Oba Ewuare II celebrates 10 years on Benin throne with historic ceremonial golf tee-off

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The Oba of Benin, Omo N'Oba N'Edo, Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, on Saturday, October 31, 2026, marked his 10th anniversary on the revered throne of Benin with a symbolic ceremonial tee-off at the Benin Club Golf Section, Benin City, Edo State.

In a remarkable display of royal symbolism, His Majesty struck 10 ceremonial golf balls, representing each year of his reign, as part of activities commemorating a decade of traditional leadership.

The colourful ceremony was further enlivened by the participation of the monarch's children, including his daughter, Princess Amenaghawon, and three sons, Princes Ikponmwosa, Igbinosa and Idugbowa, who also took turns hitting ceremonial golf balls.

The event attracted an array of distinguished personalities, including top Benin Palace chiefs, members of the tournament's Local Organizing Committee, captains of industry, sponsors, and professional and amateur golfers from across Nigeria and beyond.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Organiser of the tournament, Prince Aghatise Erediauwa, described the competition as a fitting tribute to Oba Ewuare II's decade-long reign, characterised by peace, cultural renaissance and purposeful leadership.

He disclosed that the 2026 tournament was the ninth edition of the coronation anniversary golf competition, which returned after its last outing in 2022.

Prince Erediauwa expressed delight at the impressive turnout of professional and amateur golfers, as well as the enthusiasm and excitement displayed by participants.

"You can see the joy on everybody's face today. Normally, there is a ceremonial tee-off. This has been a fantastic golf tournament where people came from all over the world—both professional and amateur players," he said.

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The Nigerian OBSERVER

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Okpebholo approves new GRA to decongest Benin City, xpand housing...*EDOGIS to commence survey, planning of estate*

Richard Eweka

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has approved the establishment of a new Government Reserved Area (GRA) to ease congestion in Benin City, expand housing opportunities and attract investment into the state.

The Managing Director of the Edo State Geographic Information Service (EDOGIS), Assoc. Prof. Innocent Ehiaguina Bello, FNCA, who disclosed this in Benin City, said the governor had directed the agency to commence the survey and planning of the proposed estate.

Bello explained that the new GRA would help ease pressure on the existing city centre by providing a well-planned residential neighbourhood with modern infrastructure and an efficient land administration system.

He said the proposed layout would accommodate roads, drainage systems, electricity, water supply, telecommunications and other essential services.

According to him, the project will be executed with professionalism, transparency and technical precision, guided by the principles of sustainable urban development.

He noted that the layout would clearly define plot boundaries, road alignments, access routes and designated land uses to guide development and minimise land disputes.

The EDOGIS boss added that secure land titles and reliable cadastral records would help prevent multiple allocations, land grabbing and other forms of land racketeering.

Bello stressed that proper physical planning was essential to preventing the challenges associated with unplanned urban expansion, particularly buildings encroaching on roads, drainage channels and other public spaces.

He said the proposed estate would also incorporate green spaces, recreational facilities, sanitation and waste management systems, as well as effective stormwater drainage infrastructure.

On the economic benefits, Bello said the project had the potential to boost investor confidence, stimulate property development and create employment opportunities through construction and other related activities.

He added that the scheme would explore housing options for different income groups, subject to the approved development plan and government policy.

According to him, transparent land allocation, proper documentation and the lawful collection of applicable charges would also enhance government revenue and strengthen accountability in land administration.

Bello disclosed that EDOGIS would collaborate with relevant ministries, departments and agencies on geospatial data acquisition, boundary verification, cadastral mapping, preparation of the estate layout and development of reliable digital land records.

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



Managing Director, Edo State Geographic Information Service (EDOGIS), Prof. Innocent Ehiaguina Bello.



Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo.

Okpebholo inspects Benin roads, promises massive repairs as dry season sets in

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has inspected several roads across Benin City, assuring residents that his administration will commence massive road construction, rehabilitation and repair works with the onset of the dry season.

Governor Okpebholo, accompanied by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Projects Monitoring and Implementation, Engr. Phoebe Williams-Bello; Edo State APC Deputy Chairman, Sylvester Aigboboh; and other top government officials, inspected sections of the Benin-Sapele Road around RCCG, Evbukhu and Bellisima.

