

World Teachers' Day: Okpebholo applauds Edo teachers, reaffirms welfare commitment

RICHARD EWEKA
BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has commended teachers across the state for their dedication, sacrifices and commitment to educating the next generation, assuring them of his administration's continued commitment to their welfare

and the strengthening of the education sector. The governor gave the assurance in a message marking the 2026 World Teachers' Day, describing teachers as critical drivers of the development and progress of every society. He said meaningful development depended largely on sustained investment in teachers, who are responsible for equip-

ping children and young people with the knowledge, skills and values required to build a better future. Okpebholo particularly appreciated public school teachers across Edo State for their service and patriotism, noting that their responsibilities go beyond classroom instruction to include the moulding of the character, discipline and values

of future leaders. "Today, we celebrate our teachers who have continued to serve our children and our state with dedication, despite the challenges they face. I want to assure every teacher in Edo State that your welfare matters to us and that we will continue to take practical steps to improve your working conditions," he said.

The governor stressed that quality education could only be achieved when teachers are adequately motivated, supported and provided with the necessary tools to perform their duties effectively. "Our administration believes that quality education starts with motivated and adequately supported teachers. We will therefore continue to invest in

our teachers, our schools and the wider education system," he said. Highlighting some of the steps taken by his administration to improve the welfare and working conditions of teachers, Okpebholo said 5,000 contract teachers had been absorbed into the state civil service,

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#200

Military helicopter crashes in Ondo, 32 on board

OUR REPORTER
AKURE

An aircraft identified as a military helicopter crashed yesterday in the Igbokoda axis of Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State. Although details of the incident were not immediately known at the time of filing this

report, it was, however, feared that many people might have died in the crash. The aircraft, identified by tail number NGR 931, was reportedly on a routine mission from Benin to Lagos when the accident occurred in the riverine area. The Ondo State Police Command confirmed the incident, with its spokesperson, DSP

Abayomi Jimoh, saying in Akure that details of the crash were still emerging. Jimoh urged residents of Igbokoda and neighbouring communities to remain calm and refrain from circulating

unverified information, assuring that the public would be updated as soon as credible information became available. Meanwhile, the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo,

said attempts to establish radio contact with the aircraft had proved unsuccessful. Keyamo disclosed that the wreckage had been located, while search-and-rescue operations were ongoing.

Preliminary information indicated that 25 passengers and seven crew members might have been on board the aircraft. However, the identities and fate of those aboard had not been established as of the time of filing this report. The minister said he had spoken with the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Sunday

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Oba Ewuare II lauds police, FRSC for service to society

MONDAY OISE
BENIN CITY

The Oba of Benin, His Royal Majesty, Oba Ewuare II, has commended the Nigeria Police Force for its efforts in combating crime and criminality in Edo State, urging the command to sustain its professionalism and commitment to maintaining peace and security across the state. The Benin Monarch gave the commendation when the Commissioner of Police, Edo State Command, CP Patrick Daaor, paid a courtesy visit to the Palace in Benin City, accompanied by senior officers of the command. Oba Ewuare II, while receiving the police delegation, particularly charged the command to remain professional,

thorough and impartial in the investigation and management of communal crises, stressing the importance of maintaining the confidence of the people while keeping crime rates under control. The revered monarch pledged the support of the traditional institution to the Commissioner of Police and the newly deployed Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), noting that the traditional institution remains committed to partnering with security agencies in promoting peace, safety and social stability in Edo State. He also commended the FRSC for its invaluable contributions to society, particularly its role in road safety, rescue

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2026 WORLD TEACHERS DAY: Nigeria Union of Teachers, Edo State Wing, during the celebration of 2026 World Teachers Day in Benin City on Monday.

Oba of Lagos showers royal prayers on Tinubu

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2027 Elections: INEC to brief stakeholders as 100-day countdown begins

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Right-wing Flávio Bolsonaro wins first round of Brazil election

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National Sports Festival: Mbah inspects facilities, reassures of world-class, memorable games

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NEWS

**PRESIDENTIAL VISIT:**

President Bola Tinubu (3rd left) during a courtesy visit to the Oba of Lagos, Oba Rilwan Akiolu (2nd left) in Lagos at the weekend. President Tinubu was accompanied by Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu (r) and the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila (left) and other dignitaries.

Oba of Lagos showers royal prayers on Tinubu

LAGOS

President Bola Tinubu on Sunday paid a courtesy visit to the Oba of Lagos, Oba Rilwan Akiolu, at the Iga Idunganran Palace on Lagos Island, where he received royal prayers, goodwill and counsel for his administration and the nation.

The President was warmly received by the traditional ruler, members of the royal household, APC supporters and enthusiastic residents who lined the streets around Marina

and Isale Eko as his motorcade approached the palace.

During the visit, Oba Akiolu prayed for divine guidance, wisdom, peace and prosperity for President Tinubu and Nigeria. The monarch also offered counsel on matters of national development, good governance and the wellbeing of Nigerians.

The Oba's prayers and remarks reflected the traditional institution's continued support for efforts aimed at strengthening national unity, promoting stability and improving the living conditions of citizens.

President Tinubu expressed appreciation for the warm reception and the prayers offered by the monarch, while acknowledging the important role traditional rulers play in preserving cultural values, fostering peace and mobilising support for development.

The visit underscored the enduring relationship between the Federal Government and the traditional institution, as well as the important role of traditional rulers in promoting peace, unity and development across the country.

Tinubu was accompanied by Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; his Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabiamila; APC chieftains, political associates and other dignitaries.

The visit was part of the President's ongoing engagements with traditional rulers and other stakeholders following his return to Lagos. It also provided an opportunity for the President to reconnect with key figures and communities in the state, where he has maintained strong political and personal ties.

Ecological fund: States get ₦32 billion amid floods, spend little on mitigation

OSEMUDIAMHEN O. FAITH

ABUJA

The 36 states of the federation received about ₦32 billion from the Ecological Fund in the first half of 2026, even as devastating floods continued to claim lives, destroy property and submerge farmlands across the country.

Data from the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation showed that the funds, distributed through the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC), are intended to address ecological challenges, including flooding, erosion, desertification and pollution.

The states received ₦4.69 billion in February, ₦5.01 billion in March, ₦5.77 billion in April and ₦5.38 billion in June, while combined allocations for January and May exceeded ₦11 billion.

Local Government Councils also received substantial allocations from the Ecological Fund during the period.

Established in 1981 following the recommendation of the Okigbo Commission, the Eco-

logical Fund initially received one per cent of the Federation Account. The allocation was increased to two per cent in 1992, with an additional one per cent derivation component, bringing the total to three per cent.

The fund is shared among the three tiers of government, with the Federal Government receiving 48.5 per cent, states 24 per cent and local governments 20 per cent.

A breakdown of allocations from January to June showed Kano as the highest recipient with ₦1.91 billion, followed by Kaduna with ₦1.58 billion, Jigawa with ₦1.55 billion, Borno with ₦1.50 billion and Katsina with ₦1.48 billion.

Others were Bauchi, ₦1.44 billion; Niger, ₦1.43 billion; Benue, ₦1.35 billion; Kogi, ₦1.33 billion; and Lagos, ₦1.25 billion between January and May.

The 10 highest-earning states collectively received more than ₦15.5 billion, with allocations determined by indices including population, land mass and derivation.

Despite the substantial receipts, a review of available

budget performance reports showed that some states spent little or nothing on flood and erosion control during the period.

In Jigawa, which received ₦1.55 billion in six months, the state government recorded no expenditure on erosion and flood control in the first half of the year, despite budgeting ₦100 million for the purpose.

Kaduna, which received ₦1.58 billion, spent only ₦178 million on flood and erosion control, representing about 11.2 per cent of its ecological allocation.

Bauchi, Niger and Benue had not published their detailed 2026 expenditure reports as of press time.

In Lagos, several major drainage and flood-control projects recorded zero expenditure in the first quarter, according to the state's budget performance report, even as parts of Lekki, Ikeja, Oshodi and Ikorodu were submerged following heavy rainfall.

In Ogun State, which received ₦94.6 million, the Commissioner for Environment, Mr. Ola Oresanya, said

he was not conversant with details of the Ecological Fund disbursement.

The development comes against the backdrop of renewed flood warnings by the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

The National Flood Early Warning Systems Centre of the Federal Ministry of Environment has predicted possible flooding in 24 states and the Federal Capital Territory between September 27 and October 10, with about 14,000 communities potentially affected.

The states placed on critical-risk alert are Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Adamawa, Bauchi, Taraba, Rivers, Delta, Cross River, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo.

The FCT is on high-risk alert, covering areas including Abuja Municipal, Abaji, Asokoro, Bwari, Garki, Gwarinpa, Gwagwalada, Kuje, Kubwa, Maitama, Nyanya and Wuse.

Military helicopter crashes...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Kelvin Aneke, and assured that the Ministry of Aviation would provide full cooperation and assistance to the ongoing search-and-rescue operation.

He, however, clarified that the control and regulation of military aircraft fall outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Aviation and the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA).

Confirming the incident, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) said the aircraft, an ATR-42, belonged to the force and was on a routine mission from Benin to Lagos when the accident occurred.

The NAF Director of Public Relations and Information, Air

Commodore Ehimen Ejodame, said in a statement yesterday that the force had commenced immediate search-and-rescue operations in collaboration with relevant authorities and emergency response agencies.

Ejodame said the NAF was committed to ensuring the success of the rescue efforts, adding that further details would be communicated as they became available.

The development came amid reports that the aircraft was carrying personnel and passengers when it crashed in the riverine area of Igbokoda.

Rescue efforts were ongoing yesterday to recover the aircraft and ascertain the fate of those on board.

Oba Ewuare II lauds police...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

operations and emergency response.

Earlier, CP Daaor expressed profound appreciation to the Benin Monarch for granting him and his senior officers the privilege of an audience at the Palace.

The Commissioner, visibly moved by the historic encounter, spoke emotionally about his longstanding fascination with the history and civilisation of the Benin Kingdom, which he said he had encountered in books from his early school days through his university education.

Recounting his academic background in History and International Relations, CP Daaor said his knowledge of the ancient Benin Empire had deepened his appreciation of the enduring institution of the Benin Monarchy and its place in the history of Nigeria and Africa.

"Permit me, Your Majesty, if I am emotional here today. Before you, my mind flashes back to what I have read in books. Forgive me, Your Majesty. I am overwhelmed."

"I never thought that in my career or lifetime, I would stand before this throne," the Commissioner said, as he sought the royal father's prayers and support for the task of strengthening the security architecture of Edo State.

CP Daaor, who enlisted into the Nigeria Police Force as a

Cadet ASP in 1994, assumed duty as the 51st Commissioner of Police in Edo State in August 2026.

The Benue State-born police officer said his appearance before the ancient throne of Benin was not merely an official engagement but a deeply personal and historic moment, given the place of the Benin Kingdom in his understanding of Nigerian history.

Also at the Palace was the newly deployed Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps, Corps Commander Prere Ezekiel Bedford, who sought the support and royal blessings of the Benin Monarch in addressing some of the operational challenges confronting personnel of the corps, particularly during rescue operations and emergencies.

Speaking separately with journalists after the Palace engagements, CP Daaor reiterated that he was deeply overwhelmed by the experience of standing before the Benin Monarch, describing the visit as an encounter he would cherish.

Similarly, Corps Commander Bedford paid tribute to Oba Ewuare II, describing his audience with the revered monarch as a great honour and pleasure.

The separate visits underscored the enduring relevance of the traditional institution as a vital partner in the collective pursuit of peace, security, order and the wellbeing of the people of Edo State.

Okpebholo applauds Edo...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

thereby providing them with greater job security.

He added that the government had also recruited 6,000 teachers to address staffing shortages in public schools across the state.

"We cannot build schools and leave them without teachers. Our priority is to ensure that our children have access to qualified teachers, whether they are in Be-

nin City or in our rural communities," the governor said.

Okpebholo congratulated teachers across Edo State on the occasion of World Teachers' Day, expressing appreciation for their continued service, sacrifice and commitment to the education and future of the state's children.

"To every teacher in Edo State, I say thank you for your service. Happy World Teachers' Day," he said.

Oborevori orders permanent solution to East-West road washout at Agbarho

AJUWA VICTOR

BENIN CITY

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevori, has directed the immediate provision of a permanent engineering solution to the washed-out section of the East-West Road at Agbarho in Ughelli North Local Government Area of the state.

Oborevori gave the directive on Thursday when he inspected the damaged section of the major highway, which links Delta State with Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River states.

The section of the road was washed away following about six consecutive days of torrential rainfall, disrupting traffic and causing hardship to motorists and residents in the area.

The governor, who was accompanied by the Regional Manager of Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, Fredrick Wieser; Chairman of Ughelli North Local Government Council, Olorogun Jaro Egbo; Executive Director, NEXIM Bank, Hon. Stella Okotete, among others, commended Julius Berger for its prompt response to the emergency.

Oborevori said he immediately contacted Julius Berger after assessing the extent of the damage, noting that the

construction company possessed the technical expertise required to handle the emergency intervention.

"When I saw what happened as a result of the rainfall, which continued for about six days, and the place collapsed, I immediately called Julius Berger, knowing that they are very competent in this kind of intervention, to move in," he said.

The governor explained that the immediate priority was to restore traffic flow while technical and hydraulic studies were being conducted to determine the most appropriate permanent solution.

He assured that the state government was prepared to finance the permanent remedial works.

According to him, a large volume of water from different parts of Agbarho flowed through the affected section, generating considerable hydraulic pressure that contributed to the collapse of the road.

He said Julius Berger had commenced technical and hydraulic studies to determine whether the permanent solution would involve the construction of a mini-bridge or a multi-cell culvert.

The governor stressed that the intervention must go beyond temporary repairs, insist-

ing that whatever permanent structure was adopted must be strong enough to effectively accommodate the volume of water passing through the area.

Oborevori disclosed that Julius Berger had assured the state government that the affected section would be temporarily restored to enable motorists regain access, with the two lanes expected to be

opened to traffic shortly.

He sympathised with motorists and residents affected by the incident, saying government had a responsibility to provide solutions and demonstrate empathy whenever the people faced difficult situations.

The governor also appealed to Nigerians not to politicise unfortunate incidents, stressing that the priority should be

finding solutions to challenges confronting the people.

"When people are in difficult times and facing challenges, we are supposed to support them and show empathy, rather than exploit the situation," he said.

Oborevori described the East-West Road as a critical economic artery linking several states in the South-South, stressing that keeping the highway

accessible was essential to the movement of people and goods.

"This is the only road that leads to Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River. It is a major road; that is why it is called East-West Road," he said.

He reaffirmed his administration's commitment to infrastructure development and improving the welfare of residents across the state.

"Our own is to serve and to help the people. We were elected to serve our people, and we will continue to do that," the governor said.



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.

Tansian University VC dies 48 hours after assuming office

KELECHI C. UGWUADU

AWKA

Tansian University, Umuaya, Anambra State, has been thrown into mourning following the sudden death of its newly inaugurated substantive Vice-Chancellor, Professor Carter Dike Umeoduagu, barely 48 hours after assuming office.

Umeoduagu was formally sworn in as the substantive Vice-Chancellor on Thursday, October 1, 2026, but reportedly took ill on Saturday, October 3, and died shortly afterwards.

His sudden death has left the university community in

shock, coming just two days after he assumed the leadership of the institution and at a time when the university had been grappling with leadership challenges.

A Professor of Microbiology, Umeoduagu had previously served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the university. He also ventured into politics, representing Aguata I Constituency in the 7th Anambra State House of Assembly.

His emergence as acting Vice-Chancellor had earlier generated controversy, with a former Vice-Chancellor reportedly describing the development as a "palace coup", prompting the university to issue a statement backing his appointment.

The circumstances surrounding his sudden death have heightened the sense of loss within the institution, as the professor's tenure as substantive Vice-Chancellor ended almost as quickly as it began.

His death has further plunged Tansian University into a fresh period of uncertainty, with members of the university community mourning a leader who had only just taken the oath of office.



Prof. Cater Nnamdi Dike Umeoduagu

Army begins sensitisation for 92nd regular recruits intake in Edo

BENIN CITY

The Nigerian Army has commenced a sensitisation exercise for prospective applicants for its 92nd Regular Recruits Intake (92RRI) in Edo State.

The exercise, which began on Monday, October 5, 2026, is being held at the Festival Hall,

Government House, Benin City, and will run until October 12.

Prospective applicants, aged between 18 and 26 years, are expected to be seated at the venue by 8 a.m. daily throughout the exercise.

The state has so far recorded only 291 applicants against an expected quota of between 300 and 400 recruits for the current intake.

Concerned about the low turnout, Edo State Governor,

Senator Monday Okpebholo, has urged eligible youths across the state to take advantage of the recruitment opportunity by coming forward in large numbers.

The governor's appeal is aimed at ensuring that Edo meets its recruitment quota and that qualified youths are given the opportunity to join the Nigerian Army and serve the nation.

The sensitisation exercise is

designed to provide prospective applicants with first-hand information on the recruitment process, eligibility criteria, documentation and other requirements for the 92nd Regular Recruits Intake.

Eligible youths across Edo State have therefore been encouraged to attend the exercise and obtain accurate information on the procedures and requirements for the recruitment.

2027 Elections: INEC to brief stakeholders as 100-day countdown begins

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) will today, Tuesday, October 6, 2026, brief Nigerians and key stakeholders on its preparations for the 2027 General Election as the 100-day countdown to the polls begins.

The commission is scheduled to hold a World Press Conference and a National Stakeholders' Meeting at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre (BAT-ICC), Abuja.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, SAN, is expected to lead the engagement, which will focus on critical aspects of the electoral process, including the voters' register, candidate nominations, logistics and measures aimed at ensuring a credible and transparent election.

The commission said the engagement was designed to strengthen transparency and sustain regular communication with stakeholders as preparations for the 2027 elections enter a critical phase.

Expected at the meeting are political party leaders,

security agencies under the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), members of the diplomatic corps, development partners, civil society organisations, election observer groups, disability rights advocates, religious and traditional leaders, youth organisations and media executives.

The stakeholders' meeting will also provide participants with an opportunity to raise concerns and engage the commission on issues surrounding the forthcoming elections.

The event is scheduled to commence at 10:00 a.m., with guests expected to be seated by that time.

INEC said the proceedings would be broadcast live on major national television networks and streamed through its official social media platforms.

Attendance is strictly by invitation, while accredited media representatives and invited guests are required to present their invitation cards or accreditation badges at designated security checkpoints.

The October 6 engagement comes as INEC moves into a crucial stage of its preparations for the 2027 elections, with stakeholders expected to scrutinise the commission's readiness, plans and measures for delivering a transparent and credible electoral process.

NEWS

NIPR mobilises Edo residents ahead of World Public Relations Forum

BENIN CITY

LUCKY PIETY AND
EKHABAFE BELOVED

The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Edo State Chapter, has commenced a public awareness road walk in Benin City as part of efforts to mobilise residents and stakeholders ahead of the 13th World Public Relations Forum (WPRF), scheduled to hold in Abuja from November 15 to 21, 2026.

Speaking during the exercise, Chairman of the Edo State Chapter of NIPR, Dr. James-Wisdom Abhulimen, MNIPR, said the campaign was designed to take the message of responsible communication to the streets while creating awareness about Nigeria's hosting of the international gathering.

Abhulimen described public relations as a strategic profession concerned with managing communication, building and sustaining relationships, protecting reputation, earning public trust and preventing conflicts and misunderstandings between organisations and their stakeholders.

