the clothes we were wearing," said Abu Walid who did not give his real name out of fear for his

family's safety.

"The children and their mother had no idea what was happening. I told them, 'We have to flee,'" he said.

Abu Walid added that the Houthi militias had taken control of the city of Hays, and the "shelling and bombardment were fallen".

"It got to the point where a mortar shell landed right next to the door of our house," he said.

A woman who was also displaced from Hays said she and her children fled when a mortar shell was fired at them.

"I don't know where we are going or where to turn. We are now displaced and have no identity cards, no passports, nothing," she said.

"Our children are now out of school. We want help from humanitarian organizations. We need homes, schools, and hospitals, she added.

Displaced people with their children could be seen living in tents with some saying that they don't have anything apart from their clothes, while they line up to register and receive aid.

NEWS

FOREIGN



PROTEST:

Tens of thousands took to the streets of Madrid to protest

'Anger in the streets': Tens of thousands protest in Spain over housing crisis

Tens of thousands of people have protested across Spain calling for greater protections for tenants after the government failed to pass emergency housing legislation.

About 50 marches took place on Saturday in cities including Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona.

"There is a lot of anger in the streets," a spokesperson for the Valencia Tenants' Union said. Clashes have taken place between some protesters and police in the city.

The measures put forward by Pedro Sánchez's leftist coalition government on Friday followed public outcry over the eviction of an 87-year-old woman from her home last month after she was unable to afford a sharp rent increase.

Her eviction triggered nationwide protests across Spain with protesters demanding lower rents, an end to evictions, and a ban on investment

funds - or "vulture funds" as the government has termed them - buying property.

Sánchez's defeat in Congress on Friday heightens speculation that he might call an early general election, which was not due until next summer.

His coalition government, made up of his ruling Socialist party and junior partner the Sumar alliance, does not command a majority in parliament.

Spanish PM Sánchez loses key housing crisis vote after eviction of woman, 87

Photographs showed protesters in the east coast city of Valencia clashing with police officers on Saturday near arts centre Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, which was hosting a real estate summit.

Several protesters removed barriers and threw objects at officers, who responded with rubber bullets, Spanish media reported. Public broadcaster RTVE said nine police officers were injured and five people were arrested.

Tensions arose between some protesters and police officers in Valencia

One of the biggest demonstration happened in the capital, Madrid, where estimates of the number of participants varied widely. The city's Tenants' Union said there were 500,000, while officials put the figure at 70,000.

Demonstrators held banners reading "There won't be peace for rentism" and "I study to have a future, not to have a tiny apartment". They shook the keys they were holding and chanted: "We have the keys of all the city".

Some had also camped in one of the city's main squares, Puerta del Sol, for days.

One protester, David, told RTVE ahead of the protest: "We're not here for pleasure or comfort. We're here out of conviction."

Another protester, 26-year-old librarian Marcos Sainz, told AFP news agency that he used to share a two-bedroom

flat with friends, paying 900 euros (£766) a month in rent. Today, he said a one-bedroom flat often costs 1,000 euros.

Sainz said he would protest against rent rises "until someone dares to regulate it all", or "we'll all have to leave Madrid".

Spanish police said they had arrested three members of a far-right group, some of whom had performed Nazi salutes, as they tried to reach demonstrators in the square.

On Friday night, Madrid's Tenants' Union said that although the government's proposed measures were insufficient, the rejection of the proposed legislation "exacerbates the housing crisis which is costing the working class their lives".

It is calling for a general strike over the housing crisis.

An encampment has been set up for days by protesters at Puerta del Sol in Madrid

The legislation put forward in Congress on Friday was divided into two decrees.

Flydubai co-pilot attacked captain with axe, UAE official says

The co-pilot who attempted to take control of a Flydubai plane travelling to Israel attacked the pilot with a crash axe, the United Arab Emirates prosecutor general has said.

The flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv carrying more than 170 people plunged 17,000ft (5,200m) two and a half hours into its journey, before passengers managed to overpower the attacker and successfully take control of the plane.