The governor's entourage also inspected the water retention point beyond the Benin-Sapele Road bypass, Adesuwa Flyover and Akhionbare, among other locations.

Speaking during the inspection, Governor Okpebholo said the exercise was aimed at identifying roads requiring urgent attention, noting that the dry season provided an opportunity to intensify construction and rehabilitation works across the state.

"We have embarked on this inspection because it is the dry season and it is time to go back to work. It is time for us to quickly address the roads

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

2027: Edo ready to deliver Tinubu, APC candidates, Okpebholo declares —*Pg 2*

Okpebholo promises better healthcare at hospital groundbreaking ceremony —*Pg 3*

Minister seeks army battalion, tougher enforcement to curb illegal mining. —*Pg 7*

India's opposition holds mega rally seeking election chief's resignation —*Pg 10*

NEWS

2027: Edo ready to deliver Tinubu, APC candidates, Okpebholo declares

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has declared that the state is ready to deliver President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and all candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2027 general elections scheduled for January.

The governor made the declaration on Thursday after a guided tour of the Edo State Presidential Campaign Council secretariat in Benin City by the Director-General of the Council, Senator Mathew Urhoghide.

Okpebholo, who expressed satisfaction with the renovation work at the facility, described the complex as ready for the electioneering campaign.

He expressed confidence that Edo voters would re-elect President Tinubu for a second term and also vote for APC candidates contesting seats in the Senate, House of Representatives and Edo State House of Assembly.

"I did not know there was a press briefing. I just came to see what has been done at the Campaign Council complex. It looks nice, and we are set for the election," the governor said.

"Things are set in Edo State. As you can see on the board, Asiwaju 2027 is settled. Our 2.5 million votes are not negotiable. They are already settled, and that is the truth."

He said the party was looking forward to January 16, the stated election date, and urged eligible voters across the state to turn out in large numbers to exercise their civic responsibility.

"We are just waiting for January 16 to perform our civic duty as citizens. I urge all Edo people to come out in their large numbers and vote," he added.

Earlier, Senator Urhoghide welcomed the governor to the campaign council secretariat and thanked him, government officials and party leaders for visiting the facility to assess the renovation work ahead of the presidential, National Assembly and State House of Assembly elections.

The Director-General noted that the governor had provided the facility for the council's activities and had visited to assess the level of work carried out.

He explained that the renovation was necessary to provide a conducive environment for the campaign council to promote the party's candidates and programmes to the electorate.

"The renovation became necessary to create a conducive atmosphere to sell the party's candidates to the electorate and the Nigerian people," Urhoghide said.

He added that the media was invited to familiarise journalists with the council's campaign plans and solicit their cooperation.

"We are partners in progress. With your support, we will sell our brand to the Nigerian people. The APC has very good candidates in various positions, and we expect your full cooperation to present them to the Nigerian public," he said.



INSPECTION:
Edo State Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo (3rd left) inspecting on going road construction in Benin city at the weekend

...Okpebholo approves new GRA

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

He said the agency would also identify existing legitimate land interests and planning constraints to minimise potential conflicts.

The EDOGIS managing director assured that the implementation of the project would comply with relevant laws, protect legitimate property rights and respect environmental requirements and statutory approval procedures.

He advised prospective property owners and investors to obtain verified information through official government channels and avoid unauthorised transactions and payments.

Bello said further details concerning the location, approved layout, land allocation, infrastructure and implementation timetable would be made public by the appropriate authorities after the necessary assessments and approvals.

He described the initiative as an opportunity to advance the state government's vision of a better-planned and less congested Edo State, reaffirming EDOGIS's commitment to the administration's SHINE Agenda through professional surveying, dependable land records and improved service delivery.

He called on the media, government agencies, traditional institutions, landowners, investors and members of the public to cooperate with the government and respect due process.

...Oba Ewuare II celebrates 10 years on Benin

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

He added: "It has been going so well. We are excited that His Royal Majesty dedicated his time to be with us at the tournament. We are extremely delighted, and we thank him so much for that."

Also speaking with journalists, the Director-General of the National Institute for Sports and former Deputy Governor of Edo State,Rt.Hon. Philip Shaibu commended the Benin monarch for attaining the historic 10-year milestone. He noted that the presence of eminent personalities at the tournament demonstrated the widespread respect and admiration enjoyed by the Oba.