He said the road walk was organised against the backdrop of the 2026 WPRF theme, "Responsible Communication: The Voice of the World," stressing that responsible communication remained critical to effective leadership, peaceful coexistence, good governance and sustainable development.

According to him, the forum will provide an international platform for public relations practitioners, communication experts, government representatives and other stakeholders to examine the role of responsible communication in addressing contemporary global challenges.

He added that the WPRF would hold alongside the 37th African Public Relations Association (APRA) Conference, providing an additional platform for professional collaboration and the exchange of ideas and experiences in strategic communication.

Abhulimen disclosed that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, would serve as the Chief Host, while President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia is scheduled to deliver the Presidential

Keynote Address.

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

The NIPR chairman stressed

that the Edo road walk was not merely ceremonial, but part of a broader effort to deepen public understanding of the importance of public relations and promote stronger partnerships among government institutions, the media, the private sector and the general public.

He urged residents and stakeholders to support the initiative and embrace ethical and respon-

sible communication, noting that effective communication was indispensable to building trust, managing relationships and advancing national development.

Abhulimen expressed confidence that Edo State would play an active role in the global gathering, noting that the awareness campaign would begin in Benin City and continue in Abuja during the forum.

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 conversations on public relations, strategic communication, ethical leadership, trust, professional collaboration and sustainable development.

Benin residents raise Aaarm over hotels used by school-age children

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

Residents of Benin City, Edo State, have expressed grave concern over the alleged use of hotels and short-stay facilities by some school-age boys and girls as meeting points for sexual activities, substance abuse and other behaviour capable of destroying their future.

The residents described the development as a disturbing reflection of the weakening of parental supervision, moral discipline and community vigilance, warning that children who should be in school, at home or under responsible adult guidance are increasingly being exposed to environments meant primarily for adults.

They stressed that the issue should not be treated as merely a matter of teenage indiscipline, but as a serious child-protection and moral challenge requiring urgent intervention from parents, schools, hotel operators, community leaders, security agencies and the Edo State Government.

According to them, allowing minors unrestricted access to hotels and short-stay facilities could expose them to sexual exploitation, drug abuse, trafficking, violence and other criminal influences capable of permanently damaging their lives.

A child-protection advocate in Benin City, Mrs. Eunice Osagie, said the reported presence of unsupervised children in hotels should compel operators to examine their responsibilities beyond making profits.

She questioned how some hotel operators verify the ages

and identities of guests, whether staff are adequately trained to recognise possible cases of child exploitation and whether there are clear procedures for reporting suspicious activities involving minors.

Osagie said hotel owners and managers must understand that commercial interests cannot override their responsibility to protect vulnerable children from abuse and exploitation.

Residents also placed a heavy responsibility on parents, urging them to return to closer supervision of their children and to take a greater interest in their movements, friendships, online interactions and unexplained spending.

They advised parents not to wait until their children become involved in serious misconduct before intervening, stressing the need for regular conversations about sexuality, peer pressure, drugs, social media and the consequences of irresponsible behaviour.

The residents further urged parents to combine discipline with affection and guidance, saying that children who are properly supervised, listened to and morally grounded are less likely to seek dangerous environments outside the home.

They also called on schools, religious organisations and community leaders to intensify moral instruction and youth counselling, insisting that the upbringing of children should not be left entirely to parents or teachers.

The residents warned that society must not normalise the sight of school-age children entering hotels and short-stay apartments without responsible adult supervision.



WPRF 2026 ROAD WALK:

Members 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.

FCT police order arrest, prosecution of vehicles without plates, tinted permits

ABUJA

The Commissioner of Police in charge of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), CP Ahmed Sanusi, has ordered the immediate arrest and prosecution of motorists operating vehicles without valid number plates or tinted-glass permits.

The directive was contained in a statement issued on Sunday in Abuja by the FCT Police Public Relations Officer, SP Josephine Adeh.

Sanusi warned motorists and vehicle owners against driving vehicles without valid licence plates, tinted permits,

or with concealed, defaced or deliberately faded number plates.

He said particular attention would be paid to the use of Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs), especially by persons other than top government officials.

The CP also warned against the use of fake diplomatic number plates or diplomatic plates by unauthorised persons within the FCT.

According to him, the directive became necessary following the proliferation of vehicles bearing such irregularities, which he said were sometimes used by criminal elements to evade detection, identification

and arrest during or after the commission of offences.

"The FCT is a peculiar environment where the use of such vehicles poses significant security concerns, as it may hinder effective identification and tracking by law enforcement agencies.

"Motorists found operating such vehicles in violation of the law will be arrested and prosecuted immediately in accordance with the law," he said.

Sanusi disclosed that police officers across the FCT had been directed to intensify enforcement and ensure strict compliance with extant laws governing vehicle identifica-

tion and the use of tinted glasses.

He, however, directed the officers to conduct the enforcement professionally and warned them against using the exercise as an avenue for extortion.

The CP urged residents to support police operations, stressing that security remained a collective responsibility.

He advised members of the public to report suspicious vehicles or activities to the nearest police station or through the command's emergency lines: 08032003913 and 08028940883.

Nigerian universities gain ground in global research rankings — Okebukola

ABUJA

Nigerian universities have recorded significant gains in global research rankings, with the country placing third in Africa and 48th globally in the latest AD Scientific Index, Prof. Peter Okebukola, Chairman of the Nigerian Tertiary Education Ranking Advisory Committee (NiTERAC), has said.

In a report issued in Abuja, Okebukola said the October 1 rankings indexed 53,580 Ni-

gerian scientists across 384 institutions, noting that Nigeria had the largest number of indexed researchers among Africa's three leading research countries.

The University of Ibadan retained its position as Nigeria's leading university, ranking 889th globally and among the top 4.5 per cent of nearly 19,800 universities worldwide. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka, ranked second nationally, followed by Covenant University.

He said federal universities occupied at least eight of Nigeria's top 10 positions, reflecting their dominant role in the country's research output.

Okebukola also noted that the number of Nigerian universities ranked increased from 257 in 2024 to more than 300 in 2026, while Covenant University recorded the biggest improvement, moving from 1,857th to 1,400th globally.

Among individual researchers, Mayowa Owolabi of the University of Ibadan emerged as Nigeria's most cited scholar with 257,748 citations, fol-

lowed by Shafiu Mohammed of Ahmadu Bello University with 242,300.

He further cited the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2027, which increased Nigeria's representation from 24 to 29 universities, with 19 being federal institutions.

Okebukola said the improved rankings reflected growing research visibility but stressed the need for stronger research impact, international collaboration and sustained investment in leading research groups.

THE NIGERIAN OBSERVER

That The People May Know

OBA EWUARE II AT 10

A DECADE OF ROYAL EXCELLENCE

Celebrating the

**10th Coronation Anniversary
& Birthday Anniversary**

of

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

OBA EWUARE II, CFR
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October 18, 2026



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LONG MAY HE REIGN

NEWS

Seven injured as gunmen attack market traders in Plateau

JOS
The Plateau State Police Command on Monday confirmed that sev-

en people were injured in a shooting incident along the Bukuru Expressway in the Jos South Local Government Area of the state.

The traders were said to have been returning from the market when gunmen opened fire on them at Bukuru community in the Jos South Local

Government Area on Sunday. In a statement on Monday, the command condemned the attack, which it said targeted traders returning from Kara

Market in Bukuru.

The spokesman for the command, SP Alfred Alabo, disclosed this in a statement issued in Jos.

The statement, signed by Alabo, partly read, "The Plateau State Police Command has received with deep concern the report of a shooting incident that occurred on 4th October, 2026 at about 04:30 pm along Bukuru Expressway, Jos South LGA.

See more Punch stories on Google.

"Preliminary investigation indicates that the vehicle targeted was conveying traders returning from Kara Market, Bukuru, Jos. Seven injured victims have so far been traced to the Military Clinic, Rukuba Barracks, Jos, where they are receiving medical attention."

According to the statement, the Commissioner of Police, Plateau State Command, CP Ayodeji Faniyan, directed the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of the Department of Investigations to take full charge of the investigation

and ensure that the perpetrators were fished out and made to face the full wrath of the law.

"The Command strongly condemns this dastardly act and wishes the injured victims a quick recovery.

"Meanwhile, Tactical Teams and Anti-robbery Teams have been mobilised to beef up security around the general area while intelligence has been stepped up to identify and arrest the perpetrators," the statement added.

The command advised residents of the state to go about their lawful business and report any suspicious activity to the police through the Control Room emergency numbers: 07059473022 and 08038907662.

It also released numbers for reporting unethical conduct by officers: ACP X-SQUAD - 08034448617, PPRO - 08060545670, CRU - 08037681026 and PCB - 09016146804, adding that further developments would be communicated accordingly.

**CONVENTION:**

Global President, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Alumni Association, Prof. Ikechukwu Innocent (R), presenting a souvenir to the Guest Speaker/Managing Director, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Malam Ali M Ali, during the 2026 International convention of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Alumni Association in Abuja.

PDP dep gov candidate, Adebutu's wife gifts Ogun ex-traffic officer ₦1million

ABEOKUTA

The Deputy Governorship Candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party in Ogun State for the 2027 election, Hajia 'Yemi Sowunmi-Kolapo, and the wife of the party's governorship candidate, Chief Adenike Adebutu, have announced a cash gift of ₦1m to recently retired Deputy Superintendent of Traffic, DST Anifat Bello, for her dedication to duty and exemplary conduct while serving as a police traffic officer across the state.

The PDP deputy governorship candidate and Adebutu announced the cash gift on Sunday at a reception and

dinner organised by Sowunmi-Kolapo for the retired traffic officer at Obantoko, Abeokuta.

Sowunmi-Kolapo commended the retired traffic warden, popularly known as Auntie Anifat, for her professionalism, discipline, resilience and dedication to traffic management during her years of service with the Ogun State Police Command, describing what she called "her infectious commitment to duty" as rare and worthy of emulation.

The PDP deputy governorship candidate said the honour was the beginning of greater things to come in the retired officer's life, urging other security agents and

workers to emulate Bello's outstanding service to the Nigeria Police Force.

"You are a role model for younger Nigerians. I want to commend you for your professionalism. Gold or silver, I do not have. But please accept this as a token of appreciation for your infectious commitment to duty. It is the beginning of greater things to come for you," she told the retired traffic officer while presenting a cheque of ₦500,000 to her.

She assured workers in Ogun State of rewarding welfare packages if the government of Hon. Oladipupo Adebutu, the PDP governorship candidate, comes on board next year, declaring that

"hard work will pay."

"I want to assure our people in Ogun State that hard work will pay and our civil servants will always smile at home. When we come on board, the suffering they have put us through in Ogun for the past eight years will be a thing of the past," the deputy governorship candidate promised.

Other dignitaries at the reception ceremony, including the wife of the party's governorship candidate, Yeye Adenike Adebutu; Ogun PDP Chairman, Dr Abayomi Tella; party leaders at various levels; and religious leaders in Egbal-and, among others, paid glowing tributes to Bello in appreciation of her diligent service.

Kebbi NUT dismisses viral video on poor education funding as doctored

BIRNIN KEBBI

The Kebbi State chapter of the Nigeria Union of Teachers has dismissed a video circulating on social media that alleges poor education funding and inadequate teacher remuneration in the state.

The union described the video as old, edited and doctored to create a false impression about the state government's performance in the education sector.

The state NUT Chairman, Zaki Sarki, in a statement on Monday, said the video and

the claims contained in it were misleading and amounted to an attempt to discredit the administration of Governor Nasir Idris.

According to him, the video was being circulated by individuals allegedly sponsored by opposition politicians seeking to incite teachers and other workers against the government.

Zaki said the allegations were particularly misleading because they failed to acknowledge what he described as significant interventions by the Idris administration since assuming office.

He said, "We at Kebbi NUT are solidly behind Governor Idris, and we will continue to support him in providing dividends of democracy to the people of Kebbi State.

"We therefore condemn and reject the doctored video and its entire contents. Those behind it should verify their facts before making fallacious claims against the government."

The NUT chairman said the state government had improved teachers' welfare by reviewing salaries from the previous level of below the current minimum wage to ₦75,000, describing the development as a major intervention in workers' welfare.

He also cited the construction of mega schools across the four emirates, the construction of more than 2,500 classrooms, recruitment of over 2,000 teachers, and provision of furniture and other learning materials as evidence of government investment in education.

Zaki said, "To drag the image of a government that has built mega schools in the four emirates, constructed over 2,500 classrooms, recruited over 2,000 teachers and provided furniture and learning aids into the mud is, to say the least, a desperate attempt to smear the hard-earned reputation of the administration."

NRS warns Nigerians over fake FIRS job vacancy advert

ABUJA

The Nigeria Revenue Service has disowned a recruitment notice circulating online in the name of the defunct Federal Inland Revenue Service,

In a public notice titled "Fraudulent Recruitment Notice" posted on its official X.com page on Monday, the NRS said its attention had been drawn to a notice headlined "Federal Inland Revenue Service - FIRS Job Vacancy - Replacement," which has been circulating on social media and other platforms.

According to the Service, the notice purportedly advertises employment opportunities within the agency and directs applicants to submit information to the email address recruit@replacement-nhrmt.org.

"The NRS wishes to state categorically that the notice is fraudulent and did not emanate from the Nigeria Revenue Service," the agency said.

It reminded the public that the FIRS had been succeeded by the NRS.

"Accordingly, any purported recruitment notice issued in the name of FIRS should be treated with caution and independently verified," the Service stated.

The NRS added that it had not authorised any recruitment exercise.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the NRS has not authorised or commenced the recruitment exercise referenced in the notice and has not appointed or authorised any individual, agent, consultant or third party to conduct any recruitment exercise on its behalf," the notice read.

The agency advised members of the public to disregard the notice and be careful when responding to recruitment-related messages and links.

"Any legitimate recruitment exercise undertaken by the Nigeria Revenue Service will be formally communicated through the Service's official website and authorised communication channels."

It urged Nigerians to verify any recruitment-related information through these channels before taking any action.



FEDERAL INLAND REVENUE SERVICE - FIRS



AWKA

The Anambra State Government has told the electorate to resist voting for Nigeria Democratic Congress presidential candidate Peter Obi in the 2027 general election.

The state government made the call on its official X account, managed by the office of the New Media to Governor Charles Soludo, on Monday.

The government asserted that Obi destroyed the All Progressives Grand Alliance in the state while President Bola Tinubu defended it.

In a graphic branding of Obi as a betrayal, it wrote, "A betrayal alert for Ndi APGA. Since

Gov Soludo urges Anambra electorate to reject Peter Obi, says he destroyed APGA

2014, Obi has had one mission: to destroy the party that made him.

"In 2015, while President Tinubu stood with APGA, Obi backed the opposition to bury us. Do not be deceived by a man who abandoned his own house. Anambra is APGA. Ndi APGA, defend your home, resist the NDC."

Recall, in 2025, Soludo said that he was backing President Bola Tinubu ahead of the 2027 elections

He said his support is grounded in a 22-year friendship and the President's bold economic reforms.

Speaking with journalists after meeting Tinubu at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, Soludo said his support remained firm despite not being a member of the All Progressives Congress.

"President Tinubu is my friend; he has been my friend for 22 years now and counting, so you don't deny your friend. I support him, and I'm impressed by the bold steps he has taken, particularly in the economy and

structural reforms. We're taking the right steps, and we need to stay the course," he said.

The governor described Tinubu as "in high spirits, hale and hearty" and urged political parties that identify as progressive to form a broad coalition to strengthen democracy and drive economic and social development.

In the same vein, the Governor's party, APGA, endorsed President Bola Tinubu as its preferred candidate for the 2027 general elections in July.

The party's National Publicity Secretary, Ejimofor Opara,

who disclosed this, said the absence of the party's presidential candidate's name on the Independent National Electoral Commission nomination portal should not be interpreted as a failure to comply with electoral guidelines.

Opara said the party's leadership had already resolved to back Tinubu's re-election bid after what he described as extensive consultations within its ranks.

He added that the party's National Executive Committee reached the decision, concluding that supporting the pres-

ident's second-term ambition was in the overall interest of the country.

Recently, Obi and Soludo disagreed over the financial obligations associated with projects implemented during Obi's tenure as Anambra governor.

Responding to the issues, Obi said he had remained silent in recent days because he was mourning his late elder brother and friend, Chief Okey Ezeibe, adding that he was not interested in returning to the governorship, even if the Constitution were amended.

Atiku condemns abduction of corps members, demands urgent rescue

ABUJA

Former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, on Monday condemned the abduction of prospective National Youth Service Corps members in Imo State, describing the incident as "heartbreaking" and calling on the Federal and Imo State governments, as well as security agencies, to urgently secure the release of those still in captivity.

Atiku, who is the presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress in the forthcoming election, made the call in a post on X while also drawing attention to the prolonged captivity of schoolchildren abducted from Mussa and Lassa communities in Borno State.

The former vice president's intervention came four days after gunmen attacked two commercial buses conveying prospective corps members along the Owerri-Onitsha Road in the Umunoha area of Mbaitoli Local Government Area of Imo State.

The victims were travelling from Ibadan, Oyo State, to

NYSC orientation camps in Abia and Akwa Ibom states when the attackers struck at about 6:30 am on Thursday, October 1.

He wrote, "The abduction of 20 travellers, including prospective corps members, in Imo State is heartbreaking. Some have been rescued, but others remain in captivity."

"I urge the Federal and Imo State governments, and all security agencies, to act with urgency and bring everyone still being held home safely."

Recall that the Imo State Police Command initially announced that 10 passengers had been rescued and the two buses recovered, while other passengers remained missing. Subsequent accounts from families indicated that 20 prospective corps members were all being held by the abductors.

The police and military have since intensified the search for the victims.

The Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu, deployed the Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of Operations, Shehu Nadada, alongside two commissioners of police, to coordinate the rescue operation.

NSCDC warns officers against extortion, rights abuse in Anambra

AWKA

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Anambra State Command, has warned its personnel to desist from actions that violate citizens' rights and breach professional ethics.

The NSCDC State Commandant, Olatunde Maku, gave the warning while addressing the personnel during the muster parade at the state headquarters in Awka, the state capital, on Monday.

Maku said his administration would not condone any form of misconduct, high-handedness or abuse of power.

He said, "All operatives must operate within the Corps' standard operating procedures and in line with extant laws. No officer is permitted to act in a way that erodes public trust

or tarnishes the image of the Corps.

"Any personnel found culpable of indiscipline, misuse of authority or infringement on the fundamental rights of the public would face disciplinary action in accordance with laid down regulations."

The state commandant also charged heads of departments and units, area commanders and divisional officers to ensure effective command and control of their jurisdictions, with proper supervision of men under them for total compliance with operational guidelines.

"The powers conferred on officers must be exercised with utmost professionalism, civility and respect for human rights, as the conduct of every officer is a reflection of the entire Corps."



ANNIVERSARY:

President, League of Women Voters of Nigeria (NILOWV), Irene Awunah-Ikyegh (3rd L); Chairperson, NILOWV FCT, Comrade Sandra Ogbonna (2nd L); Chairperson, Anniversary Planning Committee, Chizoba Ogbeche (2nd R); and other members during the NILOWV FCT Chapter 30th Anniversary Celebration at the weekend in Abuja.

2027: Ogun CityBoy movement targets 2million votes for Tinubu, backs Yayi

ABEOKUTA

The Special Assistant to the Ogun State Governor and stakeholder of the CityBoy Movement in Ado-Odo Constituency II, Solomon Olarewaju, has commended the group for its grassroots mobilisation and efforts to secure victory for President Bola Tinubu and the Ogun State governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress, Senator Solomon Adeola, popularly known as YAYI, in the 2027 elections.