Capt Smit Machchhar said he was lying on the floor injured when he realised the plane was sinking and he had to act, explaining: "I told myself to go for one last push to open the door from inside", which allowed the passengers in.

Two reserve pilots then

landed the plane safely in Saudi Arabia.

A crash axe is usually kept in the cockpit in case of emergencies.

The weapon used has been a key question for investigators, given the stringent security on such a sensitive route. Early reports from passengers on board had suggested it might have been a knife.

The UAE attorney general told state media that investigations are ongoing to determine the full circumstances and motives of the incident.

The co-pilot who launched the attack was an Omani national, according to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Multiple media outlets including Reuters, CNN and The

New York Times have named him as Hamam al-Hammami. There has been no official confirmation of this.

While working at another airline, Oman Air, US media reported that Al-Hammami was removed from flight training because of concerns over his radical views, and was given another role at Oman's national airline.

Australian authorities confirmed on Sunday they were investigating his "links" to the country, but did not provide any details.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation, citing sources, reported he was issued a student visa in 2014 and studied in Australia between 2015 and 2017 before leaving the country.

The ABC said his student visa was cancelled in 2019 as

he was not enrolled in a course at that time.

Counter-terrorism officials will look at whether the man was radicalised in Australia, the ABC reported.

He then completed a three-year distance-learning course run by Buckinghamshire New University in the UK and graduated with a degree in aviation management in 2023, the university said. It added he did not take any pilot training at the school.

Speaking to Fox News, Netanyahu said that after the attacker was subdued on the flight, he called out to the crew "Kill me, kill me!"

The Israeli prime minister added: "So, it's clear that he was suicidal... It looks very likely that he was going to down the plane."

Debris found from plane that went missing off US coast

US authorities have found debris from a medical transport aircraft that went missing with six people on board.

The Federal Aviation Administration told the BBC it had lost contact with the Gulfstream G-100 plane just after 01:00 local time (05:00 GMT) on Saturday, while it was travelling from Bermuda to Boston, Massachusetts.

The search for survivors continues off the coast of Nantucket, a Massachusetts island, the US Coast Guard said.

Authorities have notified the next of kin of those on the flight, four Canadian nationals and two Bermudian nationals.

"Search crews located a debris field confirmed to be from the aircraft off the coast of Nantucket," the US Coast Guard said in an update on Saturday night. It added that ships, helicopters and planes were involved in searches that would through continue the night.

The plane departed from Bermuda's L.F. Wade International Airport at 23:40 local time, according to flight data from FlightAware, and was due to land at Boston's Logan International at 01:30 EDT (05:30 GMT).

According to the tail number released by the Coast Guard, the plane belonged to Latitude Air Ambulances, a company that provides international medical flights for patients returning home.

Among those on board were two pilots and two medical staff, both Canadian, Clarence Togeretz, director of flight operations at Latitude, told CBC News.

The crew flew to Bermuda to collect a patient and their relative, who are not Canadian, Togeretz said.

FlightAware's tracker shows the aircraft significantly dropped in altitude before its communications went dark, plummeting from around 7,300m (24,000ft) to 3,300m (11,000ft).

Radio transmissions shows trouble with communications between the air traffic controller and the pilot, the Boston Globe reported based on transmissions provided by LiveATC.net.

"You're coming in blind? Is that what you said?" the air traffic controller asked. "Are you declaring an emergency, or no?"

The pilot's response was inaudible.

"You're coming in a little weak so I didn't hear what your response was, if you were declaring an emergency or not," the air traffic controller said, according to the Globe.

The air traffic controller later confirmed the pilot had declared an emergency.

An area fire dispatcher asked emergency crews just after 01:00 EDT to prepare to meet a plane with an "electrical issue".

The dispatcher later said "the aircraft has lost radio and radar".

Riot police clash with students as education protests rage in France

Riot police have clashed with protesters as thousands of students demonstrating over education standards disrupted more than 700 schools in France.

Fires have burned in the streets as high school pupils and others objected to a lack of teachers, overcrowded classrooms and run-down buildings. Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez said 1,747 people were arrested on Friday.