The former deputy governor also applauded Oba Ewuare II for his contributions to peace, unity and development in Edo State, while offering prayers for a more prosperous and enduring reign.

"As you can see, everybody is around for this tournament. It shows the respect that we have for the Oba. May his reign continue to bring progress to all of us," he said.

The ceremonial tee-off added a memorable highlight to the anniversary celebrations, bringing together members of the royal family, traditional institution, business community and golfing fraternity in honour of Oba Ewuare II's decade on the throne.

The tournament further underscored the enduring significance of the Benin monarchy and the role of sporting and cultural engagements in celebrating the kingdom's heritage, unity and progress.

Okpebholo offers land for Federal Transport Data Centre

...Says project will boost security, create jobs, increase revenue

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has offered 1,000 square metres of land for the establishment of a Smart National Transport Data Bank in the state, describing the initiative as a major boost to security, employment generation and economic growth.

The governor gave the assurance when he received a delegation from the Federal Ministry of Transportation, led by its Permanent Secretary, Engr. Olufunso Adebiyi, FNSE, at Government House, Benin City.

The delegation included representatives of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT) and Arab Investment.

Governor Okpebholo described the proposed facility as a significant development that would stimulate Edo State's economy through job creation, improved security, increased revenue generation and technology transfer.

He said the project aligned with his administration's vision of transforming Edo from an ancient city into a modern one, expressing delight that the state had been selected to host the facility.

"Setting up a transport data centre in Edo State is huge. A lot of benefits will come to us. Social benefits will be there, employment will also be there, not to talk of the revenue that will come to us.

"I see it as a development that will uplift our economy in this state. I am delighted that Edo was mentioned in that meeting where the approval was discussed. To me, it is a recognition," the governor said.

He assured the delegation of his administration's readiness to provide the necessary support, including land for the project.

"Knowing fully well that approval has been given at the federal level, whatever you require from us, including 1,000 square metres of land, we can give you. I will direct EdoGIS to commence the process," he added.

The governor described Edo's selection for the project as another recognition of the state's growing strategic importance, recalling that the 83 Armoured Division was also recently cited in Edo State despite competition from other states.

Earlier, Adebiyi said the initiative was part of President Bola Tinubu's vision to establish a structured transport data management system for Nigeria's land transportation sector, similar to the system operating in the aviation industry.

He disclosed that the Federal Government had approved the development of standardised bus terminals across the country, beginning with one in each of the six geopolitical zones before extending the programme to other states.

According to him, participating states are expected to provide 1,000 square metres of land for the construction of an office to house and manage transport data, while neither the state nor the federal government would be required to fund the construction.

The Permanent Secretary explained that the initiative would strengthen security, improve revenue generation, facilitate access to transport data, create employment opportunities and promote technology transfer.

"Your Excellency, this project has come to stay and it will kick-start immediately. Edo is the first state I am visiting for this purpose," Adebiyi said.

...Okpebholo inspects Benin roads

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

across Edo State and ensure they are motorable for Edo people and Nigerians," he said.

The governor disclosed that the contractor handling a section of the Benin-Sapele Road had assured the government that the project would be completed before Christmas, adding that the development would bring relief to motorists and other road users.

"The contractor handling a section of the Benin-Sapele Road has promised that between now and Christmas, the road will be completed. It is good news for Edo people and Nigerians who use the road. They will be happy when the project is completed," he stated.

Also speaking, a representative of the construction company handling the Sapele-bound section of the road, Mr. Star, said work had commenced on the stone-base phase following the onset of the dry season.

He assured that the company was working towards connecting Benin City to Warri with a completed carriageway before Christmas to ensure smoother movement for motorists.

NEWS

Okpebholo promises better healthcare at hospital groundbreaking ceremony

BERNADETTE IDALU

OVIA

In line with the SHINE Agenda which seeks to provide quality and affordable healthcare for the people, the Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo on Thursday performed a foundation laying ceremony at the project site of the proposed General Hospital at Iguobazuwa.