Olawaju, in a statement on Monday, praised the leadership and members of the movement for taking the message of the Tinubu administration to communities across the state through various programmes and mobilisation activities.

He said the growing presence of the movement at the grassroots would strengthen the APC's structure and increase support for the party ahead of the 2027 general elections.

According to him, the activities of the CityBoy Movement have also created opportunities for youths and other stakeholders to participate actively in political

engagement and mobilisation.

"I want to commend the CityBoy Movement in Ogun State for the tremendous efforts they are making through their programmes and grassroots mobilisation. Their commitment to ensuring victory for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the APC is commendable," Olarewaju said.

He reiterated the commitment of members of the move-

ment to the two-million-vote target set for President Tinubu in Ogun State, saying the group would intensify its grassroots mobilisation across the state.

YAYI had earlier set the target during the inauguration of the CityBoy Movement in Ogun State, calling on members to mobilise at least two million votes for Tinubu in the 2027 presidential election.

Olawaju continued, "We are reiterating the commitment

to deliver and mobilise over two million votes for President Tinubu in Ogun State. As members and stakeholders of the CityBoy Movement, we will continue to take the message of the administration and our political agenda to the grassroots."

He also expressed support for YAYI's proposed ITESIWAJU agenda, describing it as a framework focused on continuity, development and inclusive governance in Ogun State.

UNILORIN promotes 13 lecturers to professors

ILORIN

The University of Ilorin has "promoted 13 academic staff members to the rank of Professor" across various disciplines.

The university disclosed this in a statement issued and shared on its website and social media pages on Monday.

The promotions cut across the medical sciences, education and pharmaceutical studies, with the Department of Education Management recording the highest number of newly promoted professors.

Five academics in the department were elevated to the

professorial rank.

They are "A. T. Muritala, A. A. Lawal, A. A. Atolagbe, O. J. Ojo and A. A. Tijani. See more Punch stories on Google."

"Other academics promoted to Professor are Mary O. Ologe of the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics; Hafsat A. Ameen of Epidemiology and Community Health; and Oluwabunmi I. N. Buhari of Behavioural Sciences."

"Others are A. Saidu of Arts Education; Aminat A. Odebo and Falilat A. Okesina of Counsellor Education; A. M. Akanmu of Science Education; and S. T. Abdullahi of Pharmaceutical and Medical Chemistry."

The promotions bring the

number of academics elevated to the rank of Professor across the listed departments to 13. The university said the promotions were part of its "academic advancement process."

In February 2025, the varsity's governing council of the University of Ilorin has approved the promotion of 51 academic staff to the positions of Professors and Readers in various faculties of the institution.

In a statement by the university Registrar, Mr. Adeleke Alfa, the varsity said that 20 Readers were promoted to the professorial level while 31 Senior Lecturers were upgraded to the position of Readers.

NEWS



ANNUAL CONFERENCE: From left: Former Provost, Federal College of Animal Health and Production Technology (FCAHPT), Dr. Olatunde Owosimbo; Provost of FCAHPT, Dr Moshood Popoola; Lead Paper Presenter, Kabir Salman and the Keynote Speaker, Prof. Babasola Olugasa, during the Annual Conference of Researchers on Animal Health and Production Technology in Ibadan on Monday

Miners' deaths: Shettima visits Niger, announces N250 million support for victims' families

MINNA

The Federal Government has warned Nigerians against blaming the Niger State Governor, Mohammed Bago, for the deaths of 37 illegal miners in the custody of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps.

The Vice President, Kashim Shettima, gave the warning on Monday during a visit to the governor over the deaths of the 37 miners, who lost their lives inside a detention facility of the NSCDC in Minna, Niger State.

Shettima, who conveyed the condolences of President Bola Tinubu to the governor and people of the state, demanded answers from the government and people of the state over the deaths.

He also announced N250m in Federal Government support

to the families of the deceased, saying no amount of money could answer the questions of a grieving family.

The Vice President also cautioned against politicising the deaths or using the tragedy to demonise Governor Bago.

He said, "The death of 37 young men in the custody of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps calls for initial questions. A grieving mother cannot be consoled by grief, nor can grief answer a father's questions.

"There can be no room for

hiding for leaders when lives are lost within the perimeter of their sphere. We should avoid weaponising the departed to demonise Governor Bago. He had no hand in what has befallen their lives," he said.

Shettima said the tragedy should transcend political, religious and other divisions, stressing that every citizen was entitled to the protection of the state.

He noted that every victim deserved dignity, survivors deserved care, while families deserved the truth about what happened.

Bago, in his remarks, thanked the Vice President for the visit and for conveying the President's message. He described the visit as a demonstration of empathy and solidarity with the affected families and the people of Niger.

The governor noted that the message from the President had been clearly delivered to the victims' families and the people of the state.

He lamented that Niger State had suffered several tragedies in recent times, including insecurity, mining-related incidents and petrol tanker explosions.

Ebonyi govt committed to payment of benefits to EBSU retirees, chides Odii on alleged false claims

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

ABAKALI

Ebonyi State government has expressed determination to meet its financial obligations to workers a retirees of the state own University, EBSU.

The Commissioner of Information and orientation, Barris-

ter Ikeuwa Omebe, made this assertion while briefing newsmen in his office at the Old Government House in Abakaliki the state Capital.

The government whose position is coming amidst the alleged controversial claim of payment of gratuities to pensioners of the EBSU by a private citizen and 2027 governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP Dr. Ifeanyi-chukwuma Odii, said it was necessary to separate philanthropic gestures from those that are statutory and exclusive preserves of the government.

The Commissioner said that a donation of N7m to some needing pensioners of the university should not translate to mean the settlement of their gratuities, stressing that the PDP governorship candidate should refrain from trying to make unnecessary political capital out of a mere humanitarian gesture.

Ebonyi State government he said has shown positive disposition towards the welfare of workers and retirees benefits with unrivaled and honest disposition leading to the payment of pensions and gratuity arrears to both state and local govern-

ment retirees covering a period between 1996 till date with a structured verification and payment process.

He admitted that the issue of pension benefits owed to EBSU workers demands critical examination by stakeholders concerned including the management of the institution, retirees representatives and relevant government agencies to address.

According to him, "EBSU retirees concerns should be addressed through a structured process involving the appropriate authorities, the university's management, the retirees representatives and relevant government agencies".

While stating that government wasn't interested in joining issues with whoever wished to assist the retirees from personal resources, he insisted that there should be a clear line separating charity and statutory responsibility.

"The government constantly believes that the appropriate response is to establish the facts concerning each of the EBSU retirees claimants instead of politicising the issue", the commissioner explained

He however charged Dr.

Why Redeemer's varsity hike tuition fees — VC

EDE (OSUN)

The Vice-Chancellor of Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State, Prof. Shadrach Akindele, has said the prevailing economic realities and the new salary structure approved by the Federal Government necessitated the upward adjustment of fees by the institution.

Akindele said the rising cost of living had considerably increased the running costs of universities, making it difficult to sustain operations without reviewing fees.

He stated this on Monday during a press briefing heralding activities for the 18th convocation of the institution.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that if private universities failed to key into the new salary structure approved by the Federal Government, they might lose staff members to federal institutions.

He said, "The economic reality of the society in which we are living has made things become more expensive, such that our running costs have increased considerably. Now, with that new salary structure, which they implemented at the federal level for federal universities, if a private university doesn't key into that, what you will observe is mass migration of staff from your university to federal universities, and there is nothing you can do to keep them.

"So, for you to be able to keep your staff, you must match at least what the Federal Government is paying, and because we

are a private university, we don't get grants from government, and we don't want to compromise on the quality of service we provide; we rely on the fees we collect from students to pay our staff."

Speaking on the 18th convocation of the institution, Akindele explained that the university would be graduating a total of 2,471 students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

"A total of two thousand and thirty are graduating with Bachelor's degrees (regular and affiliate institutions). At the post-graduate level, 441 (regular and affiliate institutions) will also be graduating," the VC said.

Highlighting other programmes, Akindele said the convocation lecture would be delivered by the Chief Executive Officer of A's Consulting, Erinle Adeola, while an award and recognition ceremony to appreciate those whose contributions deserved the attention of the wider university community would also be held.

Reviewing the achievements of the university in the outgoing academic year, Akindele said the management had secured full approval for 10 new undergraduate programmes.

"These programmes are Broadcasting, Public Relations, Advertising, Information and Media Studies, Journalism, Film Production, Criminology and Security Studies, Biotechnology, Software Engineering and Information Systems", the Vice-Chancellor said.

INEC targets simultaneous voting across polling units in 2027 polls

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission has said it is targeting the commencement of voting simultaneously across all polling units nationwide during the 2027 general elections.

The INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, disclosed this on Monday in Abuja while delivering a keynote address at a strategic workshop for editors organised by the Nigerian Guild of Editors in collaboration with the commission.

Amupitan said the commission was drawing lessons from recent off-cycle elections and would improve its logistics, personnel and technology ahead of the 2027 polls.

He said INEC was working to ensure that logistics were properly addressed and its technology worked optimally to enable Nigerians to vote without unnecessary delays.

"So some of those lessons from those elections, right from our technology optimisation, must improve. Our logistics

must improve.

"I want to see a general election where voting starts in all the polling units in Nigeria at the same instance. That is what we are targeting, where logistics is well-addressed, and where our technology works optimally," he said.

The chairman said the commission had already commenced early procurement and distribution of non-sensitive election materials to state offices, while new operational pickup vehicles had been procured for state offices and local government areas to improve movement of personnel and materials.

He added that INEC had commenced nationwide zonal readiness assessments, with physical audits and staff engagements already completed in the South-West and North-West zones.

The commission, he said, was using the assessments to identify local vulnerabilities, test contingency systems and address potential bottlenecks ahead of election day.

CHANGE OF NAME

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **PATRICIA NELSON-ERUKAYENURE** now wish to be known and addressed as **PATRICIA ERUKAYENURE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **ADU JUSTINA** now wish to be known and addressed as **JUSTINA OKPEIGBE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **AMASOWOMWAN OSARUGUE** and not **BRIGHT REJOICE**. Hence now wish to be known and addressed as **AMASOWOMWAN OSARUGUE REJOICE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAME/CORRECTION OF DOB

The general public is hereby notified that **TERKENDE TARSEER RONALD** and **TARSEER ROLAND RONALD** is one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known and addressed as **TERKENDE TARSEER RONALD**. And my correct date of birth is 4th day of May, 1989, and not 11th day of May 1990. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **OSIMAHON FORTUNATE** and not **OSIMEAHON FORTUNATE**. Hence now wish to be known and addressed as **OSIMAHON FORTUNATE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **EHOLOR MONDAY OSAMEDE** and **EHOLOR MONDAY** are one and same person. Hence now wish to be known and called **EHOLOR MONDAY OSAMEDE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

NEWSEXTRA

New Army formations will strengthen response to insecurity – Tinubu

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has said the Nigerian Army has operationalised new formations in Zamfara, Kebbi, Oyo and Osun states to strengthen security and improve response to threats against vulnerable communities.

The President disclosed this in a statement shared on his social media handles on Sunday, noting that the new formations would bring troops closer to communities and enhance their ability to respond swiftly to security threats.

He said, "This week, the

Nigerian Army @HQNigerianArmy operationalised new formations in Zamfara, Kebbi, Oyo and Osun. Our troops are now closer to vulnerable communities in these areas, strengthening our ability to respond swiftly and decisively when our people are threatened."

Tinubu also announced that the Federal Government was accelerating the construction of new military barracks and depots in Abuja, Ekiti, Ebonyi and Kogi states, while construction in Osun State had been completed.

He said the projects were part of efforts to improve the

welfare and working conditions of military personnel and their families.

"We are also fast-tracking the construction of new barracks and depots in Abuja, Ekiti, Ebonyi and Kogi, with Osun already completed. As we demand more from our men and women in uniform, we must do more to support them and their families," he stated.

The President said the recent salary increase for military

personnel had made a positive difference in the lives of servicemen and women and their families.

"Over the past few days, servicemen and women of the Armed Forces have shared what the recent pay increase means for them and their families. I am glad it is making a difference," he said.

Tinubu emphasised the sacrifices made by military personnel and their families, not-

ing that the government had a responsibility to provide the resources and support needed to protect the country.

"Every deployment is a sacrifice made by a family too. As our Armed Forces stand watch over Nigeria, my duty as Commander-in-Chief is to ensure they have the resources and support to do their job, and that Nigeria stands firmly behind the families waiting for them at home," he added.

The development comes amid continued security challenges across several parts of the country, particularly in the North-West, where armed banditry, kidnappings and attacks on rural communities have remained major concerns.

The establishment of additional military formations is expected to strengthen the Army's operational presence and improve its response to security threats in the affected states.

Kebbi plans military base in bandit-hit communities

BIRNI-KEBBI

Kebbi State Governor, Nasir Idris, has announced plans to establish a military base in communities affected by recent bandit attacks in Bagudo Local Government Area to strengthen security and facilitate the return of displaced residents.

The governor announced the plan at the weekend during a condolence visit to the District Head of Kaoje, Alhaji Mustapha Adamu, following attacks that claimed the lives of the Village Head of Lafagu and other residents.

The governor's Chief Press Secretary, Ahmed Idris, disclosed this in a statement made available to journalists.

Idris said the establishment of the military base was part of measures being taken by his administration to provide a stronger security presence in

the affected communities and prevent further attacks.

The governor said, "We have concluded arrangements to establish a military base in the affected communities to strengthen security and protect our people."

He added, "I am not going to relent in ensuring that my people are protected. My government is working hard with the security agencies to ensure that the internally displaced persons return safely to their villages."

Idris said his administration was working with security agencies to track down those responsible for the attacks and restore normalcy to the affected communities.

He also visited camps housing residents displaced by the attacks, where he assured the victims that the government would continue to support them until they could safely return to their ancestral homes.

**SWEARING-IN:**

Representative of the Minister of State for FCT, Mr Ajayi Babatunde (3rd L); FCT Coordinator, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC); Mr Samson Ateli (M); representative of the FCT Chief Judge, Justice Olumuyiwa Oyeyipo (2nd L); and others during the swearing-in of 2026 NYSC Batch C Stream I orientation course at the Kubwa Orientation Camp in Abuja on Friday.

Zulum denies ordering arrest of 'TinubuMustGo' protesters

MAIDUGURI

Borno State governor, Babagana Zulum, has denied ordering the arrest of "Tinubu Must Go" protesters in the state, emphasising that his threats were particularly for criminals threatening the peace and stability of the state.

The governor's clarification was in response to a statement issued on Sunday by the African Democratic

Congress Presidential Campaign Council, which demanded an explanation from Babagana Zulum over a viral video in which he allegedly ordered the arrest and detention of anyone found expressing the slogan "Tinubu Must Go".

The council said the reported directive was particularly troubling because Zulum had recently denied ordering the arrest of people wearing "Tinubu Must Go" T-shirts in the state.

In a statement signed by its Director of Strategic Communication, Phrank Shaibu, the campaign council said the governor should explain the video's contents and reconcile them with his earlier denial.

In response, the governor's spokesman Dauda Iliya, in a statement on Sunday night, described the ADC allegations as "unprofessional", insisting that the party had misrepresented the governor's remarks.

The statement reads, "We read with dismay the recent

statement by the Presidential Campaign Council of the Action Democratic Congress (ADC), which made impulsive remarks about the administration of Borno State Governor, Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum."

Iliya expressed disappointment in the ADC's reliance on what he described as an "unprofessionally written news report" which accused the governor of threatening opposition politicians with arrest.

"The party's press release is poorly thought out and a product of political desperation, which any keen observer would see it as a case of self-indictment."

"It was regrettable that the party relied on an unprofes-

sionally written news report to accuse the governor of threatening opposition politicians with arrest," he noted.

The Spokesman clarified that Zulum's remarks were made during a media chat with journalists in Maiduguri where he addressed several issues, including a recent spike in social vices and crimes threatening the state's peace and stability.

"As any responsible Chief Executive would, he emphasised that his administration would not stand by while social urchins and criminals plunge the state into violence. He referred to young men moving around wearing shirts emblazoned with knives and clubs, portraying violence."

Osun disputes accounts restriction over \$13.9m award

OSOGBO

The Osun State Government says it has filed an application to the Federal High Court, Lagos, asking the court to set aside the ex parte order that placed restrictions on bank accounts operated by the government over a \$13.9m arbitration award in favour of Gamji Nigeria Company Limited.

The government also reassured the public that necessary legal action had commenced to vacate the order and ensure the due rights of the state were observed by judicial review of the arbitration award.

Justice D.E. Osiagor issued the interim order following an application filed by Gamji through its counsel, Yunus AbdulSalam (SAN), in a suit marked FHC/L/CS/1233/2026.

But the state government, in a statement signed by the Commis-

sioner for Information and Public Enlightenment, Kolapo Alimi, in reaction to the development, declared that the order "was a product of deceit and substantial non-disclosure of material facts to the court," adding that the arbitration award it sought to enforce was also fraught with several irregularities.

It said the development prompted the government's legal team to approach the High Court of Lagos State to set aside the award.

The statement read, "In fact, it was reported that the purported award which the ex parte order of 9th September, 2026, referenced does not exist as there was no arbitral award made against the state government in July 2024."

"The only arbitral award against the state government was in July 2026, and the said award is presently being challenged before the Lagos State High Court by the state government's legal team."

INEC to brief Nigerians as 2027 polls enter 100-day countdown

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission will on Tuesday hold a national stakeholders' meeting and World Press Conference to mark 100 days to the 2027 general elections, with the commission expected to provide updates on its preparations for the polls.

The event will focus on key areas including the voters' register, candidate nominations, logistics

and measures being put in place to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process, the commission said in a statement on Sunday.

The meeting, scheduled to hold at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre, Abuja, will be addressed by the INEC Chairman, Prof Joash Amupitan, SAN, alongside other stakeholders involved in the electoral process.

INEC said the engagement

was intended to provide Nigerians and key actors in the electoral process with an update on its level of preparedness as the 2027 elections enter the final 100-day stretch.

"The Commission will provide updates on preparations for the elections, including the voters' register, candidate nominations, logistics and critical measures to ensure the integrity of the electoral process," the statement said.

The commission said the na-

tional stakeholders' meeting was also designed to strengthen engagement with institutions and groups whose activities are central to the conduct and security of the elections.

"The national stakeholders' meeting underlines the Commission's commitment to absolute transparency, proactive public communication, and collaborative engagement with key actors in the electoral ecosystem," it said.



A cross-section of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members administering three hearty cheers to the representative of the Minister of State for FCT, during the swearing-in of 2026 NYSC Batch C Stream I orientation Course in Abuja

How much does it really cost to be a student in Nigeria today?

PRECIOUS AGBEJESI

For many Nigerian students, going to school is no longer simply about paying school fees and buying a few notebooks. Behind every lecture attended, assignment submitted and examination written is a growing list of expenses that parents and students must somehow meet.

From accommodation and food to transportation, data, textbooks, printing and other academic requirements, the financial burden of being a student has become increasingly difficult to ignore.

The question is no longer just whether a student can afford university education.

The bigger question is: how much does it really cost to survive as a student in Nigeria today?

For students living away from home, accommodation is often one of the biggest expenses. While students in university-owned hostels may pay considerably less, those who live off campus face rising rents and additional charges for electricity, water and other services.