The protests began last week in the capital Paris and have spread across the country, with cities including Montpellier, Nantes and Marseille affected.

French Justice Minister Gérald Darmanin said things had "gone from high-school student demonstrations to a public order disturbance".

School protests send shivers down French government's spine

Darmanin said that 735 of France's 3,700 schools were now affected "one way or another" by the violent protests.

Announcing the arrests late on Friday, Nuñez told France's TF1 television network: "We are sliding into riot and urban violence, and we are using all intermediate means to put an end to it."

Meanwhile, Education Minister Édouard Geffray said the movement had been hijacked by non-students.

He told French broadcaster BFMTV that teachers had said "the people in front of me were not my students".

Earlier on Friday, a 17-year-old was arrested on suspicion of attempted homicide after protests in Belfort, north-eastern France, where a police officer was targeted.

BBC Verify has now authenticated two videos that show the man, who was later identified as an officer by a minister, being beaten up.

In the graphic footage, a group of young men are seen chasing him. The officer falls to the ground, and is subsequently punched and kicked multiple times in the head.

At least 65 staff members have been injured in the unrest, the education ministry said.

In the Paris suburb of Pantin police charged at protesters and made arrests after projectiles were thrown at officers.

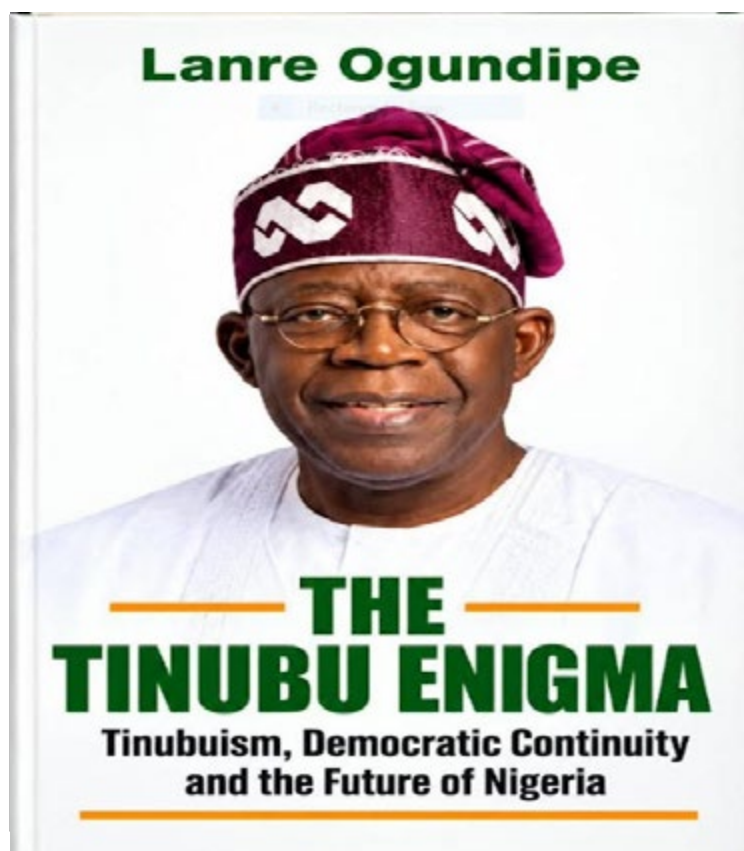
Meanwhile, in Strasbourg tear gas was deployed as police feared conditions would become more hostile, according to the Reuters news agency.

Rubbish bins have also been set on fire in Rennes and Paris.

"As far as we're concerned, we've won - our school is closed this morning," Lola, a 16-year-old protester, told the AFP news agency on Friday.

BookWorld

New book examines Tinubu's political method, introduces 'Tinubuism'



A new book examining President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's political evolution, strategies and approach to democratic governance is scheduled for publication before the end of 2026.

Titled *The Tinubu Enigma: Tinubuism, Democratic Continuity and the Future of Nigeria*, the approximately 300-page book is authored by veteran journalist Lanre Ogundipe, a former president of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the African Union of Journalists.