Performing the block laying ceremony at the project site for an ultra modern two storied hospital building that would be used when completed as a referral and secondary treatment Centre for the sick coming mostly from Ovia Federal Constituency, the Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa who spoke on behalf of Governor Okpebholo stated that the project was one of many facilitated by Governor Monday Okpebholo to make healthcare affordable and seamless across Edo State.

He said the project was remarkable, magnificent, and, located at the heart of Iguobazuwa, a location which made it accessible to the people whenever a medical emergency arose.

He noted that the project was not just about the provision of healthcare for use by members of Ovia Federal Constituency but bringing close to the people a quality secondary healthcare facility that resonates with modernity.

Inspecting the physical layout of the construction site haven earlier appraised the site plan which displayed the skeletal outline of a two storied building housing a pharmacy, mortuary and staff quarters to aid a 24 hour medical rotation, Idahosa on behalf of constituents of Ovia Federal Constituency thanked Governor Okpebholo for bringing quality healthcare to the doorsteps of the people.

He reiterated the value of the hospital at improving the health needs of the people when completed and fully in use, envisioning that 60yrs from now, even children who are yet unborn would benefit from the value chain of the ongoing hospital project.

Aside the Iguobazuwa South West Local Government Council Chairman, Hon. Anthony Osarobo who hailed the governor for initiating the ongoing project, other personalities voiced on the germaneness of the project at satisfying the health needs of indigenous localities. These included Robert Okubo, Special Adviser to the Governor on Riverine Communities; Hon. Sunday Aghedo, Member representing Ovia South West at the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA) and Prof. Ikponmwonsa Omorodion, Edo State Commissioner for Oil and Gas Resources.

The project engineer was at hand anf took the government officials round, on inspection of the hospital project.



INAUGURATION
From left: Mishkom Mupun of Mupun Chiefdom, His Royal Highness Da Yusuf Walle Fwangbring; representative of the Chief of the Naval Staff, Rear Adm. Jonathan Mamman; Project Facilitator, Rear Adm. Nan-Manle Damtong; his wife Rachael and other dignitaries, during the inauguration of the newly constructed maternity ward at Abwor Dyis, Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State.

INEC upholds 66 petitions, rejects 64 in review of 2027 election candidates

CAROLINE AMEH

LAGOS

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has approved 66 petitions and rejected 64 others following a review of complaints against the final lists of governorship and State Houses of Assembly candidates for the 2027 general elections.

The commission said the review resulted in the inclusion of some candidates and political parties previously omitted from the lists, as well as the removal of individuals whose nominations failed to satisfy the applicable legal requirements.

In a statement issued on Thursday, Mohammed Kudu Haruna, Chairman of INEC's Information and Voter Education Committee (IVEC), said the petitions arose from complaints received after the publication of the final candidates' lists on October 10, 2026.

The complaints centred on the omission of political parties, the inclusion of candidates whose names were absent from their parties' membership registers and allegations of multiple nominations.

According to the commission, 69 petitions were received from 12 political parties across 26 states concerning governorship candidates. Of these, 41 were successful, while 28 were rejected. For the State Houses of Assembly elections, INEC received 61 petitions from 11 political parties across 11 states. Twenty-five petitions were upheld, while 36 were unsuccessful.

The commission explained that it examined the complaints alongside relevant records and applicable legal provisions before determining which representations had merit. It said candidates and political parties whose complaints were successful would be included in the updated lists, while names wrongly published despite being absent from the relevant party membership registers would be removed.

Tinubu seeks Senate nod for six NMDPRA executive directors

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has forwarded the names of six nominees for executive director positions at the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) to the Senate for confirmation.

The nominations include three serving executive directors seeking another term and three new appointees, all of whom are expected to serve five-year terms if confirmed.

The development was announced in a State House press release issued on Friday by the President's Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga.

The three nominees for reappointment are Abiodun Adeniji, Executive Director of Finance and Accounts; Ogbugo Kalu Ukoha, Executive Director of Distribution Systems, Storage and Retailing Infrastructure; and Mustapha Lamorde, Executive Director of Health, Safety, Environment and Community.

The new nominees are Mobolaji Tajudeen Musa, for the position of Executive Director of Hydrocarbon Processing Plants, Installations and Transportation Infrastructure; Ogechukwu Modie, for Economic Regulations and Strategic Planning; and Said Abutalib, for Corporate Services and Administration.