A May 2026 report by The Guardian noted that students in some university towns were paying between N150,000 and N250,000 yearly for a single room, while self-contained apartments could cost between N350,000 and N600,000 annually. In some areas, furnished student accom-

modation was reportedly much more expensive.

For a student whose parents are already struggling with household expenses, paying hundreds of thousands of naira for accommodation can be a major challenge.

Then comes food:

A student has to eat every day, regardless of whether there is an examination, school fees deadline or assignment to submit. Yet the cost of food remains a major concern for Nigerian households. In May 2026, Nigeria's food inflation was reported at 16.96 per cent, according to figures attributed to the National Bureau of Statistics.

The effect can be seen around campuses. Students who previously bought complete meals may now choose cheaper options. Some cook in groups, reduce the number of meals they eat outside or depend on food supplied from home.

Transportation is another unavoidable expense, particularly for students living off campus. The daily trip to and from school may appear insignificant when considered separately, but the cost becomes substantial when multiplied by several days every week and several months in a semester.

Academic expenses also quietly consume students' money.

Printing assignments, photocopying materials, buying textbooks, paying for practical work, purchasing

stationery and subscribing to internet data are all part of student life. With many academic activities now requiring internet access, data has become almost as important as notebooks and pens.

For students who depend on their phones or laptops for research and communication, electricity is another concern. Charging devices, powering laptops and accessing the internet can

add to the monthly budget.

The financial pressure does not end with education-related expenses.

Students still need clothes, toiletries, healthcare, personal items and emergency money. There are also unexpected expenses that cannot be planned for, such as repairing a phone, replacing a damaged academic material or travelling home during an emergency.

The result is that some students have had to find ways of making money while studying.

Some sell clothes, food, cosmetics and other products. Others offer services such as hairdressing, graphic design, photography, writing or tutoring. For some students, these businesses provide useful financial support. For others, however, combining work with lectures can become exhausting.

The pressure is particularly difficult for students whose families depend on irregular incomes.

Nigeria's wider cost-of-living crisis has made the situation more complicated. A Reuters report in August 2026 noted that households were still struggling with high food, transport and housing costs despite signs of improvement in some economic indicators.

This means that the student is not experiencing the financial pressure alone. The parents or guardians paying the bills are also facing increased

expenses.

A student who receives a monthly allowance may discover that the same amount that once lasted for several weeks now disappears much faster. What looks like poor financial management may sometimes simply be the reality of rising prices.

Yet, despite these challenges, thousands of Nigerian students continue to attend lectures, sit for examinations and pursue their dreams.

For many, education remains the hope of securing a better future. The struggle, therefore, is not necessarily a lack of willingness to study but the increasing cost of remaining in school.

The real cost of being a student in Nigeria today cannot be measured by school fees alone. It includes the roof over the student's head, the food on the table, the transport to lectures, the data used to conduct research and the countless small expenses that accumulate throughout the academic year.

As the cost of living continues to put pressure on families, supporting students requires more than encouraging them to work harder. Affordable accommodation, improved campus facilities, student welfare programmes and practical financial support can make a significant difference.

For now, many Nigerian students are learning two things at the same time: what their lecturers teach in the classroom and how to survive financially outside it.

”
For some students, these businesses provide useful financial support. For others, however, combining work with lectures can become exhausting.”

Nigeria at 66: The country we have and the country we can build

CHINEDUM ANAYO

Another Independence Day has arrived, and Nigeria turns 66.

For a country as complex, diverse and resilient as Nigeria, 66 years is more than just a number.

It is more of a story bordering on extraordinary possibilities, difficult seasons, missed opportunities, remarkable achievements and, above all, a people who have continued to believe that the Nigerian project is worth preserving and improving.

Independence Day should therefore be more than a ceremony of flags, speeches and familiar patriotic songs.

It should also be a moment of honest reflection:

Where are we today? How far have we come? And what kind of country do we want to leave for those coming after us?

The honest answer is that Nigeria has made progress.

Nonetheless, it is equally honest to say that millions of Nigerians are still waiting to feel the benefits of that progress in their everyday lives.

That contradiction defines much of our national experience.

In 2026, Nigeria is undertaking significant reforms aimed at reshaping the country's economy and institutions.

The new tax framework became operational from January 1, 2026, following the transition from the previous tax regime.

There is also movement towards a more decentralised approach to policing.

The National Assembly has passed the Constitution (Sixth Alteration) Bill, 2026, which provides for the establishment of state police services alongside the Nigeria Police Force.

The Senate passed it on 24 June 2026, and the House of Representatives passed the Executive-sponsored version on 23 July with 311 votes.

It was transmitted to all 36 State Houses of Assembly on 16 September 2026 under Section 9 of the Constitution.

These developments matter because nations do not transform merely by wishing for better outcomes.

They transform when institutions are reformed, systems are strengthened and policies are sustained long enough to produce measurable results.

The impact of every reform must be felt at every level of society.

Policies must ultimately be judged by what they mean for the ordinary Nigerian.

A new tax system is important, but the trader wants to know whether her business can survive and grow.

The young graduate wants more than economic statistics; he wants an opportunity to build a career at home.

The farmer wants security, access to land, affordable inputs and a reliable market.

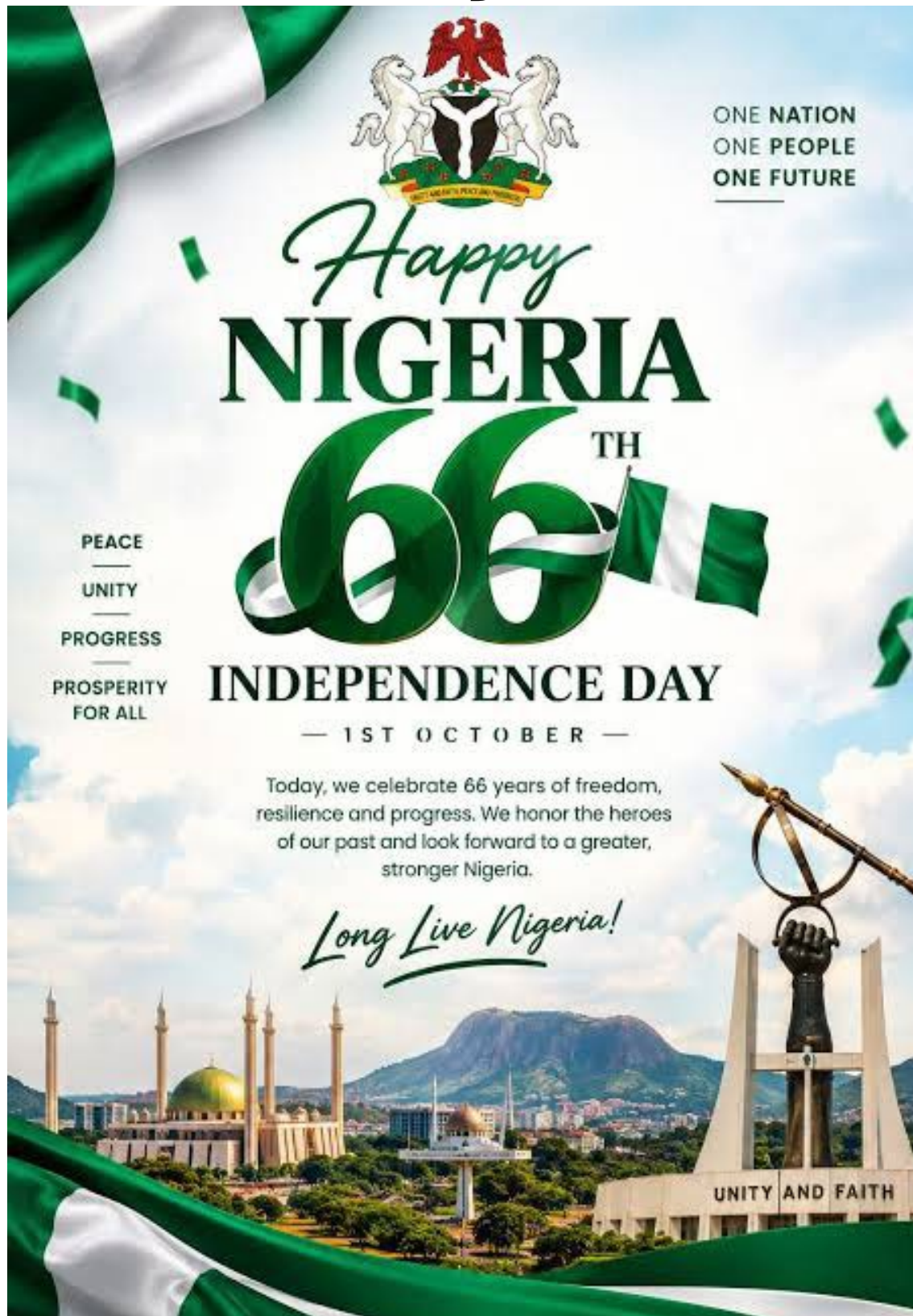
The family wants electricity, affordable food, decent healthcare and safe roads.

The small business owner wants access to credit without being suffocated by costs.

This is where the real test of Nigeria's progress lies.

It is not enough for the economy to improve on paper or projector.

Growth must increasingly become something Nigerians can see, touch and experience.



There are also reasons to be encouraged.

Nigeria's industrial capacity is changing.

The Dangote Petroleum Refinery has become operational at a scale that has altered the country's refining landscape, with the facility reporting a current crude distillation capacity of 700,000 barrels per day.

That development represents something larger than one refinery. It is a reminder that Nigeria possesses the capital, talent, entrepreneurship and market necessary to undertake projects of enormous scale.

For decades, Nigerians have asked why a country blessed with crude oil should depend so heavily on imported refined petroleum products. The emergence of large-scale domestic refining offers an opportunity to begin answering that question differently.

But infrastructure alone will not transform Nigeria.

We must build institutions around our infrastructure. We must create an environment where businesses can produce competitively, where investors can trust the rules, where innovation is rewarded and where government policies survive beyond political cycles.

At 66, Nigeria must also confront an uncomfortable truth: our biggest challenge is not that we lack potential. It is that we have too often struggled to convert potential into consistent outcomes.

We have brilliant young people. We have natural resources.

We have entrepreneurs building companies from difficult circumstances.

We have farmers feeding communities, professionals competing globally, creatives exporting Nigerian culture and technology entrepreneurs solving problems from Lagos, Abuja, Enugu,

Kaduna, Port Harcourt and countless other cities.

The question is how to create a national system that allows these individual successes to become collective progress.

That requires responsibility from everyone.

Government must govern better. Public institutions must become more accountable and efficient.

The private sector must continue to invest and create jobs. Political leaders must understand that development is more important than political rhetoric. And citizens must recognise that nation-building cannot be outsourced entirely to government.

Nigeria's future cannot depend solely on who occupies Aso Rock.

It must depend on the strength of our institutions, the quality of our education, the productivity of our people, the

integrity of our public service and the ability of Nigerians to demand better while also contributing to the country they want.

We should also resist the temptation to measure Nigeria only by its failures.

Yes, insecurity remains a serious concern. Yes, the cost of living has placed enormous pressure on households.

Yes, unemployment, infrastructure deficits, corruption and weak institutions remain challenges.

And yes, there are Nigerians who have become frustrated enough to question whether the country is moving forward at all.

Their frustrations should not be dismissed.

Patriotism does not require pretending that everything is fine.

A mature love for Nigeria allows us to celebrate progress while demanding more. It allows us to acknowledge achievements without declaring victory prematurely.

It allows us to criticise government without abandoning the country.

That is perhaps the Nigeria we should aspire to at 66: a country confident enough to celebrate its achievements and courageous enough to confront its failures.

The journey ahead will not be easy. Reforms can be painful. Institutions take time to strengthen.

Economic recovery does not automatically translate into household prosperity overnight.

Security challenges cannot be solved by slogans. And no administration, regardless of its intentions, can rebuild a nation in a single term.

But difficulty is not the same as impossibility.

Nigeria has survived periods that once appeared capable of breaking the country apart.

We have remained one nation through political upheavals, economic crises, military rule, democratic transitions and deep social divisions.

Our continued existence should not be mistaken for the completion of the Nigerian project.

Rather, it should remind us that the project is still alive.

At 66, Nigeria does not need exaggerated optimism.

We need credible hope.

Hope grounded in institutions. Hope backed by reasonable investments. Hope strengthened by accountability. Hope that recognises the suffering of the present while refusing to surrender the possibilities of the future.

The Nigeria we desire will not emerge simply because we celebrate Independence Day every October 1.

It will emerge when the quality of life of the ordinary citizen becomes the central measure of national progress.

So, as the green-white-green flies once again, let us celebrate Nigeria; not because the journey is complete, but because the journey is worth continuing.

Nigeria is 66.

We have come a long way. Nonetheless, we still have a long way to go.

And perhaps the most important thing we can say on this Independence Day is that the distance ahead should not make us forget how far we have already travelled.

The Nigerian story isn't complete and it is not a reason for despair. It is an invitation to build.

•Chinedum Anayo is a Political Commentator and can be reached via neduum@aol.com

FOREIGN

NEWS

Right-wing Flávio Bolsonaro wins first round of Brazil election

Right-wing Flávio Bolsonaro has won the first round of Brazil's presidential election, beating left-wing President Lula da Silva, but falling short of an outright majority.

There will be a run-off between the two candidates on

25 October.

Bolsonaro is the son of the former president Jair Bolsonaro, who is serving a 27-year prison sentence for masterminding a failed coup after losing the 2022 election.

Sunday's vote was close, with President Lula polling

slightly ahead during the campaign. With almost all of the votes counted, Bolsonaro has 47% to Lula's 45% of the vote.

Bolsonaro's result exceeded expectations, meaning the second round now looks like his to lose, given some of the other candidates knocked out in the

first round were right-wing alternatives.

Bolsonaro's Liberal Party (PL) also had the most governors, senators and federal deputies elected in the results so far, meaning the party is expected to have the most influence in Congress.

The majority of Latin America has now elected right-wing presidents, aligned to the Trump administration, and the run-off will determine whether Brazil – Latin America's largest country and economy – will follow suit.

After casting his ballot,

Lula, 80, warned the choice was between democracy and "barbarism".

Bolsonaro, 45, said he wanted to "free the Brazilian people".

Lula and Bolsonaro are the two biggest names in Brazilian politics, on the left and



FLÁVIO BOLSONARO



LULA

US-Brazil relationship: Why has Brazil accused the US of election interference?

The president of Brazil's supreme electoral court said on Sunday that no evidence of international interference was found in the election.

President Lula made "sovereignty" a key pillar of his campaign and at times accused the US of trying to interfere in and influence Brazil's elections - which the US has denied.

Earlier this year, Bolsonaro successfully lobbied the US to designate the two biggest Brazilian gangs as terrorist organisations.

Last year, Donald Trump used the coup trial of Jair Bolsonaro as

justification for imposing tariffs on Brazil and sanctioning some top officials and judges.

A win for Flávio Bolsonaro would likely see Brazil join the US's "Shield of Americas" coalition against narco-trafficking and align more closely with the US.

Key campaign issues

Corruption became a key issue in this campaign after a scandal involving a jailed banker, Daniel Vercaro, who orchestrated one of Brazil's largest financial frauds, embroiling senior figures across the political spectrum.

Bolsonaro acknowledged that

he'd asked Vercaro to bankroll a biopic about his father after voice recordings emerged in which he could be heard asking for 134 million reais (\$25.9m; £19.5m).

Lula was also impacted by the scandal indirectly, after police suggested Vercaro had reached out to the Supreme Court judge Alexandre de Moraes to ask for help avoiding arrest. Moraes denies any wrongdoing.

Moraes was not appointed by Lula but is seen as his ally, given Moraes presided over Jair Bolsonaro's coup trial.

Crime and insecurity were also top concerns for voters. Brazil's homicide rate has fallen, but street

crime such as phone thefts, that are highly visible to voters, have increased - and violence and drug trafficking are still major problems.

Bolsonaro has pledged to designate Brazilian gangs as terrorists and build maximum-security prisons akin to those in El Salvador. His father, during his presidency, loosened gun ownership restrictions.

Lula has criticised the US terrorist designation of Brazilian gangs but launched various reforms to tackle the financial networks of organised crime networks, improve homicide investigations, and invest in prisons.

Not again: Arrest of US marine for murder reignites protests in Japan's Okinawa

For many Okinawa locals, the arrest of a US soldier accused of robbing and killing a woman in a hotel room has reignited decades of frustration over crimes involving US military personnel there.

"Honestly my first reaction was, 'Not again,'" 52-year-old longtime Okinawa resident Ai Sato told the BBC.

"Nothing has changed since I was a child. How many times are we going to repeat the same thing, create more victims, cause their families to suffer, and ultimately, cause the people of Okinawa to grieve?"

Akemi Oshiro, a 62-year-old Ginowan resident shared similar sentiments.

"I know we shouldn't get used to terrible things like this, but because they keep happening, I've stopped being surprised," she told the BBC.

Okinawa hosts the largest US military presence in Japan. It is home to several US military bases and tens of thou-

sands of American troops.

US Marine Lance Corporal Devin Jacob Ballard, 20, was arrested by Japanese police on Sunday. Police say an investigation is underway and that Ballard is in Japanese custody because the alleged crime was unrelated to official military duties.

Whether a US service member is acting in the performance of official duty or not can determine which country has primary jurisdiction. When Japan has jurisdiction, but the suspect is under US custody, they can retain custody until Japan brings charges.

Some locals gathered to protest against the robbery-murder case on Sunday

Ballard was assigned to III Marine Expeditionary Force and stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Ginowan City.

The Okinawa prefectural police say 39-year-old Anna Yagi was found dead early 3 October in a hotel room in Naha.

France closes up to 500 schools monday over student protests

Up to 500 schools across France were partially or totally closed on Monday after clashes between riot police and student protesters in recent days, the French education minister said on Sunday.

Lessons will be "totally or partly suspended" in some "400 to 500" high schools as security conditions "have not been fulfilled", Édouard Geffray said.

He also said 24 schools had been "burned or ransacked" since the start of the protests.

Thousands of students have been demonstrating over education standards and the protests, which started last week, have spread from Paris to other cities, including Montpellier, Nantes and Marseille.

High school pupils and others have objected to a lack of teachers, overcrowded classrooms and run-down buildings.

On Friday, French Justice Minister Gérald Darmanin said 735 of France's 3,700 schools had been affected "one way or another" by violent protests.

The education minister warned the number of schools

potentially affected on Monday could be comparable to Friday's figure but promised a "partial, progressive return to lessons".

"There are activists - particularly from the far-left - who have infiltrated the high school student movement, hijacked it from the students themselves, and engaged in extreme violence," Édouard Geffray claimed.

"Clearly, this poses a risk to both our staff and our students," he said. Geffray added that 78 staff members in education had been wounded, which he described as "something we have never seen before".

On Friday 1,747 people were arrested, according to French Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez.

Over 5,000 people have been arrested altogether since the start of the movement, according to the AFP news agency, with around 85% of them minors.

Organisers of the protests have called for the demonstrations to continue on Tuesday after accusing the government of a lack of "concrete measures", according to AFP.

US removes all bombers from RAF Fairford base

The US has withdrawn all of its bombers from RAF Fairford, the UK military base at the centre of an incident being investigated by counter-terror police.

A statement from a Pentagon official confirmed on Sunday it had removed its bombers - thought to be about a dozen B-1s - from the base back to their home stations in America.

US media reported a new threat led to the bombers being removed, which follows a major incident on 27 September when police were alerted to three "suspicious vehicles" near the airbase.