The publication explores Tinubu's emergence as a political strategist, coalition builder and organiser, while examining the influence of his political methods on Nigeria's democratic development and governance.

According to the author, the book is neither intended as a work of praise nor a partisan condemnation of the President, but rather as an attempt at political interpretation.

The publication examines Tinubu not merely as an individual politician but as a broader

political phenomenon shaped by power, strategy, coalition management, institutional influence and the challenges of governing a complex federation.

Its early chapters focus on Tinubu's political organisation and coalition-building strategies within Nigeria's evolving democratic landscape, while subsequent chapters address questions surrounding governance, political legitimacy, economic reforms, institutional endurance and democratic accountability.

A central theme of the book is the concept of "Tinubuism", which Ogundipe presents as a subject for critical examination rather than an established political doctrine.

The author seeks to determine whether recurring patterns in Tinubu's political career could be understood as a distinctive approach to political organisation,

coalition management and the exercise of democratic power in contemporary Nigeria.

The book also situates Tinubu's political experience within the context of Nigeria's Fourth Republic and broader African debates on statecraft, democratic consolidation and political leadership.

It brings together political commentaries, analytical essays and historical reflections, including previously published materials that have been substantially developed alongside new contributions.

According to the announcement, the manuscript has undergone extensive editorial development and has been reviewed by scholars and analysts ahead of publication.

The book is expected to contribute to discussions among scholars, journalists, political practitioners, researchers, students and members of the public interested in Nigerian politics and the future of the country's democracy.

FEATURE

Edo's bad roads, the hypocrisy of Okpebholo's attackers

DAN OSA-OGLEGIE, ESQ.

In my earlier essay, I asked how Edo's roads reached their present state. Obaseki's supporters responded with photographs of potholes and demands that Governor Monday Okpebholo repair them. Edo people are entitled to make that demand. What Obaseki's supporters cannot do is erase eight years of deterioration and pretend the roads failed the day Okpebholo took office.

Some of the Governor's loudest critics held office under Godwin Obaseki. Others praised the Obaseki administration without restraint. They watched roads break down and communities plead for help, yet had little to say. Now every flooded street has become a campaign exhibit against his successor. Before lecturing Edo people on accountability, they should explain their silence and apologise for the failures they defended.

Ibiwe Street should embarrass them. In January 2023, Obaseki's government placed it among 42 Benin roads approved for spot improvement and asphalt overlay. The work was supposed to take two months. Ibiwe remains scarred by potholes and deep gullies. Was the promised work done? If so, why has the road failed? If not, why was it announced? Those who celebrated the promise cannot hand its consequences to Okpebholo.

Then there is Ring Road. Obaseki's

government undertook renovation work in and around that axis in 2023. Today, his supporters point to failed portions of the city centre as evidence against Okpebholo. Ring Road is the centrepiece of Benin City, and Benin City is more than Edo's capital: it is the face the state presents to the world. Its condition demands urgent attention. It also demands an account of what was rebuilt, what was patched and why portions have deteriorated. A photograph of a pothole tells us where the damage is. It does not tell us when the failure began.

Elsewhere in Benin, portions of the road by Stella Obasanjo Hospital, connecting Country Home Road and Limit Road, have given way after the work undertaken there under Obaseki. The condition of Commercial Road near the Fourth Mechanised Brigade and golf course raises questions about the excavation and reconstruction attempted towards the end of his tenure. These were visible projects, not forgotten streets. His supporters once asked Edo people to count them among his achievements.

First Ugbor Road deserves particular scrutiny. I have been told that Obaseki's government initially awarded work there for more than 800 million, yet residents saw largely palliative work. Within a year, according to the same account, the road was awarded to another company and subsequently left unfinished. Let the contracts, payments and certified

work be published. If the account is wrong, the documents will establish that. If it is right, those who applauded the awards owe Edo people an explanation.