President Tinubu has asked the Senate to consider the nominations expeditiously to ensure continuity in the authority's operations and strengthen its regulatory oversight.

In a related move, the President has approved the appointment of Jumoke Gafar as Secretary to the Board/Authority and Legal Adviser, subject to the completion of the statutory procedures under Section 46 of the Petroleum Industry Act.

The appointments come months after Tinubu appointed Rabiu Abdullahi Umar as the agency's chief executive in April.

The NMDPRA oversees regulatory activities in Nigeria's midstream and downstream petroleum sectors, including petroleum processing, transportation, storage and distribution.

The nominees will assume their respective positions following the completion of the required confirmation and appointment procedures.

2027: Christian, Muslim youth sign peace pact

LAGOS

The Youth Wing of the Association of Nigeria (YOWICAN) and the National Council of Muslim Youth Organisations (NACOMYO) have appealed to Nigerians youths to eschew violence and bloodshed in the forthcoming 2027 General Elections.

The groups said the elections would be a litmus test for Nigeria's unity and should not be traded for anything.

The groups made this known at an inter-religious peace accord summit they organised in Lagos on Saturday.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that the Youth Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria and the National Council of Muslim Youth Organisations on Sept. 4 in Abuja also signed a peace accord ahead of the elections.

The Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Bishop Stephen Adegbite, said at the Lagos summit that the peace accord was aimed at fostering religious tolerance.

He said that the peace accord was also aimed at rejecting political violence and promoting peaceful coexistence ahead of the elections.

Adegbite faulted politicians making derogatory utterances against their opponents, saying the nation could not afford war.

"It is because we don't have trust in one another, and when there is no trust, there is room for acrimony, suspicion and bickering.

Umrah offered opportunity for undistracted prayers for Nigeria –Wale Tinubu

MAKKAH

Mr Wale Tinubu, Group Chief Executive Officer of Oando PLC, says the Umrah offers a unique opportunity for the Federal Government delegation to pray for Nigeria's peace, stability and development.

Tinubu, who joined President Bola Tinubu in Makkah to perform the lesser Hajj, told the News Agency of Nigeria that spiritual devotion and hard work must go together in building a prosperous nation.

He described the pilgrimage as an opportunity to demonstrate humility, gratitude, brotherhood and commitment to service.

"In Makkah, the distinctions we carry fall away, leaving humility, gratitude, brotherhood and a spirit of service.

"I am honoured to join President Bola Tinubu in performing the lesser Hajj.

"May Allah accept our Ibadah and grant our nation peace, progress and prosperity," he said.

The Oando boss also commended the economic reforms introduced by the Tinubu administration, saying they were creating opportunities in the oil and gas sector.