Five men were initially arrested on suspicion of terror offences and subsequently released on bail. A sixth man, a UK-Iranian

national, was also later arrested and released on bail.

Whitehall sources have not disputed the decision from Washington was in response to the incident at the airbase in Gloucestershire.

The BBC has also been told it was a military rather than a political decision - taken at an operational level - and communicated from the US military to its British counterparts.

The UK's Ministry of Defence has not commented.

Tracking websites showed B-1 bombers flying out of RAF Fairford on Sunday.

The New York Times reported US commanders had received new threats about an Iran-backed plot against RAF Fairford

according to two US officials.

The newspaper wrote the new information was part of the same threat warnings from three weeks ago, but officials acted quickly after specific details emerged in the past 24 hours.

The planes reportedly took off while aerial refueling aircraft were still being scrambled to support their flights to the US.

Days after the incident at RAF Fairford, Prime Minister Andy Burnham said there were "strong indications" that Iran had played a part in the incident but did not provide further details. Tehran has strongly denied any involvement.

Initially, five men aged between 23 and 25 were arrested in the early hours of the morning after ve-

hicles were reported to be travelling towards the base operated by the US Air Force (USAF). All five were UK nationals from London.

They were arrested on suspicion of explosives offences and later on suspicion of preparing a terrorist act, before being released on bail in what police called an "investigative decision" that was "grounded in experience and strategy".

The sixth man, aged 25, was arrested in London on Thursday on suspicion of preparation of terrorist acts. Counter terror police confirmed on Saturday he had also been released on bail.

RAF Fairford, nearby the village of Whelford in the Cotswolds, has been used as a forward operating location by the USAF for decades.

NEWS**FOREIGN**

A pro-government soldier standing guard on a street in Ethiopia's Tigray region on Sunday

Ethiopian rebel forces withdraw from Tigray regional capital

Rebel forces in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region have said they have temporarily withdrawn from the regional capital, Mekelle, as fighting with the national army moves towards the city.

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which has been running the region, said it decided to leave because of concerns about risks to civilians.

Two Mekelle residents said that pro-government forces now control the city and TPLF fighters have abandoned it. One resident also said mobile phone services had been restored.

Fighting has erupted in recent weeks between the TPLF and allied groups and government forces in parts of the northern regions of Tigray, Afar and Amhara.

TPLF chairman Debretsion Gebremichael said that while they were leaving Mekelle for the time being, the conflict remained fluid and the group would "continue its work from another location".

He described it as a deliberate strategic move, saying: "We will attack the enemy where we choose, not where he chooses for us."

During the 2020-2022 civil war in Tigray, the TPLF made a similar move and resorted to guerrilla attacks after losing control of Mekelle to federal forces.

The latest outbreak of fighting has raised concerns among observers that the conflict could further destabilise the Horn of Africa, potentially drawing in neighbouring countries.

The US Department of State called for "restraint" and "dialogue" on all sides ahead of a diplomatic meeting about the conflict in Egypt with leaders from some of Ethiopia's neighbours.

The presidents of Egypt, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan - which all have strained relations with Ethiopia - met on Sunday in the Egyptian coastal city of El-Alamein.

They called for "respecting the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of states" and the resolution of disputes through "peaceful means".

Ethiopia accuses Egypt, Eritrea and Sudan of supporting the Tigray rebels, which they deny.

Duke Burbridge, an American doctor with the Health Professionals Network for Tigray, told the BBC that the situation had been calm since the rebels pulled out, except for some outbreaks of gunfire and looting shortly after the withdrawal.

He said it "appeared some people who were released from prison or some of the criminal gangs around here [who] were well armed" were involved.

Telecommunication services, which had been cut, had now been restored, he said.

"[Yesterday] everybody was in the restaurants, in the markets, enjoying the fact that cell phones were back on, mobile banking was back on, and there was loud music deep into the night," he told the BBC Newsday programme.

Burbridge said some relative normality was returning, although some food items, including fruits and vegetables, were not available.

Tigray residents have been trying to recover from a devastating two-year civil war that ended in 2022 when the African Union (AU) brokered a peace deal, known as the Pretoria Agreement, between the two sides.

However, in the last six months there has been a worsening of relations, with both sides accusing each other of violating the agreement.

Last month, the TPLF joined six other armed movements, including the Fano militia from Amhara, to form an alliance whose stated objective is to remove Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government from power.

The civil war was one of the most deadly conflicts this century - the AU's mediator estimated some 600,000 people died as the fighting drove the region to the precipice of famine.

All six passengers presumed dead after plane went missing off US coast

Six people aboard a medical transport aircraft that went missing on Saturday while it was travelling from Bermuda to Boston are presumed dead, according to a statement from the flight's operator.

On Sunday evening, the United States Coast Guard said it was ending its search for survivors off the coast of Nantucket, a Massachusetts island.

"We must now face the heartbreaking reality that the four members of our Latitude team, our patient and the patient's family escort, who were aboard Heartbeat 104, are presumed to have died," Latitude Air Ambulance said in a statement shortly thereafter.

"Our thoughts are first and foremost with their families, loved ones, friends, and colleagues."

The Federal Aviation Administration lost contact with the Gulfstream G-100 plane just after 01:00 local time (05:00 GMT) on Saturday morning.

On Saturday evening, authorities located a "debris field" confirmed to be from the aircraft.

The plane had departed from Bermuda's L.F. Wade International Airport at 23:40 local time on Friday night, according to flight data from FlightAware, and was due to land at Boston's Logan International at 01:30

EDT (05:30 GMT).

Four Canadian nationals and two Bermudian nationals were onboard.

"This is an unimaginable loss for our Latitude family and for everyone who loved the six people aboard Heartbeat 104," said Peter Byl, President of Latitude Air Ambulance, on Sunday evening.

"Our focus now is on supporting their families, supporting our people and assisting the authorities. We will honour our colleagues by remembering the care, professionalism, and commitment they brought to their work every day."

Latitude Air Ambulance is a Canadian company that provides international medical flights for patients returning home.

Two pilots and two medical staff, both Canadian, had flown to Bermuda to collect a patient and their relative, Clarence Togeretz, director of flight operations at Latitude, told CBC News.

FlightAware's tracker shows that 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 show trouble with communications between the air traffic controller and the pilot, the Boston Globe reported, based on transmissions provided by LiveATC.net.

Supporters of jailed ex-PM Imran Khan begin march in

Some 5,000 people took to the streets on Sunday carrying red and green flags of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party

Thousands of supporters of Pakistan's jailed ex-prime minister Imran Khan have begun a march from the country's northwest as they call for his release.

Concerns over the 74-year-old's health have grown louder in recent months. His family claims he has lost most of his vision in his right eye after prison authorities failed to take action.

The cricket star-turned-politician, who faces charges in more than 100 cases, was jailed for 17 years over corruption last year. Khan said all the cases against him are politically motivated.

Even behind bars, he remains a force in Pakistani politics, and demonstrations in his support have led to deadly violence and crackdowns in the past.

The march began on Sunday in Lakki Marwat, a city 275km (170 miles) from Islamabad, and was expected to resume on Monday after pausing for the night.

Originally scheduled for last week, it was postponed to allow for talks between the government and Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party but the talks ended in deadlock.

Khan, who faces charges ranging from leaking state secrets to selling state gifts, was

first imprisoned in August 2023. His wife Bushra Bibi was jailed along with him last year.

Sohail Afridi, chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province which is governed by the PTI, expects the march to make its way to a town about 80km west of the capital Islamabad by Thursday.

"[By then] this movement will have reached every corner of the country and every square will have become a centre of activity," he said on Sunday, urging the people to "play an active role in the political process".

While the march organisers have not announced that they were heading for Islamabad, authorities have stacked up shipping containers to block key access routes to the capital.

The PTI said talks with government failed because authorities rejected the party's request for access to Khan so that its leaders could consult him on national and political issues.

The party also said it had demanded that Khan be given an immediate medical examination and treatment.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi meanwhile accused Afridi of "sabotaging" negotiations, saying the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had backed out of earlier commitments on counter-terrorism issues, according to Pakistan's local media reports.

Yemen's government announces all-out war to reclaim land from Houthis

The head of Yemen's internationally recognised government has announced it will wage an all-out war in an effort to take all territory held by the Houthis.

It follows an exchange of strikes between the Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition in recent days.

The Iran-backed group said it had struck sites belonging to Saudi national oil company Aramco, in response to what it described as 50 Saudi-led coalition strikes in 12 hours. Saudi Arabia has yet to comment.

The Yemeni government's fierce statement was expected after the Houthis' offensive last month, which saw them seize control of the country's Red Sea coastline, including the vital shipping lane of the Bab al-Mandab Strait.

On Sunday, Yemeni President

Rashad al-Alimi said in a televised address: "Today, I announce the start of military operations to retake the remaining territory of the republic and extend the authority of the state and its institutions across the entire national territory."

Yemen's capital, Sanaa, which has been held by the Houthis for more than a decade, has come under sustained attack as government forces try to weaken the group's military capabilities.

Attacks on the Houthis have also spread across Yemen, including to the Saada region, the group's northern heartland.

Yemeni President Rashad al-Alimi addresses the nation in a televised address in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

But security sources say the Iran-backed Houthis have continued to make gains.

The frontline in Yemen remains focused around the key city of Taiz, which is still controlled by the internationally recognised government.

On Sunday, the Houthis cut a vital supply route linking Taiz with Aden, the interim capital of the Yemeni government, AFP news agency reports.

Citing three Yemeni military sources, AFP also reports that the Houthis now control the area and supply route, effectively encircling Taiz.

"They've achieved the military objective of isolating Taiz from Aden, even if they haven't fully taken control of it," Farea Al-Muslimi, a research fellow at the Chatham House think tank, told AFP.

Al-Alimi was unlikely to have made the announcement without the green light from Saudi Arabia, which remains the key

backer of his government.

Saudi Arabia has been under constant attack as the Houthis try to target the country's economic lifeblood - oil.

On Sunday, Yemen's Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said the group had launched a ballistic missile and drone attack on Aramco sites in the capital, Riyadh, and the oil-rich Khurais area in the kingdom's east.

"Both operations successfully achieved their objectives," the spokesman said in a statement. "The strikes were precise, causing large fires at the targeted sites."

It is not the first time the group has said it has hit Saudi oil sites. Saudi Arabia has yet to comment on Sunday's claimed attack, but has previously dismissed some claims as misleading, mocking the Houthis for "chasing imaginary victories".

FEATURE

Delist the company. find the man. follow the money

LANRE OGUNDIPE

There is a vast difference between administrative activity and genuine enforcement intensity.

That distinction matters as Nigeria strengthens its corporate transparency and beneficial ownership regime.

Cleaning the corporate register, removing dormant entities and compelling companies to regularise their records are necessary regulatory exercises. But they do not, by themselves, establish that the structures behind corporate fraud, concealed ownership and illicit financial flows have been dismantled.

A company can disappear from the register while the person who used it remains untouched. A corporate name can be struck off while the money that passed through it remains untraced. A shell can be removed without establishing who created it, who controlled it, who operated its accounts, who directed its transactions and who ultimately benefited.

That is where the real test begins.

Nigeria already has much of the necessary infrastructure. The Corporate Affairs Commission's Beneficial Ownership Register identifies Persons with Significant Control and is designed to capture ownership and control beyond the name appearing on a share certificate. Its stated purpose includes helping to prevent the use of shell companies for money laundering and public procurement inflation. The register is also designed for machine readable data exchange with other systems.

The Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit, for its part, receives and analyses suspicious and threshold transaction information, draws on relevant databases and disseminates intelligence to competent authorities for investigation and prosecution.

The machinery therefore exists.

The issue is whether it is being used to move from corporate records to actual enforcement.

The first question is simple: who is actually being hit?

There is little evidence of enforcement intensity in merely removing large numbers of abandoned or inactive companies. That is essentially a database exercise.

The harder test is whether the system is reaching the corporate vehicles that matter: companies handling substantial public contracts, entities with unexplained ownership structures, networks of apparently unrelated companies sharing directors or intermediaries, and structures in which the declared owner appears different from the person exercising actual control.

This requires risk based intelligence rather than indiscriminate enforcement.

The PSC database should be systematically examined alongside relevant procurement, tax, regulatory, identity and financial intelligence, subject to the law governing access and use of such information.

A serious intelligence system should be capable of flagging patterns such as a company with a modest apparent economic profile receiving unusually large government contracts, a senior managing official or shareholder appearing repeatedly across numerous companies, several entities sharing addresses or contact details, proxy relationships, or substantial financial activity involving companies that otherwise appear dormant or newly established.

None of these indicators proves wrongdoing.

They are leads.

The job of enforcement is to determine whether the lead conceals something more.

That is where the exercise should move from automated detection to human investigation.

The second question is: where are the prosecutions?

A regulatory flag cannot be the end of the process.

Where investigation establishes deliberate concealment of beneficial ownership, fraudulent corporate information or other conduct constituting an offence, the information should move through the appropriate investigative and prosecuting channels.

The trail should answer basic questions.

Who made the declaration?

Who supplied the information?

Who exercised control?

Who gave the instructions?

Who operated the account?

Who benefited?

Who knowingly facilitated the arrangement?

The answers should come from evidence.

That evidence will often lie outside the corporate register itself. Bank mandates, payment instructions, procurement documents, contracts, powers of attorney, accounting records, electronic communications and the history of changes in ownership and directorship may reveal the person exercising effective control.

This is why targeted forensic investigation must follow credible intelligence.

Where the evidence and applicable legal thresholds justify it, investigators should be able to preserve and examine digital records, corporate files, financial documents and communications. Search and seizure should, of course, be conducted under the appropriate legal authority.

Professional intermediaries should also be examined where evidence points to knowing participation in a scheme. Incorporating a company or providing professional services is not evidence of criminality. But where a professional repeatedly facilitates arrangements designed to conceal ownership or move illicit proceeds, the evidence should determine whether further investigation is warranted.

The third question is more consequential: are the accounts, assets and operations actually being disrupted where the law permits it?



Staff of Skyewise Group

Delisting is not a bank freeze.

A CAC action does not, by itself, authorise the indiscriminate freezing of accounts. Financial restraint must follow the applicable law, evidential thresholds and, where required, judicial process.

But the opposite extreme is equally unacceptable.

Where financial intelligence and investigation establish grounds for action, the system should move quickly to preserve relevant evidence and prevent the dissipation of suspected proceeds.

The Proceeds of Crime Recovery and Management Act provides a court based mechanism for restraint of realisable property where its statutory conditions are satisfied. The law also permits restraint in appropriate circumstances of property under the effective control of the relevant person, even where the identity of another person holding that property is not yet known.

That is precisely where financial intelligence must connect with enforcement.

The corporate structure identifies the entity.

The financial intelligence identifies the movement.

The investigation identifies the controller.

The law determines what can then be restrained, prosecuted or recovered.

The process should also reach beyond individual companies.

One person may sit behind multiple entities. One address may connect apparently unrelated companies. One intermediary may appear repeatedly across a network. One procurement relationship may expose corporate connections that cannot be seen by examining companies separately.

The target, therefore, should not always be the company.

It should be the network revealed by the evidence.

That leads to the fourth and most important stage: find the natural person exercising effective control.

The sophisticated corporate operator may not appear as the majority

shareholder. Control may be exercised through nominees, relatives, associates, employees, financing arrangements, board appointment powers, bank mandates, contractual authority or other forms of significant influence.

The fact that someone is a nominee does not automatically make that person a criminal. Nor does the appearance of a relative or associate on a corporate record establish concealment.

The issue is control.

Who makes the decisions?

Who supplies the capital?

Who determines the contracts pursued?

Who controls the money?

Who receives the economic benefit?

Who can cause the company to act?

That is the point at which the corporate veil ceases to be merely a legal concept and becomes an investigative question.

A company cannot explain who

gave the instruction.

A company cannot identify who ultimately benefited.

A company cannot go to prison.

Where evidence establishes that a natural person knowingly participated in an offence, the investigation must follow that person as well as the company.

This is also where public procurement becomes critical.

Beneficial ownership information should not sit in one government compartment while procurement information remains in another. Where legally permissible, the two should be interrogated together.

The objective is to identify concealed relationships between contractors, recurring directors, nominees, intermediaries, related companies and persons exercising control.

The same principle applies to taxation.

An apparent mismatch between a person's declared economic position and the scale of companies or transactions associated with that person does not prove tax evasion, corruption or money laundering.

But it may justify verification.

The real question is whether the economic reality can be reconciled with the declared ownership, assets, corporate relationships and financial activity.

That is what financial intelligence is supposed to establish.

The final stage is recovery and prevention of re-entry.

If an investigation establishes that assets represent proceeds of crime or are otherwise subject to lawful recovery, the process should not end with prosecution. The appropriate legal mechanisms for restraint, forfeiture and recovery must be pursued.

And once a network has been exposed, the system must prevent the same actors from simply returning through another company.

That requires effective use of lawful director disqualification and other applicable restrictions, better information sharing and identity based risk controls across relevant agencies.



This is also where public procurement becomes critical. Beneficial ownership information should not sit in one government compartment while procurement information remains in another. Where legally permissible, the two should be interrogated together.

FEATURE

Illegal African immigrants to Europe: A perilous journey to hazardous destinations



Africa Immigrants in meditarineans sea

OSAMUDIAMEN LUCKY AGHEDO

Either on the spur of enhancing patronage or, out of altruistic objective of highlighting a recurring humanitarian crisis, European mass media usually, give headlines to news of the catastrophic experience of immigrants while going through the perilous sail on the Mediterranean sea.

The stories are usually horrific and heart rendering. They are carried under such headlines as: "Hundreds drowned"; "Thousands stranded at sea" or, "Thousands rescued."

It is almost all about Africans and other nationales fleeing their troubled native homes in search of the fabled "greener pastures" especially, in the European countries of Italy and Spain. It is like an endless stream, a steady, moving train of humans, without the end in sight.

In the desperate voyage across the Mediterranean, thousands inevitably perish by drowning in capsized, usually over-crowded rafts and rickety boats. The Red Cross counts the dead and rescues the lucky survivors. The missing are estimated. Because, just as there are no footprints on the dunes in the Sahara desert, so are there no footprints on the Mediterranean sea.

Before getting to the points of departure on the coasts of Libya or Tunisia, large numbers of the immigrants would also have perished in the terribly hazardous crossing of the Sahara. Exhaustion, hunger, dehydration, heatstroke, malaria-related ailments and, robberies are the ma-

jor causes of mortality in the sahara segment of the journey of thousands of kilometres.

The Trans-Atlantic or Trans-Saharan slave trades were stories of violently uprooted and forceful transportation of the enslaved people across the Atlantic or the Sahara desert.

On the other hand, the present day mass movement of peoples, citizens of Africa and the Middle East, can be rationally explained as voluntary as it lacked the wars, conquests and brute force used in the times of the Saharan and Atlantic trade in humans.

Yet, it can be argued that those involved in the present day exodus to Europe, are, as well, victims of certain compelling push and pull factors with external forces acting as catalysts.

The migrants are mostly from countries suffering from the ravages of civil wars such as the Sudan, Somalia and Syria; countries of ramshackle infrastructure ruled by corrupt, incompetent and repressive regimes. People, simply fleeing their native homes in search of greener pastures.

Separated only by the Mediterranean, Europe, appears to be the nearest destination for a safe haven. Europe, is additionally attractive due to the age-old fairy-like tales that portray it as a continent of limitless bliss, where milk and honey flow in abundance.

Another impetus, a pull factor to the migrants, was the reality of the liberal migrant policies of most West European countries, particularly, Italy, Spain and France. That was of course, before the emerging gale of

nationalist, anti migrant postures and policy reversals sweeping across the western world.