Edo Central and Edo North inherited an even deeper road deficit. Obaseki's government can list projects in both districts; a list cannot substitute for the roads entire communities needed and never received. Anyone who travelled those routes could see the scale of the neglect. Yet his defenders have reserved their outrage for Okpebholo, who inherited the consequences.

Benin's flooding exposes another failure. Adams Oshiomhole commenced the Benin Storm Water Project and delivered its first phase. He presented it as part of a larger plan and urged Edo people to elect Obaseki to carry the work forward. Obaseki instead attacked the design and accused his predecessor's administration of fraud, like a poor workman blames his tools. If the design was defective, he had eight years to deliver an effective alternative. The floods that continue to damage homes and roads show how much remained unresolved.

In January 2023, Obaseki said Edo had spent over \$150 million on flood control and erosion management. That claim invites questions about results. Which communities gained lasting protection? Which drainage systems were completed? His former

officials should bring records and answers, rather than another photograph captioned as Okpebholo's failure.

I acknowledge Obaseki's renovation of public service buildings. I will always praise the civil service reforms that changed the character of Edo's public institutions. Giving him credit where it is due does not oblige me to conceal his record on roads. Godwin Obaseki failed Edo on roads.

The APC government, under Senator Monday Okpebholo, now bears the responsibility of repair. Government is a continuum. It must fix dan-

gerous roads, complete its projects and build drainage that works. Edo people should hold it to those duties. Obaseki's supporters, however, cannot pose as innocent witnesses to a crisis that deepened while their government held power.

The potholes are real. So is their history. Obaseki's defenders must answer for both.

DAN Osa-Ogbegie, Esq. is a Benin-based legal practitioner and an apostle of Edo renaissance from Ughunmwode Local Government Area.



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SPORTS



NPFL Matchday 7: Insurance FC thrash Barau FC 4-1 to end unbeaten run

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance FC returned to winning ways in impressive fashion on Sunday, October 4, thrashing Barau FC of Kano 4-1 in Matchday 7 of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL).

The emphatic victory at the

Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium, Benin, brought Barau FC's unbeaten run to an end, as the Benin Arsenal produced a dominant performance in front of their home supporters.

Kayode Oke broke the deadlock in the 34th minute, firing Insurance into the lead in a keenly contested encounter

that lived up to its billing.

The energetic forward completed his brace in the 70th minute, extending Insurance's advantage and underlining the home side's hunger for goals from the start.

Insurance head coach Kennedy Boboye made a tactical switch in the 66th minute, introducing Fatai Abdullahi, Wisdom Udom and Suraju Lawal for Efe Ubiomo, Emmanuel Dung and Alex Oweileyefa.

Barau FC responded three minutes later when Sugau Aliyu converted from the penalty spot to reduce the deficit and gave the visitors renewed hope.

However, Insurance remained resolute and quickly reorganised to contain the marauding Kano side.

In the 85th minute, Suraju Lawal restored Insurance's two-goal advantage when he found the back of the net with

Fatai Abdullah's superb assist to make it 3-1 and put the game beyond the visitors' reach.

With four minutes of added time indicated, Jonathan James completed the scoring by tapping in Insurance's fourth goal, adding his name to the score-sheet and sealing a comprehensive 4-1 victory.

The result moves Bendel Insurance up to fifth position on the NPFL table with 12 points.

The Benin Arsenal will be away to Sporting Lagos next weekend.

Speaking after the game, Barau FC head coach Eugene Agagbe congratulated Bendel Insurance and praised the home side's approach.

"Insurance showed strong character, better than last season. We lost to a very good team. I must admit that they played better today," Agagbe said.



Edo State Deputy Governor Dennis Idahosa addressing the players



PATRICE MOTSEPE

CAF confirms Women's Champions League, beach Soccer AFCON dates

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) Executive Committee, chaired by President Patrice Motsepe, has approved several major decisions, including the 2026-2030 competitions calendar and the dates and venues for key continental football events.

Following its meeting, CAF confirmed that Lagos, Nigeria, will host the 2026 CAF Awards on December 7, while the country's capital, Abuja, is expected to welcome African football stakeholders for the CAF Ordinary General Assembly on November 21.