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SPECIAL EDITION

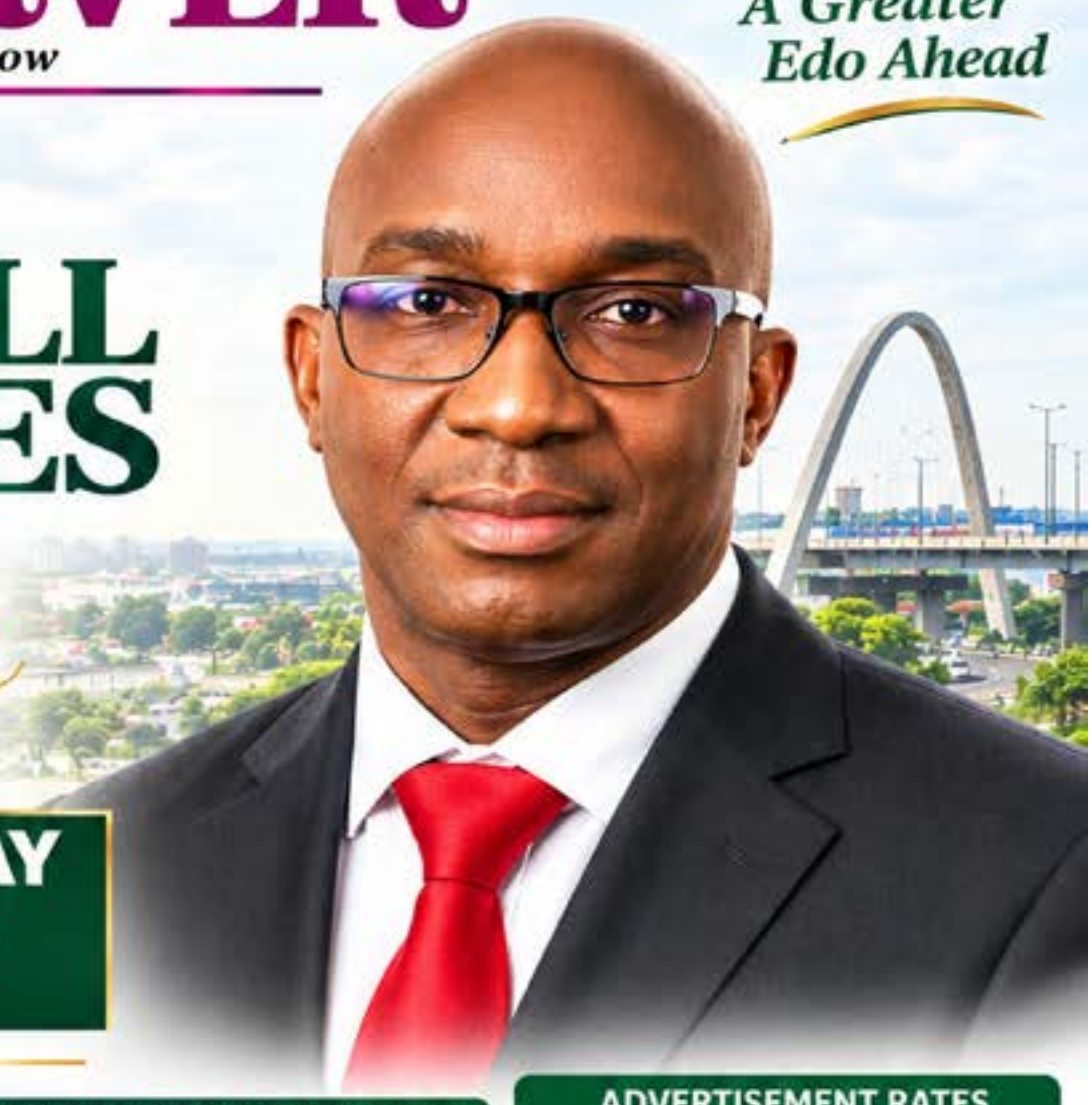
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IN COMMEMORATION OF THE

2ND Years ANNIVERSARY OF

GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO'S ADMINISTRATION

EDO STATE



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Thank you for your continued patronage and support.

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NEWS

Nigeria engineers tasked on professionalism as Benin NSC gets new executive

BENIN CITY

Newly inaugurated executive committee of the Nigeria Society of Engineers NSC, Benin branch has been charged to pursue its mandate with humility, vision and a strong commitment to service.

The National Chairmen of the NSC Engr. Ali Alimasuya Rabiu, gave the charge at the official inauguration of the 24th branch chairman Dr John Obanor, Permanent Secretary, Edo State Ministry of Works and other members of the executive on Saturday in Benin City.

Engr Alimasuya who was represented at the event by Dr. Evukowhiroro Ojegba, a prominent engineer, urged the new exco to build on the achievements of its predecessors, and identify new opportunities to improve the relevance, visibility and impacts of the branch on the society.

While urging teamwork, collective responsibility among professionals in the branch, Engr Alimasuya urged them to prioritize membership development through constructive engagement with old and new members in a way that would make every member to feel valued.

The National Chairmen acknowledged the special position the branch occupied in the professional community in Edo state and Nigeria at large, stressing the necessity of professional excellence in engineering practice for national development.

In his post inauguration remarks, Dr Obanor promised to carry every member along in his new assignment, even as he stressed the importance of members' support and willingness to devote their time, resources and expertise for the success of the association.

Dr Obanor commended the former executive committees of the branch assuring of his commitment to preserving valuable achievements recorded, learn from previous experiences and address existing challenges while introducing new initiatives that would move the association forward.