Like the fictional "Alice in Wonderland", majority of the migrants who were lucky to have survived the hazards of the journey, would soon come to terms with the realities of life in Europe. Firstly, because they cannot afford to live in decent rented apartments, majority live in shacks.

Sadly, a large number of the migrants, men and women in their youths, are ill-equipped to be gainfully employed. This is on account of their lack of educational qualifications or skills. And, there is no free lunch in their new societies.

To survive, they resort to doing menial jobs, hawking on the streets and begging, among other forms of anti social activities. While some of the men drift towards crimes such as dealing in drugs, some of the women are drawn, out of necessity, into prostitution. All of these are illegal ventures and as a result, they are soon targeted by the law enforcement agents.

In a lot of instances, a good number of the immigrants who are arrested and clamped into detention, are not, per se, guilty of the offences for which they are accused of. The immigrants also face the tortuous fate of long detentions without trial or arraignment in courts of law.

I will give the example of a 2021 experience of thirty-six Nigerians of Niger Delta extraction, who were detained for over two years in an Italian jail. According to a local newspaper, "Gazzetta de Regio", they were arrested over credit card fraud and on the sus-

picion of being members of the Mafia.

The crime of Mafia membership carries very lengthy jail time in the Italian laws. This implies that the thirty-six Nigerians faced the prospects of long jail terms if they were found guilty by the courts.

Alas, human rights activists, discovered that what the Police had labeled as Mafia membership was no more than the acts of occasional social gatherings of people of the same nationality and cultural background. Trust Nigerians, such gatherings can be noisy and hilarious. The predicament of immigrants from Africa particularly, is rooted in their lack of sufficient background understanding of their host countries.

Also, poor African immigrants, such as the example of the thirty-six Nigerians given above, suffer injustice and deprivation of their fundamental rights, due to lack of care by their embassies.....

There is no gainsaying that the phenomenon of mass migration of citizens of African countries to Europe is a challenge to the contemporary world. It is a transnational crisis that calls for global collaboration in tackling it.

It will necessarily have to begin with African political leadership firmly resolving to fight the retrogressive culture of endemic corruption which has engendered avoidable catastrophic wars, poverty, repression and dictatorship.

Africans of this generation owe it a historical responsibility to harness the abundant natural and human resources of the continent to

lay the foundation for technological advancement, economic growth, development and a prosperous future.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the USA initiated the Marshall Plan to aid the recovery and reconstruction process of Western Germany. Japan was similarly, specially assisted in view of the effects of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The world, particularly the West, owe Africa some sort of a "Marshall Plan" to rectify the ruination of centuries of the slave trades across the Sahara and the Atlantic as well as, the decades of plundering of resources and distortions wrought on the social, political and cultural institutions and systems of Africans.

The countries which are tacitly engaged in instigating and fanning of violent conflicts and wars in Africa must desist from their nefarious activities. A sizeable chunk of immigrants from Africa to Europe and North America are in fact, refugees displaced by civil strifes in their home countries. Sudan, Somalia and Congo are typical examples.

The leaders of African and European countries, the rest of the world, must rise up to the challenge of the monumental disaster that the mass migration of citizens of Africa and elsewhere on the globe poses for the contemporary world.

No nation or race deserves to be given the condescending name of, "refugees".

• **Lucky Aghedo is the Secretary of Nigerian Professionals in the UK.**

When Justice Fails A Woman Twice - The Tennessee Botched Execution

CLARETH SOLOMON

On September 30, 2026, the State of Tennessee attempted to make history by executing Christa Pike, the only woman on its death row and the first woman the state would have executed in over two centuries. Instead, it made history for a different reason. Officials administered a dose of pentobarbital intended to be lethal. She remained alive. They administered a second dose. She remained alive, audibly snoring, with a heartbeat, crying and gasping. Her lawyers said she told staff, "My arm feels like it's about to burst open." She was rushed to a hospital, both arms swollen, burned and blistered, placed on a ventilator, unconscious and in critical condition.

It was Tennessee's second failed execution in six months, after the state failed to execute Tony Carruthers earlier this year after spending over an hour trying to find a vein.

But to understand this as only a technical failure is to miss the gender story at its core. Pike was 18 when she committed the murder of Colleen Slemmer in 1995. She was also a survivor of sustained sexual violence from early childhood. Court documents, police reports

and hospital records corroborated rapes she suffered at age 11 and 17, and earlier abuse as a preschooler. Her trial lawyer never told the jury that history. For decades, the State's lawyers dismissed her accounts as lies. Only a month before her scheduled execution did the State acknowledge the truth of her suffering.

That history came rushing back into the execution chamber. Pike had asked for an all-female lethal injection team, arguing that being strapped to a gurney by men would trigger a flashback to her childhood rapes. A clinical psychologist testified that immobilization on the gurney was likely to make her feel and believe she was being raped to death. The request was reported as bizarre by some outlets, but for gender justice advocates, it was a final plea for dignity and for recognition that punishment does not happen on a neutral body.

Tennessee prison officials said they might grant that request for an all-female team, and witnesses later reported hearing her ask that team, "does this happen like that?" as she suffered. What followed was not just torture, as her advocates described it, but an act of gender-based violence layered upon a lifetime of it. Experts noted the drug used, pentobarbital, is highly

alkaline and caustic, burning flesh and veins on contact, compared to bleach or Drano. Medical staff reportedly needed at least seven needle sticks, with one needle bent at a 90-degree angle.

Governor Bill Lee has now ordered a comprehensive third-party review and paused all executions for the rest of the year, while Department of Correction Commissioner Frank Strada, who oversaw

the execution, has resigned. Yet the deeper question remains unanswered. Why did a system that knew of her trauma, her PTSD, her small veins and her history of abuse, and that had overturned death sentences for seven men who were adolescents at the time of their crimes, refuse to see her vulnerability as relevant? As Tennessee courts themselves have been quoted, "I think we all wish that

we were not here today and that [Christa Pike] was not on death row".

The botched execution forces us to confront how the death penalty disproportionately punishes women whose lives have been shaped by male violence, and how the architecture that upholds capital punishment remains flimsy when it meets the reality of a woman's body and a survivor's memory.



CHRISTA PIKE

Far from home, holding it all - Nigerian Women in the diaspora and the lonely work of single motherhood

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

She wakes up in Manchester at 5 a.m. to get the children ready for school, works a double shift as a care assistant, comes home to cook egusi and pasta, helps with homework over video calls to a mother in Benin City, and then falls asleep to the quiet

of a house where she is the only adult. This is the daily rhythm for thousands of Nigerian women raising children alone in the diaspora, women who left home in search of better opportunities only to discover that survival abroad demands a different kind of strength.

For many, single parenthood did

not start in the UK, Canada or the United States. It started with a relationship that fractured under the weight of migration, unemployment, or cultural strain. Research shows that migration often inverts traditional family hierarchies. Women find work faster in care, retail and service industries and become pri-

mary breadwinners, while some male partners face protracted unemployment. Yet that economic shift rarely changes expectations at home. One woman in the UK captured it plainly: "I work fulltime, pay most of the bills, take care of the children... but my husband still expects his meals fresh, his clothes ironed, and no complaints. Migration didn't change that part."

When marriages break down, Nigerian women abroad face a double burden. They must navigate an expensive housing market, immigration paperwork, shift work and childcare costs without the extended family system that would have supported them at home. They also carry the emotional labour of long-distance motherhood and daughterhood. Even while cleaning homes in Toronto or working nights in Houston, they are coordinating school fees for siblings in Irrua, sending monthly upkeep to parents in Lagos, and maintaining daily phone calls to children left in Nigeria. As one Ghanaian mother in Canada described it, a sentiment echoed by many Nigerian mothers, "You feel like you are mothering from a distance... Your heart is in Accra, but your hands are cleaning homes in Toronto."

The stigma does not disappear with distance. Single mothers who chose to leave abusive relationships or who

were left to raise children alone after being deceived by partners who had families abroad still hear the whispers from home that a woman must endure. Yet there is also a quiet revolution happening. These women are learning to be independent in ways their own mothers could not. They are joining community associations, Standup for Women Society sister circles in the diaspora, church groups and savings cooperatives to share childcare and create safety nets. They are returning to school at 40, starting small catering businesses from their kitchens, and teaching their daughters that a woman's worth is not tethered to a marriage certificate.

Survival for them is not just about paying bills. It is about holding identity together when the house is too big or too empty, about fighting loneliness after the children leave for university, about grieving a country that raised them while building a new one that often sees them only as labour. Their story is not one of pity. It is one of resilience. They are raising a new generation of Nigerians who speak with accents from two continents, who know how to make jollof rice in a small London flat, and who have watched their mothers turn survival itself into a form of leadership.



NIGERIA SINGLE MOTHER

FEATURE

BISHOP OYINDAMOLA KELANI IGBALAJOB

From Cinema to the Stage — Building the Next Generation of Performers

For Bishop Oyindamola Kelani Igbalajobi, the journey through film, theatre and performing arts has never been only about making movies. For more than a decade, his work has combined filmmaking, performance education, mentorship and the development of young creative talent.

A filmmaker, director, cinematographer, producer, screenwriter and performing arts educator, Igbalajobi has built a career that crosses both sides of creative development: producing professional screen work while deliberately investing in those who may become the performers and filmmakers of tomorrow.

Today, that journey has entered another important chapter with CLUB19, an international-focused teenage performing arts initiative that has already begun engaging young people across secondary schools.

Teenagers from 25 secondary schools are already involved in the registration and parental-consent process, marking the beginning of an ambitious programme designed to reconnect a new generation with the discipline and foundations of live performance.

But CLUB19 did not emerge from nowhere.

Its roots stretch back more than a decade.

A VISION FOR PERFORMING ARTS EDUCATION

Igbalajobi is the Proprietor of Oyindamola Kelani School of Performing Art, an institution whose journey began in 2010.

The school was subsequently fully registered and received government approval on 17 August 2016, operating across Nursery, Primary and Secondary School levels with performing arts embedded within its educational vision.

This background is important to understanding Igbalajobi's current mission.

Long before CLUB19, he had already recognised that creative education should begin early. Children should not have to wait until adulthood, university or professional film school before discovering acting, movement, dance, costume, storytelling and the discipline behind performance.

His philosophy has increasingly centred on a fundamental principle:

If the industry wants better professionals tomorrow, it must deliberately train young talents today.

FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE FILM SET

Alongside his educational work, Igbalajobi developed a multifaceted career within the Nigerian film industry.

His professional experience spans directing, cinematography, producing, assistant directing, screenwriting and film education, giving him an understanding of both the creative and technical demands of filmmaking.

His body of work and professional engagements include productions such as *Death Remedy* (Maku), *Silver Spoon*, *Meji Oran* (Dual Troubles), *Jagba*, *Iyawo Farao*, *Aina Orosun*, *Aina Oroke*, *Honorable* (Eni Owo), *PARTY BOY* and *Aina Oroke: The Divinity Child*, among other projects.

His career has also brought him

into professional collaboration with established figures within Nollywood.

Among them is filmmaker Adebayo Tijani, with whom Igbalajobi has worked professionally, including experiences connected with major productions within the contemporary Yoruba/Nigerian film industry.

His professional network and creative journey have also connected him with veteran filmmaker Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen, as well as film marketer and distributor Kazeem Afolayan of Epsalum Productions, among other practitioners across production, distribution and film education.

Some of the productions and filmmakers associated with his professional journey have received nominations, awards and recognition within the Nigerian film industry, exposing him to the standards and demands of productions operating at significant professional and commercial levels.

FOUR YEARS TRAINING EMERGING FILMMAKERS

One of the most important chapters in Igbalajobi's career came through the Benin Film Academy, an educational arm associated with Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State.

From 2017 to 2021, he served as a Cinematography Instructor, contributing to the training of four cohorts of emerging filmmakers.

Working in an environment directed by renowned Nigerian filmmaker Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen, Igbalajobi's responsibilities went beyond explaining how to operate a camera.

Students had to understand why a shot existed.

They had to understand composition, lighting, camera movement, continuity, storytelling and the relationship between the camera and the actor.

The training environment also exposed emerging creatives to established practitioners through professional interactions and masterclasses involving personalities such as Segun Arinze, Desmond Elliot and Judith Audu.

Those years strengthened something Igbalajobi had already begun through his own school: education and mentorship must remain central to the survival of the creative industry.

WHY HE IS RETURNING YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE STAGE

Today, after years of filmmaking and training, Igbalajobi is increasingly concerned about what he sees as a weakening connection between modern screen performance and the rigorous foundations of dramatic art.

Technology has revolutionised filmmaking.

A director can call, "Cut!"

A scene can be repeated.

An editor can select the best performance from several takes.

Mistakes can disappear in the editing room.

Dialogue can be corrected, images manipulated and performances assembled from material captured at different times.

The stage is different.

When the curtain rises and an actor stands before a live audience, there is no editing room to rescue the



BISHOP OYINDAMOLA KELANI IGBALAJOB

performance.

There is no second take.

There is no cut.

If an actor makes a mistake, the actor must remain composed, stay in character and continue.

That requires training.

It requires concentration.

It requires discipline.

And, above all, it requires rehearsal, rehearsal and more rehearsal.

For Igbalajobi, this is one of the reasons stage performance historically produced performers with deep understanding of dramatic craft. Actors learned voice projection, movement, timing, characterisation, improvisation, emotional control, stage positioning and the discipline of working as an ensemble.

He believes those foundations must not disappear simply because filmmaking technology has advanced.

His answer is CLUB19.

CLUB19 — RAISING A NEW GENERATION OF PERFORMERS

CLUB19 is Igbalajobi's developing teenage performing arts movement for young people between approximately 10 and 19 years old.

Unlike a project that exists only on paper, CLUB19 has already commenced, with teenagers connected to 25 secondary schools currently going through registration and parental-consent processes.

The vision is to build a structured performing arts community where young people can receive practical training in areas including:

Acting • Stage Performance • Dance • Movement • Costume Design • Dra-

matic Expression • Rehearsal Discipline • Ensemble Performance

The ambition is international.

Beginning with participating schools in Africa, the initiative is working toward developing relationships and partnerships with secondary and high schools in the United Kingdom, creating opportunities for young performers from different countries and cultural backgrounds to eventually interact, learn and perform together.

CLUB19 is therefore not simply about discovering children who want to become famous actors.

It is about training performers.

"WE MUST BUILD PERFORMERS BEFORE WE BUILD STARS"

At the heart of Igbalajobi's philosophy is a concern about an industry increasingly attracted to visibility without always giving equal attention to training.

Talent is important.

But talent without discipline has limitations.

A young person may naturally know how to imitate characters, dance or deliver dialogue. Professional dramatic performance, however, demands something more.

It demands an understanding of the craft.

Through CLUB19, Igbalajobi wants young people to experience the rehearsal room before chasing the spotlight.

They should understand movement before standing before a camera.

They should learn to work with other actors.

They should understand costumes

as part of character and storytelling.

They should experience the responsibility of remembering lines and maintaining character before a live audience.

And they should discover that mistakes are not always failures; on the stage, they become lessons that make the next performance stronger.

AFRICA, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND A GLOBAL STAGE

The longer-term vision for CLUB19 reaches beyond one city, one country or even one continent.

Igbalajobi envisions a network in which participating African schools can eventually connect with schools in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, creating an international community around youth performing arts.

Such exchanges can allow African children to confidently present their stories, languages, movements, costumes and dramatic traditions to international audiences while also learning from the theatrical traditions of young performers elsewhere.

The objective is not to replace cinema.

It is to strengthen the people who will eventually enter it.

Because a child who learns the discipline of the stage today could become tomorrow's actor, director, choreographer, costume designer, cinematographer or filmmaker.

THE STORY COMES FULL CIRCLE

In many ways, CLUB19 brings the different chapters of Bishop Oyindamola Kelani Igbalajobi's career together.

There is the educator, whose performing arts school journey dates back to 2010.

There is the filmmaker, whose career has included directing, producing, cinematography and assistant directing across numerous productions.

There is the film instructor, who spent years helping to train emerging filmmakers at the Benin Film Academy.

And now there is the mentor looking toward the next generation, taking the professional lessons accumulated across classrooms, film sets and production environments and placing them before young people at an earlier stage of their development.

For Igbalajobi, the future of dramatic art cannot depend only on producing more films.

It must also depend on producing better-trained artists.

CLUB19 represents that next chapter.

Not merely another acting school.

Not simply another children's club.

But an attempt to return young performers to one of the oldest and most demanding classrooms in dramatic art: the stage.

Because cameras may change.

Technology will continue to evolve.

Editing will become more sophisticated.

But when the curtain rises and a performer stands before a live audience, one thing remains unchanged: the artist must be ready.

And for Bishop Oyindamola Kelani Igbalajobi, preparing that next generation has become one of the most important productions of his career.

UZAMERE: The stewardship of a mandate, the impact of a representative

MATTHEW OKAGHA

How one legislator is translating “Effective Representation” into grassroots development in Ovia North-East Constituency II

Leadership is often measured in the language of promises. But when the noise of campaigns fades and the electorate begins to ask what has changed, leadership assumes a different meaning.

It becomes a question of stewardship.

What was done with the mandate entrusted to the representative? Which communities were reached? Which young lives were given new opportunities? Which schools received attention? Which families gained access to basic amenities? And, perhaps most importantly, did the representative remember the people after the votes had been counted?

For Hon. Andrew Edobor Uzamere, Member representing Ovia North-East Constituency II in the Edo State House of Assembly, the answer lies not merely in speeches but in a growing catalogue of constituency interventions spread across the seven wards that make up the constituency.

His political journey itself is a story of perseverance.

After three unsuccessful attempts to win a legislative seat—in 2011, 2015 and 2019—Uzamere returned to the political contest in 2023 and finally triumphed on his fourth attempt. On June 16, 2023, he was inaugurated into the Edo State House of Assembly as the representative of Ovia North-East Constituency II.

That victory was not simply the end of a political struggle. It was the beginning of a responsibility he had pursued for years.

And he appeared to understand the difference.

His philosophy was captured in a declaration that has become the defining statement of his stewardship:

“I AM DUTY BOUND TO REPRESENT YOU (MY CONSTITUENTS) WELL. IT IS NOT OUT OF BENEVOLENCE, I DO NOT TAKE THE MANDATE YOU GAVE ME WITH LEVITY.”

That statement is significant because it places representation in its proper context—not as an act of personal generosity by an elected official, but as a solemn obligation arising from the people's mandate.

FROM MANDATE TO MISSION

Uzamere came into public office with a professional background in Accountancy and Finance.

Born on September 22, 1962, in Benin City, he attended St. Stephen's Primary School and Eghosa Anglican Grammar School before proceeding to the United States, where he studied Accountancy and Finance at the State University of New York College at Old Westbury, Long Island.

He later became a Certified Public Accountant, building a professional foundation around financial management and accountability.

That background has assumed particular relevance in his legislative responsibilities.

Initially appointed Chairman of the House Standing Committee on Solid

Minerals and Oil & Gas, he was subsequently reassigned as Chairman of the House Standing Committee on Public Accounts—a position that places him at the heart of legislative oversight of public finances.

For Uzamere, therefore, representation operates on two interconnected fronts: delivering tangible interventions to constituents while also participating in the institutional processes through which public resources are scrutinised and governance is strengthened.

SEVEN WARDS, ONE MANDATE

Perhaps the strongest feature of the Uzamere stewardship story is its geographical spread.