The decisions mark a significant period for Nigerian football, with the country set to host two

major CAF events within a three-week period, bringing together football administrators and some of the continent's biggest stars.

The Executive Committee also approved the CAF Strategy Conference, scheduled to take place in Sal, Cabo Verde, from October 7 to 9. The conference is expected to provide a platform for discussions on the development, governance and future direction of African football.

In another major announcement, CAF confirmed that the 2026 CAF Women's Champions League will run from November 1 to 15, providing Africa's leading women's club sides with an opportunity to compete for continental honours.

Dare, Olopade Grace 5th Great Abeokuta 10KM Race as Musa and Akanbi emerge Champions

The ancient city of Abeokuta came alive in the early hours of Saturday, October 3, 2026, as the highly anticipated fifth edition of the Great Abeokuta 10KM Race made a triumphant return. Organized by Africa's leading sports marketing firm, Nilayo Sports Management Limited (NSML), the event drew over 1,000 runners to the scenic, undulating streets of Ogun State's capital.

The road race, which made its comeback after the organizers deliberately paused the 2025 edition, attracted top dignitaries, including the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Public Communications (and former Sports Minister), Hon. Sunday Dare, alongside the Director General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Hon. Bukola Olopade.

A Landmark Decision for Nigerian Athletes

In a bold move designed to empower homegrown talent, NSML restricted the 2026 edition exclusively to Nigerian athletes. Despite being a local-only race, the organizers maintained the elite prize purse typically reserved for international competitors.

To promote gender equality in sports, the prize money was levelled across both categories:

- 1st Place : \$1,000
- 2nd Place : \$750
- 3rd Place : \$500

Flagged off at exactly 7:00 AM

from Macjob Grammar School, Onikolobo, the runners navigated the culturally significant routes before crossing the finish line at the MKO Abiola Sports Arena in Kuto, where every finisher was awarded a commemorative medal.

Race and Results
Men's Category :
 Musa Francis James. - 30:25.33
 Ilya Raymond - 30:38.06
 Gyang Sunday - 30:47.00
Women's Category:



Hon. Sunday Dare, alongside the DG, NSC, Hon. Bukola Olopade at the 5th Great Abeokuta 10KM Race

Boxing: 'Pick a Date' Tiwa Savage accepts Teni's Boxing challenge as Celebrity fights gain traction

Afrobeats star Tiwa Savage has accepted fellow singer Teni's challenge to a celebrity boxing bout, adding fresh intrigue to Nigeria's fast-growing celebrity fight scene.

Teni issued the challenge in

a viral video on Friday, October 2, proposing a N1.5bn purse for the potential showdown.

While discussing the lavish lifestyles of Nigerian entertainers, Teni jokingly called out Savage and promised to defeat

her before serenading her with Savage's hit song, My Darling.

Savage responded with a brief but striking message: "Pick a date."

The response quickly sent social media into overdrive, although no promoter, venue, contract or official date has been announced.

The exchange comes as celebrity boxing continues to gain momentum in Nigeria following the Chaos in the Ring series promoted by Balmoral Group Promotions.

BBNaija winner Phyna recently stopped actress Nkechi Blessing in Lagos, while entertainers including Portable, Charles Okocha, Speed Darlington and Carter Efe have also featured in the series.



TIWA SAVAGE AND TENI

NPFL set to introduce Friday night kickoffs, weekend fixtures

The Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) is set to introduce a new scheduling pattern, with league matches expected to be played on Friday evenings, early Saturdays and Sundays.

The new arrangement is expected to provide greater flexibility in the scheduling of NPFL fixtures while also creating more opportunities for fans to follow league matches across the weekend.

As part of the new schedule, Shooting Stars will host

Ranchers Bees at 6:00pm on Friday, October 16, in what is expected to be one of the first Friday evening fixtures under the new arrangement.

The introduction of Friday night football could add a new dimension to the NPFL, with clubs potentially benefiting from increased attendance and greater visibility for their matches.

Further details on the implementation of the new kickoff schedule are expected as the league season progresses.