Dr Obanor assured members of the exco's objectives to ensure harmonious working relationship that would engender mutual love, respect for one another in a manner that would make every member to feel valued, respected and encouraged.

He particularly advised fellow engineers to look beyond personal gains and focus more on the bigger picture of developing the profession for the benefit professionals and the society at large.

In his brief remarks, the Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly Rt Hon Yekini Idaiye who was the special guest of honour at the ceremony, expressed confidence in Dr Obanor's ability to take the NSC Edo branch to greater heights.



VISIT:
From left: APC women leader, South East zone, Dr Oby Ajih; Executive Secretary, Enugu State Primary Healthcare Development Agency, Dr Ifeyinwa Ani-Osheku; Chief Medical Director, Enugu State University Teaching Hospital (ESUTH) Parklane, Prof. Bethrand Ngwu and the representative of the wife of the President/Minister of Women Affairs, Hajiya Imaam Suleiman-Ibrahim, during their visit to ESUTH parklane, in Enugu State.

CNS seeks stronger civil-military cooperation

IRRUA

The Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Idi Abbas, has called for improved civil-military cooperation in Nigeria, saying it is imperative for enhanced national security and prosperity.

He made the call on Saturday at the inauguration and handover ceremony of the Chief of Naval Staff Special Intervention Quick Impact Project facilitated for the Ibore-Irrua community in Esan Central Local Government Area of Edo State by the former Flag Officer Commanding Western Naval Command, Rear Admiral Michael Gregory Oamen (retd.).

The Chief of the Naval Staff, who was represented at the event by the Director, Nigerian Navy Veteran Affairs, Rear Admiral Raheem Taofeek, said the Nigerian Navy recognised that the security and prosperity of the country were strengthened when communities were empowered through meaningful development.

"This understanding continues to guide the Nigerian Navy's civil-military cooperation efforts and the Chief of the Naval Staff Special Intervention Quick Impact Project Scheme, which seeks to address critical community needs while fostering stronger bonds between the Armed Forces and the people we serve," he stated.

Abbas commended Oamen for facilitating the construction of an ultra-modern hall, mini-marts and an IT garden in Ibore-Irrua, while congratulating the community leadership and all stakeholders "whose cooperation and support contributed to the successful completion of the project".

He said, "The vision, dedication and commitment of Rear Admiral Michael Gregory Oamen (retd.) to community development are clearly reflected in the successful execution of this project. Through this noble initiative, he has demonstrated that leadership is most meaningful when it positively impacts the lives of others.

"Also, the collective efforts have shown that when institutions and communities work together, sustainable development becomes achievable."

Speaking further, the CNS said the Nigerian Navy would continue to partner with communities across the country in ways that foster "peace, decision and progress", adding that the Navy remained committed to strengthening civil-military cooperation and supporting initiatives that promote national development and social cohesion.

FG gives solar systems, clean stoves to 330 Ondo residents

AKURE

The Federal Government has distributed locally made household items to 330 residents across the 18 local government areas of Ondo State under the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure Sustainable Empowerment Programme.

The items distributed included solar home systems and clean cooking stoves, among others, all manufactured locally.

Speaking at the distribution of the items to the beneficiaries on Saturday, the Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of NASENI, Mr Khalil Halilu, said the initiative was designed to translate research and development into practical products that could improve living conditions and provide economic opportunities for Nigerians.

To this end, he called for wider adoption of locally developed technologies, saying increased use of indigenous innovations could stimulate domestic manufacturing, create jobs and address some of the country's household challenges.

According to him, wider adoption of locally developed products would encourage domestic manufacturing and strengthen Nigeria's capacity to develop solutions to its own challenges.

He said, "This is to promote locally produced items which bring about employment and also to have something good for our communities.

"Our mandate finds its fullest meaning when technologies we develop and promote help people solve real problems, become more productive and improve their standards of living."

The NASENI boss explained that the solar home systems would provide lighting for households, enable children to study at night and support small businesses, while the clean cooking stoves would offer more efficient cooking alternatives and reduce exposure to smoke when properly used.

He disclosed that the NASENI Sustainable Empowerment Programme had reached more than 10 states across the six geopolitical zones, with 330 men and women benefiting from the intervention in Ondo State.