The constituency's seven wards—Okada West, Okada East, Uhen, Oghede, Oduna, Iguoshodin and Utoka—have featured in various intervention programmes.

The approach suggests an attempt to ensure that development is not restricted to political strongholds or easily accessible communities.

In Okada West, for instance, boreholes and generators were provided at Iguomo and Oguedion in Okada town. More than 50 students of Okada Grammar School have benefited from the WAEC/NECO scholarship programme since 2025, while more than 2,000 notebooks were distributed to students of the school.

In Okada East, the intervention extended to water supply, education and infrastructure, including boreholes at Iguzama and Egbetenyin-Iguive and the reconstruction of a three-classroom block at Osunde Primary School, Egbaha, with a Headmaster's office, furniture and toilet facilities.

The story is repeated, with local variations, across the constituency.

At Uhen, boreholes and generators were provided to Egbeta, Utese, Olumoye and Ugbuwe communities. A three-classroom block at Uhen Mixed Secondary School was reconstructed, while more than 100 students across four secondary schools benefited from the WAEC/NECO scholarship scheme. More than 2,000 notebooks were also distributed.

At Oghede, the intervention included the rehabilitation of an existing borehole at Ikoro, construction of two blocks of nine classrooms at Oghede Secondary School, and construction of Igo Community Market. More than 180 students have featured in the scholarship programme there, while over 4,000 notebooks were distributed among beneficiary schools.

WATER: BRINGING DEVELOPMENT CLOSER TO HOME

In rural communities, the importance of potable water can hardly be overstated.

A borehole may look like a modest infrastructure project from the pages of a report, but to a family that previously depended on unsafe or distant water sources, it represents something much larger: time saved, health protected and dignity restored.

This explains the prominence of water projects in the Uzamere intervention record.

In Oduna Ward, boreholes and generators were provided in Gelege-



HON. ANDREW EDOBOR UZAMERE
(MEMBER REPRESENTING OVIA NORTH EAST CONSTITUENCY II)

le, Ekehuan-Waterside, Iboro, Ugbineh-Urhobo Camp and Oduna, alongside solar panels and batteries for a borehole at Igueholor.

In Iguoshodin Ward, a borehole and generator were provided at Iguzama, while educational infrastructure included six-classroom blocks at Emaba Primary School, Iguoshodin N'gbemaba, and Oba Eweka Primary School, Obagie-Uwaifokun, both with offices, furniture and toilet facilities.

Solar lights were also provided at Egbaen Market.

At Utoka, a borehole and generator were provided at Ite community, while the intervention included scholarships, notebooks and a lawn mower for Utoka Secondary School.

These interventions reveal a simple development philosophy: begin with the basic needs that directly affect everyday life.

EDUCATION AS AN INVESTMENT IN TOMORROW

If water represents immediate relief, education represents investment in the future.

The WAEC/NECO scholarship programme is one of the most prominent features of the constituency intervention.

The scheme has provided examination support to indigent students across several secondary schools, helping young people overcome one of the financial barriers that can interrupt their educational journey.

The 2026 beneficiaries listed in the constituency record cut across Okada West, Uhen, Oghede, Oduna, Iguoshodin and Utoka wards, with students drawn from schools including Okada Grammar School, Ogbesse Secondary School, Utese Secondary School, Uhen Mixed Secondary School, Egbeta Secondary School, Oghede Secondary School, Army Day Secondary School, Ikpiti Grammar School, Ughoton Secondary School, Ugbineh Senior Secondary School, Iguadolor Secondary School, Ore-Nolomi Senior School and Utoka Grammar School.

The accompanying distribution of thousands of notebooks further demonstrates an effort to combine examination support with basic learning materials.

In a constituency where many

families face competing economic pressures, helping students remain in school and sit for critical examinations is more than a political intervention. It is an investment in human capital.

And that investment can outlive any political tenure.

BUILDING SCHOOLS, BUILDING POSSIBILITIES

The physical condition of learning environments also features prominently in the stewardship record.

Classroom blocks have been constructed or reconstructed, while offices, furniture and sanitation facilities have been incorporated into several projects.

This is important because education is not only about putting children in classrooms. The quality and condition of the learning environment can influence attendance, motivation and the general dignity of the educational experience.

The proposed projects for 2026/2027 indicate that this aspect of the constituency agenda is expected to continue.

Among the proposals are new classroom blocks in Omi and Iguadolor communities, reconstruction of classrooms at Egbeta Secondary School, renovation of Ikoro Secondary School and Utese Secondary School, provision of furniture at Utoka Secondary School and Ikpiti Secondary School, and reconstruction of the administrative block at Uhen Mixed Secondary School.

YOUTH: GIVING REPRESENTATION A HUMAN FACE

Public representation is not limited to physical infrastructure.

It is also about opening doors.

The constituency record documents several constituents nominated into appointive positions and others who secured permanent employment with the Edo State House of Assembly.

For many young people, such opportunities can represent a significant turning point.

Beyond employment, Uzamere also deployed sport as an instrument of youth engagement.

The 2024 Andrew Uzamere Unity Cup brought together teams representing the seven wards. Complete sets of jerseys were provided, while

prize money of 500,000, 300,000 and 200,000 was awarded to the winners of the gold, silver and bronze positions respectively.

The tournament was therefore conceived not merely as football, but as a vehicle for unity, talent development and stronger relationships among youths across the constituency.

STEWARDSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Perhaps one of the most interesting dimensions of Uzamere's public service is the convergence between constituency development and legislative oversight.

As Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, he occupies a position directly associated with scrutiny of public expenditure.

That responsibility gives another meaning to his stewardship philosophy.

The representative who asks government to provide infrastructure for his people must equally appreciate the importance of ensuring that public resources are properly managed.

The source material also places this legislative role within the broader development vision of Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo.

The Governor's SHINE Agenda—Security, Health, Infrastructure, Agriculture and Education—provides the framework against which Uzamere's constituency interventions are presented. His water projects, educational programmes, infrastructure interventions and youth empowerment efforts are therefore portrayed as grassroots expressions of a broader development philosophy.

POLITICS OF POSITIONING

Uzamere's return to the All Progressives Congress also forms part of the political story surrounding his current stewardship.

The accompanying analysis in the publication presents the move as a strategic decision motivated by the desire to position Ovia North-East Constituency II within the mainstream of governance.

It argues that political alignment, in this context, is viewed through the lens of access, collaboration and the capacity to translate political influence into tangible development.

The stewardship of a mandate, the impact of a representative

CONTINUE FROM PG 19»

A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GRASSROOTS

There is another dimension to the Uzamere story that should not be overlooked: continuity.

The proposed 2026/2027 programme contains a further list of interventions, including health-cen-

tre rehabilitation, additional water projects, electrification, market renovation, school improvements and continuation of the WAEC/NECO scholarship scheme for 500 indigent students.

This suggests that the representative's conception of stewardship extends beyond completed projects to an evolving programme of interventions.

The underlying philosophy is straightforward: identify needs, intervene where possible, and continue building on what has already been achieved.

ONE GOOD TERM DESERVES ANOTHER?

As the political conversation gradually turns toward 2027, the question of continuity inevitably enters the dis-

cussion.

The case being presented by Uzamere's supporters is built around a simple proposition: where a representative has demonstrated measurable impact, continuity should be considered through the lens of development.

The argument is not merely about political loyalty.

It is about whether ongoing projects should be allowed to mature, whether educational programmes should continue, whether infrastructure plans should be completed and whether the relationship between representative and constituents should be strengthened.

The constituency record describes this philosophy in the phrase: "One good term deserves another."

THE MEASURE OF STEWARDSHIP

Ultimately, public office is temporary.

Mandates begin. Mandates end. Political parties change. Governments come and go.

But the physical and human consequences of leadership can endure.

A classroom block can educate generations of children.

A borehole can serve a community for years.

A scholarship can alter the direc-

tion of a young person's life.

A market can create space for commerce.

A job opportunity can change a family's economic circumstances.

And a culture of accountability can influence how public resources are managed.

That is where the deeper meaning of stewardship lies.

For Hon. Andrew Edozor Uzamere, the journey from repeated electoral defeat to legislative victory appears to have shaped a philosophy in which persistence is matched by responsibility.

He waited four attempts for the opportunity to serve.

Having received it, his record, as documented in the stewardship compendium, is a story of trying to make the mandate visible across the seven wards of Ovia North-East Constituency II.

The ultimate verdict, however, belongs to the people.

For they are the custodians of the mandate.

And in the final analysis, stewardship is not measured by how loudly a leader speaks about his achievements, but by how deeply those achievements are felt in the lives of the people he was elected to serve.



AWARD OF WAEC/NECO SCHOLARSHIP:

Hon. Andrew Uzamere with a cross section of the beneficiaries of his WAEC/NECO Scholarship to students of Okada/Uhen Axis.

An aspect of emotional intelligence is not to overestimate one's value

BAGUDU MOHAMMED

I came across a social media post about a Plateau man that read more like fiction than reality, yet it provides a perfect material to understand a neglected dimension of emotional intelligence.

The story goes: a Plateau man lost an election and disconnected electricity for the whole village, claiming he had connected it with his own money. He removed the transformer and packed all the cables, disconnected everybody, and told them to go and ask the person they voted for to do it for them. He disconnected water too, removed his pipes, tank and submersible pump, and terminated scholarship support for sixty students in his constituency which he personally funded, blaming their parents for not supporting him at the polls. Who is to blame?

The question of who is to blame is thought-provoking. Eche Emmanuel, while responding, wrote that the situation could actually be painful, almost siding with the man. And that is understandable. Daniel Goleman, who popularized emotional intelligence, reminds us that pain, provocation and even deliberate mischief are unavoidable, but what defines maturity is not the absence of those triggers but the capacity to regulate the response to them. To use pain as an excuse to test one's importance or to communicate value in a battle for supremacy is to expose oneself to greater vulnerability.

Emotional intelligence at its core is not about suppressing emotions; it is about reducing vulnerability and serving as self-defense in the face of provocation, anger and challenges that put to test what we can do.

I blame the Plateau man first because he is acting from a supposed position of greater strength, a position where personal choice makes control and alternative judgment possible. Unlike a community where choice, verdict and judgment do not depend on an individual but on a group, with conflicting interests, shifting alliances and complex loyalties, he had the luxury of pause. We cannot expect such harmony from a crowd.

Social psychology calls this the fundamental attribution error; we judge others by their actions but ourselves by our intentions, and we forget that a community's rejection is rarely a verdict on one transformer or one borehole.

An aspect of emotional intelligence in politics is that love creates love, patience invites patience, and hate breeds hate. People should make a deliberate effort to disarm the threat of hate or mischief with calculated conduct that first protects them from the harm of wilderness and overreaction. There is a wisdom in the old social exchange theory of Homans and Blau, that relationships thrive on reciprocity, but reciprocity cannot be coerced. You can invest love and not harvest love in return.

While it is true that there are assumptions by which love or positive emotions can be won, for example by spending on a woman, by being of good character, by humility, life is too complex to conclude that such actions will naturally lead to favourable outcomes.

Research on unreciprocated investment shows that sometimes it is the most caring man that a woman despises and whose money she uses to help another man. Politics is even more complex. More favour could come from the political party a candidate flies, the strength of its structure and the popular sentiment of the time.

In many places, those contesting under the platform of a wave party are automatically treated as heroes regardless of whether they once fixed transformers, constructed boreholes or paid school fees, because deeper emotions and collective anxieties shape choice.

It is the same irony that makes a celebrity have millions of male friends and fans yet remain single. It is the same irony that makes an actor whose films are largely patronized remain single at an age when he should be overwhelmed with people to choose from. It is the same irony that makes a celebrity or influencer who is highly popular and influential, who has made impact for years through writing, sports, acting, music and other crafts, not good enough to be elected into office.

That is why instead of calling netizens friends or fans, they are better described as followers. People can enjoy your craft without necessarily liking you as a person.

Robert Sternberg's work on the difference between admiration and intimacy captures this; we can be fascinated by what you do without wanting to live with who you are.

Returning to the Plateau man and the reflection it inspires, the lesson is that an aspect of emotional intelligence forbids overestimating one's importance. There should be discipline not to threaten even people we help, support or even our own spouse with absolute sanctions like sack, send away or divorce because it could end up exposing our own vulnerability.

If you expose the worst you can do,

what is left for people to fear? What if while you are issuing such threats to prove your power, the supposed weak or dependent responds, Oga, you can do your worst, or is that all you can do, just to preserve dignity? What becomes of such utterances long after they are deployed to ridicule, embarrass and insult others? Do they not create greater vulnerability if by any chance you come to need the help of the same people who are your neighbours or town people and they remind you of how you abandoned them at a crucial time?

I also think the world can move on without us, and that is a truth we do not fully appreciate. It is therefore better not to overestimate our importance to the extent that, before our very eyes, those who depend on us become emancipated after we with-

draw our contribution. If you are providing someone with food or shelter, you should realise that if you suddenly become unwilling to continue that support, people do not necessarily die because of the resulting hardship. In many cases, they eventually learn to survive on their own. Yes, they may suffer at the beginning, but that suffering does not necessarily continue forever. Have you ever wondered how orphans, widows and even those who have been rejected manage to adapt and survive?

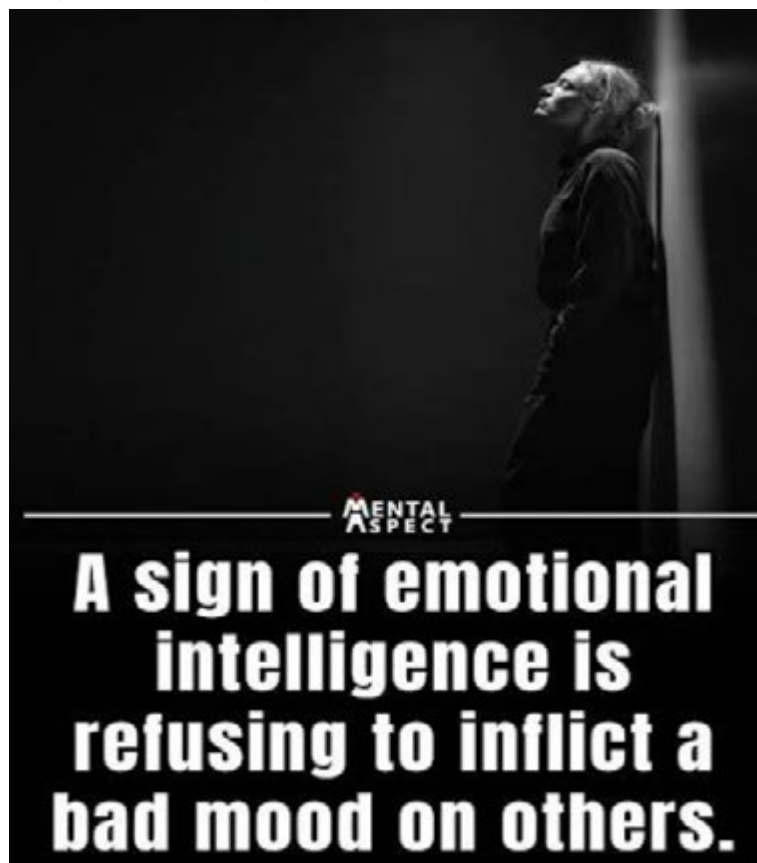
Psychologists call this resilience, the human capacity to rewire and rebuild after loss. That is why even threatening to withdraw support can be excessive talk, especially when trying to prove that people cannot do without us for a day and will come begging. That is not always the case.

Besides, politics is an investment and a risk, and repeating the investment is not always predictable. Humility is to do good because it adds value and could create positivity but never to expect or feel entitled to be paid back as a matter of right. There was no contract that if the Plateau man did those projects he would automatically be elected.

So I blame him first for losing his cool even when he seemed to be in a better position of strength and control. By losing his temper he lost all the goodwill and reputation he had built and subjected himself to mockery and greater vulnerability, because definitely the villagers will learn to live without him, but he can hardly recover from the excesses of that wilderness and from allowing provocation to get the better side of his judgment.

**HAPPY NEW MONTH, AND
HAPPY 66TH INDEPENDENCE
ANNIVERSARY.**

• Bagudu Mohammed* is the founder of *Alternative Perspectives*, a widely read commentary platform on social media, and writes a weekly newspaper column published every Monday on the back page of *Peoples Daily*. Web: <https://alternativeperspective.onrender.com>



Sports

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



Governor of Enugu State, Dr. Peter Mbah inspects facilities, reassures of world-class games

National Sports Festival: Mbah inspects facilities, reassures of world-class, memorable games

Governor of Enugu State, Dr. Peter Mbah, says his administration is committed to delivering a world-class and memorable 23rd National Sports Festival (NSF), tagged "Coal City Games."

Mbah also assured of the readiness of all the facilities ahead of the Games slated for 27th November to 11th December 2026.

The Governor spoke at the weekend during a tour of Awgu Games Village, one of the venues slated for the NSF, for a firsthand assessment of the quality and speed of work at the site, stressing that the Awgu Games Village, which had long been abandoned, would emerge as a world-standard sports facility in less than two months.

"Recall the commitment we made as a government that we are going to make the 23rd National Sports Festival one of the most memorable festivals in the history of the event.

"So, the construction of a one-thousand-capacity-bed hostel is ongoing. We also have the construction of outdoor and indoor courts ongoing.

"A standard FIFA pitch is also under construction. We equally have an eight-lane track, and these are all world-class.

"I have to come because we have a very tight timeline and this project must be ready. It means that in less than two months, this place will no longer be a construction site. It will become a world-class Games Village. In less than two months, what you will have here is a proper venue that will be hosting contingents from across the country," he said.

Mbah, however, added that his administration was not just building for the NSF, noting that the massive development of sports facilities was in line with his campaign promise to make Enugu State the preferred destination for investment, business,

tourism, and for living.

He said the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium was already being upgraded into a FIFA-standard stadium, describing sports as not just recreation and a veritable tool for social cohesion, but also big business if well harnessed.

"As you also know, the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium is receiving serious attention. We are upgrading it to a world-class standard.

"These facilities will be ready. I have personally committed to the team from the National Sports Commission, who came on a monitoring visit, that we are not interested in shifting the date. The dates are already fixed for the 23rd National Sports Festival.

"We are carrying out a comprehensive reconstruction and

transformation of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium. We are installing a new FIFA-standard football pitch and a new athletics track. We are rehabilitating and reinstalling the spectator seats, replacing damaged ones, and constructing a new roofing and canopy system to cover the entire spectator stands.

"We are upgrading the VIP and VVIP stands, the players' changing rooms and other associated facilities. We are upgrading the stadium gates and access-control system to an electronic system, installing two new LCD scoreboards, perimeter LED display boards and protective perimeter mesh fencing around the main bowl. The floodlighting system and other electrical and mechanical ser-

vices are also being upgraded.

"We are also cladding the external areas of the stadium to give the entire complex a new, modern architectural appearance and aesthetic ambience. There are extensive finishing works, external works, landscaping and improvements to the access and general environment of the stadium.

"Beyond the main stadium bowl, we are building a new Olympic-size swimming pool with its associated facilities. We are transforming the Indoor Sports Hall and constructing and upgrading indoor and outdoor sporting facilities, including volleyball, basketball, squash and other sports, together with their pavilions and supporting facilities.

NPFL Matchday 7: Bendel Insurance chairman Tenebe, says team is unstoppable

● Hails coach Boboye after thrashing Barau FC 4-1

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Chairman of Bendel Insurance Football Club, Emperor Jarrett Tenebe, has described his team's impressive performance against Barau FC as highly commendable, expressing confidence that the Benin Arsenal are unstoppable this season.

Tenebe gave the commendation while speaking with sports journalists after the Matchday 7 encounter between the Benin Arsenal and Barau FC on Sunday evening in Benin City.

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

The convincing victory at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium, Benin City, brought Barau FC's unbeaten run to an end.

The Benin Arsenal chairman said he was impressed with the team's performance as the hosts produced a dominant display throughout the blockbuster encounter in front of their home supporters.

"Our opponents only managed to score one goal as a result of the penalty awarded against us. We have proven to the world that Insurance is a solid team, and we are serious contenders in the league," Tenebe said.

"This is just the beginning. We are going to be getting good results because we have quality players who are good enough to win the league title for us.

"Let me commend the team, the Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, and the coaching crew of Bendel Insurance for the great job they have done. They have been able to assemble a solid team.

"The next thing now is for us to start winning away matches. We are going to Lagos next to face Sporting Lagos, and we are getting results in the next two away matches."

Tenebe also expressed confidence in the team's ability to compete against any side in the league, while calling for continued fair officiating.

"The Insurance team you saw just now, do you see them as a team anybody can stop? We are only praying for fair officiating, like we have had so far this season. We pray it continues, then we can do it," he enthused.

Bendel Insurance FC now have 12 points and sit fifth on the NPFL table following their 4-1 victory over Barau FC.

The Benin Arsenal will be on the road to Lagos for their Matchday 8 fixture against Sporting Lagos.

Gymnastics Federation of Nigeria appoints coaches into various disciplines

The Gymnastics Federation of Nigeria has released the list of 44 coaches to handle the various disciplines in the national teams.

In a statement signed by Rose Verisimo, the Technical Director of GFN, Isaiah Erhunwunse (OLY) has been appointed head coach of the Men's Artistic Gymnastics (MAG), to be assisted by Bala Magaji Juwara and Anthony Duilemi, while Helen Albert (head coach), Edem Umor Patric, and Emmanuel Enejo will be in charge of the Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG).

In Trampoline, DMT, and Tumbling (DMT & PT), Dorcas Abel will handle the senior men as head coach and will be assisted by Osamudiamwenam Amennaghawon, while Osasu Obasohan, Godwin Bamidele, and Awokunle Ojo are in charge of the senior women.

In the Aerobics Gymnastic, Edina Ahue has been appointed head coach Senior Team, to be assisted by David West Tamunuosaki and Jennifer Eke while, Michael Ocheke is the head coach of the junior team, to be assisted by Dimeji Aluko and Toyosi Glory Adeyemi.

President of the Gymnastics Federation of Nigeria, Prince Kelvin Erhunwunse explained that the various coaches were carefully selected because they have distinguished themselves in their respective disciplines.

He said: "These appointments were made based on merit, dedication, and the track records of the individuals. We have absolute confidence that these coaches possess the requisite experience and passion to elevate Nigerian gymnastics to unprecedented heights."

Erhunwunse revealed that the federation's ultimate target is to have more athletes win medals for Nigeria at various international championships and ultimately qualify a formidable contingent for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

He said: "Our primary goal is clear: we want to produce world-class athletes who will not only dominate the African continent but also stand on the podium at the global stage.

"Preparation for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics begins now, and we are putting the right technical crew in place to achieve this vision."

He further charged the newly appointed coaches to see their roles as a patriotic call to duty.

The UAG Vice President said: "I urge all our coaches to view this appointment as a sacred call to serve our fatherland. We expect high levels of discipline, professionalism, and teamwork

as you groom the next generation of Nigerian gymnastics."

FULL LIST OF APPOINTEES
Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG)

SENIOR TEAM:

Helen Albert (Head Coach)
Edem Umor Patric (Assistant Coach Emmanuel Enejo (Assistant Coach 2)

JUNIOR TEAM:

Abosede Olatundun Oladele (Head Coach)

Deborah Ajiboye (Assistant Coach 1)

Noel Egbunu (Assistant Coach 2)

MEN'S ARTISTIC GYMNAS-TICS (MAG)

SENIOR TEAM:

Isaiah Oni Erhunwunse (Head Coach)

Bala Magaji Juwara (Assistant Coach 1)

Anthony Duilemi (Assistant Coach 2)

JUNIOR TEAM:

Kennedy Osawaro (Head Coach)

Jimoh Wasiu (Assistant Coach 1)

Jimoh Azeez (Assistant Coach 2)

AEROBICS GYMNAS-TICS

SENIOR TEAM:

Edina Ahue (Head Coach)

Devid West Tamunuosaki (Assistant Coach 1)

Jennifer Eke (Assistant Coach 2)

JUNIOR TEAM:

Michael Ocheke (Head Coach)

Dimeji Aluko (Assistant Coach 1)

Toyosi Glory Adeyemi (Assistant Coach 2)

TRAMPOLINE, DMT, AND TUMBLING (DMT & PT)

SENIOR MEN:

Dorcas Abel (Head Coach)

Osamudiamwenam Amennaghawon (Assistant Coach 1)

SENIOR WOMEN:

Osasu Obasohan (Head Coach)

Godwin Bamidele (Assistant Coach 1)

Awokunle Ojo (Assistant Coach 2)

JUNIOR MEN:

Michael Jos (Head Coach)

Stephen Taiwo (Assistant Coach 1)

Christopher Akhidenor (Assistant Coach 2)

JUNIOR WOMEN:

Adekemi Ademuwagun (Head Coach)

David Egbunu (Assistant Coach 1)

Ashiagu Charles (Assistant Coach 2)

PARKOUR (PK)

Senior Women: Victoria Ito-do (Head Coach)

Senior Men: Olorunfemi Samuel Adeyemi (Head Coach)

Junior Men: Davidson Erhunwunse (Head Coach)

Sports

The Edo Queens verdict and the Question of finality in African Football

CONTINUES ON BACK PAGE»

ulations. If it does, the Appeals Committee should identify it clearly.

If it does not, then the case becomes less about whether Article 72.4 was breached and more about whether CAF has stretched a regulatory provision beyond its natural meaning to create a remedy that the provision itself does not expressly establish.

That distinction could be fundamental.

THE REFEREE'S INSTRUCTION AND THE PLAYER'S DUTY

There is another dimension that should not be overlooked.

Players are expected to obey the referee's instructions.

IFAB's Law 5 expressly gives the referee authority over the match and requires players and team officials to respect match officials' decisions.

So consider the practical situation in Ouagadougou.

The referee signals that the match will go directly to penalties.

The players line up.

The shoot-out takes place.

One team wins.

The referee confirms the outcome.

The winning team celebrates.

The competition authorities recognise the winner.

Then, weeks later, the team is told that the procedure was wrong and that it must return to Burkina Faso to continue the final from 2-2.

The obvious question is: what could Edo Queens have done differently?

If they had refused to take the penalties, they might themselves have faced disciplinary consequences for refusing an official instruction.

If they took the penalties, as instructed, they risked precisely the consequence now confronting them.

That is why the NFF's argument that Edo Queens should not bear the consequences of an error they neither caused nor requested cannot simply be dismissed as an attempt to defend a title.

It raises a genuine question about responsibility in the administration of sport.

THE SENEGAL-MOROCCO CASE: A DIFFERENT FACT PATTERN, BUT AN IMPORTANT PARALLEL

The other major CAF controversy provides an even more consequential backdrop.

The 2025 AFCON final between Senegal and Morocco ended 1-0 to Senegal after extra time, with Pape Gueye scoring early in extra time. CAF itself reported Senegal as champions at the conclusion of the match.

The controversy came later.

Following events surrounding Senegal's temporary departure from the field, CAF's Appeal Board ultimately held that the Senegal team had infringed Articles 82 and 84 of the AFCON Regulations and declared Senegal to have forfeited the final, recording the result as a 3-0 victory for Morocco.

That is a fundamentally different legal situation from the Edo Queens case.

In the Senegal case, CAF relied on provisions dealing with team conduct and forfeiture. In the Edo Queens case, the reported breach concerns the administration of the match procedure by officials.

That distinction should matter.

A team that deliberately refuses to continue a match after an official instruction, or commits conduct expressly punishable under competition regulations, is not necessarily in the same legal position as a team that simply follows the referee into a penalty shoot-out.

The two cases therefore should not be treated as identical precedents.

But they do raise the same larger institutional question:

How should CAF balance the sanctity of its regulations with the sanctity of events that have already occurred on the field?

THE 15-MINUTE QUESTION IN THE SENEGAL CASE

There is also a legitimate question about the chronology of the Senegal-Morocco incident.

If the competition regulations provided a period within which the Senegal team could return to the field, and the team returned within that period, then the legal significance of the walk-out becomes an important question of fact and interpretation.

Why was the match allowed to continue to its conclusion if the conduct had already amounted to an immediately punishable abandonment?

Conversely, if CAF's regulations permitted disciplinary consequences notwithstanding the subsequent resumption of play, what is the precise legal basis for imposing the forfeiture?

Those questions are now before the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

CAS has confirmed October 8, 2026, as the hearing date for Senegal's appeal against CAF and the Royal Moroccan Football Federation. The hearing is scheduled for Lausanne and will be conducted behind closed doors.

Importantly, the CAS hearing itself should not be treated as proof that either side is legally right. It is the next stage of the dispute-resolution process.

CAF'S BIGGER PROBLEM: CONSISTENCY

This is where the Edo Queens controversy transcends one football match.

Football governing bodies derive authority not only from the regulations they publish but also from the consistency with which they apply those regulations.

If the same regulatory philosophy is applied differently depending on the identity of the teams, the circumstances of the match or the consequences of the decision, confidence in the competition suffers.

The public therefore deserves more than a conclusion.

It deserves to understand the legal route by which CAF arrived at that conclusion.

In the Edo Queens case, four questions stand out:

First: What precise provision gives CAF authority to annul the completed penalty shoot-out?

Second: What provision authorises the final to resume from 2-2 rather than being replayed or the existing result being allowed to stand?

Third: If CAF found that neither team was responsible for the error, why should the competitive consequences of the officials' mistake be



CAF PRESIDENT PATRICE MOTSEPE

imposed on either team?

Fourth: What judicial or sporting precedent supports the specific remedy of resuming a completed final from the point at which the regulatory error occurred?

Those are the questions that should be answered before anyone concludes that the matter is simply about whether extra time was required.

"SPILLED MILK" OR A REMEDY THAT CREATES A NEW PROBLEM?

There is an old expression: once the milk is spilled, the challenge is not to pretend that it was never spilled but to decide what can reasonably be done next.

Football's governing bodies face the

same dilemma.

A regulatory breach should not simply be ignored because correcting it is inconvenient.

But correction must itself have a legal foundation.

Otherwise, a governing body risks replacing one irregularity with another.

The September 5 final was played. Ninety minutes were completed. The score was 2-2. The referee directed the teams to penalties. The shoot-out was completed. Edo Queens won 4-1. The team was declared champion.

The subsequent discovery that the prescribed extra-time procedure was not followed undoubtedly raises a legitimate regulatory issue.

But the equally legitimate question is whether annulling the shoot-out and reopening the competition is a remedy authorised by CAF's legal framework, or a remedy created after the event because the original mistake had already become impossible to correct in the ordinary course of play.

That is the real legal test.

THE APPEAL SHOULD BE ABOUT LAW, NOT EMOTION

The NFF's appeal now gives CAF an opportunity to address the issue with clarity.

The Appeals Committee should explain not merely why Article 72.4 was breached, but why the particular remedy imposed follows from CAF's regulations.

It should also explain the legal status of the referee's instruction, the responsibility of the competition officials, the relevance of the completed shoot-out, and the reason why Edo Queens should or should not bear the consequences of an error for which the first-instance ruling reportedly did not hold either team responsible.

This is not an argument for ignoring CAF's regulations.

Quite the opposite.

It is an argument for applying them rigorously — including the provisions that determine the jurisdiction and remedial powers of CAF's own judicial bodies.

The same standard should apply in the Senegal-Morocco case before CAS.

AN INTEGRITY TEST FOR CAF

CAF is entitled to protect the integrity of its competitions. Indeed, it must.

But integrity is not simply the willingness to correct an error.

Integrity also means applying rules consistently, respecting due process, identifying the proper source of legal authority, distinguishing between responsibility and consequence, and providing a remedy that the governing regulations actually permit.

The Edo Queens-Ampem Darkoa dispute therefore presents CAF with an important opportunity.

The question before the Appeals Committee is bigger than which club should hold the WAFU-B trophy.

It is whether African football's regulatory system has a coherent answer when officials make a procedural error after 90 minutes, the teams comply with the officials' instruction, the match is completed, a winner is declared, and the mistake is discovered only afterwards.

Can football authorities simply rewind the competition?

If yes, under what rule?

If not, what is the appropriate remedy? And where does the principle of finality of a football match begin?

Those questions deserve precise legal answers.

Because in football, as in every serious sporting system, the integrity of the rules is ultimately measured not only by how they are written, but by how fairly, consistently and transparently they are applied.

The Edo Queens case may therefore become more than another controversial CAF ruling.

It may become a test of whether CAF can demonstrate that its regulatory system has a principled answer for the difficult space between what should have happened on the field and what can lawfully be done after



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SPORTS



CAF'S Integrity Test: The Edo Queens verdict and the Question of finality in African Football

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Confederation of African Football (CAF), under its president, Patrice Motsepe, once again finds itself confronted with an uncomfortable question about the administration of the game: when an error is committed by match officials or competition administrators, where should responsibility lie, and how far can a football governing body go in correcting the consequences after the final whistle?

That question now lies at the heart of the controversy surrounding the 2026 WAFU-B final between Nigeria's Edo Queens and Ghana's Ampem Darkoa Ladies.

It is not merely a dispute over a women's football trophy. It is a dispute about the authority of competition regulations, the responsibilities of match officials, the finality of results, the jurisdiction of disciplinary and appeals bodies, and the remedies available when a competition has not been administered in accordance with its own rules.

Ultimately, it is another test of CAF's institutional credibility.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED IN OUAGADOUGOU?

The WAFU-B final was played on September 5, 2026, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Edo Queens and Ampem Darkoa Ladies were level at 2-2 after 90 minutes.

Instead of playing the prescribed 30 minutes of extra time, the officials directed the teams to proceed immediately to a penalty shoot-out.

Edo Queens won the shoot-out 4-1 and were declared champions, thereby securing the WAFU-B qualification ticket for the CAF Women's Champions League.

Ampem Darkoa subsequently protested, arguing that the competition regulations required two 15-minute periods of extra time before penalties.

CAF's Organising Committee for Women's Football upheld the protest. According to the published account of the ruling, CAF found that Articles 13.1 and 72.4 of the applicable regulations required extra time and that proceeding directly to penalties was therefore contrary to the competition rules. CAF consequently ordered the final to resume from the 2-2 scoreline and proceed through extra time, with a new penalty shoot-out if necessary.

There is an important detail that should not be lost in the argument.

The available reporting of CAF's decision indicates that neither Edo Queens nor Ampem Darkoa was held responsible for the failure to play extra time. The error was attributed to an administrative instruction that was inconsistent with the competition regulations, while the



EDO QUEENS PLAYERS

referee was reported to have acted in good faith on that instruction.

That fact makes the case particularly difficult.

If neither team caused the procedural breach, why should one of them lose a result obtained by following the instructions of the appointed match officials?

That is the central question raised by the Nigeria Football Federation's appeal.

CAN THE VICTIM OF AN OFFICIAL'S ERROR BE MADE TO PAY FOR IT?

The NFF has appealed CAF's ruling, arguing that Edo Queens did not request that extra time be abandoned and did not refuse to play it.

The federation's position is straightforward: the players followed the referee's instruction. The club neither selected the procedure nor had the authority to substitute its own interpretation of the competition regulations for that of the appointed officials.

That argument deserves serious consideration.

Football is governed by rules, but players do not administer those rules during a match. That responsibility belongs to the officials and, ultimately, to the competition organisers.

If a referee instructs both teams to proceed to penalties, can a player reasonably be expected to stop the process and say: "No, referee, Article 72.4 requires another 30 minutes"?

And if the player complies with the official instruction, can that compliance later become the legal basis for taking away the result?

These are not merely emotional questions. They go to the architecture of sporting justice.

The NFF's appeal reportedly asks CAF's Appeals Committee to examine precisely this issue: whether there is sufficient legal basis to invalidate a completed shoot-out and reopen the final when neither participating team was responsible for the procedural error.

ARTICLE 72.4 MAY ANSWER ONE QUESTION — BUT DOES IT ANSWER THE REMEDY QUESTION?

This is perhaps the most important legal issue in the Edo Queens case.

Assuming Article 72.4 clearly required 30 minutes of extra time, there may be little dispute that the prescribed procedure was not followed.

But identifying a breach and identifying the appropriate remedy are not necessarily the same thing.

A regulation can tell officials what should happen at the end of 90 minutes. It does not automatically follow that the same provision authorises a competition committee, weeks later, to reconstruct the match from the point at which the error occurred.

This distinction deserves careful examination.

Article 72.4, as reported in the CAF

decision, establishes the sequence: 90 minutes, followed by two periods of 15-minute extra time if the final is drawn, and penalties only if the scores remain level thereafter.

But where, precisely, is the legal provision that says:

«If officials mistakenly proceed to penalties without playing the required extra time, and the penalties are completed, the shoot-out shall be annulled and the match shall resume from the end of regulation time?»

That is the question the Appeals Committee must confront.

It is not enough to establish that something went wrong. The committee must also establish what the regulations legally empower it to do about what went wrong.

That is where the principle of legality becomes important.

FOOTBALL NEEDS FINALITY — BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE RULES

There is an obvious counterargument.

If competitions simply allowed an incorrectly conducted procedure to stand, organisers could effectively make the regulations optional. That cannot be the answer.

The integrity of a competition requires its rules to be followed.

But the opposite proposition also

deserves consideration: if every material officiating or administrative mistake can retrospectively reopen a completed match, where does the finality of football results begin and end?

The Laws of the Game give the referee extensive authority during a match. IFAB's Law 5 states that the referee has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game, while decisions regarding facts connected with play and the result of the match are final.

That principle does not necessarily prevent competition authorities from reviewing regulatory breaches. Nor does it mean that every referee error is immune from challenge.

But it does underline the need for a clear distinction between:

- a mistake made in applying the Laws of the Game;
- a breach of competition regulations;
- an administrative error by competition officials; and
- misconduct or deliberate non-compliance by a participating team.

These categories should not automatically produce the same remedy.

THERE ARE PRECEDENTS FOR CORRECTING TECHNICAL ERRORS — BUT THE REMEDY MATTERS

It would be wrong to suggest that football authorities can never order a match to be replayed because of an officiating error.

Indeed, an instructive English example emerged in 2026.

An FA Cup qualifying match between Mulbarton Wanderers and Woodford Town was ordered to be replayed after an FA rules sub-committee determined that a technical error had occurred in the application of Law 14 following a penalty.

The original result was voided because the match had not been completed in accordance with the applicable FA Cup rules.

That case is useful to the Edo Queens debate — but it also demonstrates why comparisons must be made carefully.

In the English case, the remedy was a replay of the match in its entirety.

CAF, by contrast, has reportedly chosen a much narrower remedy in the Edo Queens case: the first 90 minutes remain valid, the 2-2 scoreline remains, but the teams must return to play the missing extra time and, if necessary, another shoot-out.

That raises another legal question:

What provision authorises CAF to preserve one part of the match, erase another part and retrospectively insert a period of play that should have occurred on September 5?

The answer may exist in CAF's reg-

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