Customs, EFCC, NDLEA partner to tackle money laundering, terrorism financing

ABUJA

The Nigeria Customs Service has stepped up efforts to tackle cross-border money laundering, terrorism financing and other financial crimes by seeking stronger intelligence sharing and operational cooperation with six security and regulatory agencies.

The agencies, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit, are expected to strengthen coordinated action against illicit financial flows and criminal networks operating across Nigeria's borders.

The initiative also involves the Nigeria Immigration Service and the National Counter-Terrorism Centre under the Office of the National Security Adviser.

A statement issued by the customs spokesperson, Abdullahi Maiwada, on Sunday said the collaboration followed a three-day engagement by the Customs Service with the agencies between October 27 and 29, 2026, as part of efforts to address weaknesses in information sharing and improve the detection of suspicious cross-border transactions.

The exercise was led by the Assistant Comptroller-General in charge of Headquarters, Muhammad Shuaibu, who said the engagement was designed to improve coordination among institutions responsible for tackling financial crimes and threats to national security.

Shuaibu said the initiative would go beyond routine consultations by examining practical Customs controls at border stations and strengthening cooperation among relevant agencies.

"The sole objective of this mission is to effectively detect and disrupt cross-border illicit financial flows. The measures include field visits to selected border stations to assess practical Customs control measures and engage with relevant agencies," he said.

The engagement comes amid persistent concerns over the use of Nigeria's borders for smuggling, drug trafficking, movement of illicit funds and other transnational criminal activities.

Financial crimes and terrorism financing often involve complex networks that cut across different jurisdictions and require intelligence from multiple institutions. Customs officers, who monitor the movement of goods and cargoes across the country's borders, are strategically positioned to identify suspicious trade transactions and movements that could be linked to criminal activities.

However, the effectiveness of such interventions depends largely on the ability of security and financial intelligence agencies to exchange information and act on shared intelligence.

Speaking during the engagement, the Chief Executive Officer of the NFIU, represented by the Chief Operating Officer, Intelligence Security Service Sector, Muhammed-Mustapha, commended the Customs Service for its role in border security and efforts to combat smuggling.

He described the relationship between both institutions as longstanding, noting that Customs was among the earliest agencies to collaborate with the financial intelligence unit when it was established.

"When NFIU was created, NCS was the first to collaborate with us. No particular agency understands things better than how Customs does globally," Mustapha said.

The World Customs Organisation mentoring team, led by Shahiduzzaman Sarkar, also participated in the engagements, sharing approaches to combating money laundering and terrorism financing.

The team urged stronger collaboration with the Customs Service, stressing the importance of coordinated institutional responses to financial crimes.

NEWS

Ekiti recruits 1,522 health workers for PHCs

ADO-EKITI

The Ekiti State Government has begun issuing appointment letters to the first batch of 1,522 newly recruited junior healthcare workers to strengthen service delivery across primary healthcare centres in the state.

The Chairman of the Ekiti State Primary Health Care Development Agency, Dr Funke Ogunbunmi, described the recruitment as "a significant intervention to address manpower shortages and improve essential healthcare services at the grassroots".

Ogunbunmi, in a statement issued in Ado Ekiti on Sunday, commended Governor Biodun Oyebanji for approving the recruitment, saying the move demonstrated his commitment to prioritising residents' health and well-being through investments in the sector.

She said, "The recruitment reflects the governor's commitment to strengthening primary healthcare facilities and ensuring access to quality medical services in all communities.

"Adequate staffing is essential to building a functional, responsive and accessible healthcare system. The new personnel will improve operational efficiency and enhance the capacity of frontline health facilities to meet residents' healthcare needs."

Ogunbunmi reaffirmed the agency's commitment to ensuring that the recruits contribute meaningfully to improved healthcare outcomes in the state.

She said appointment letters were being issued to successful candidates in the categories of Laboratory Assistants, Health Assistants and Health Attendants.

According to her, the exercise began on Wednesday, October 28, at the agency's registry in Ado Ekiti and would end on Tuesday, November 3.

She added, "The 1,522 candidates are being attended to in batches of 300 daily to ensure orderly collection and verification.

"Successful candidates have been directed to report to the registry from 10 am on their designated days with the original copies of their credentials for verification."

The agency said appointment letters were being released only after the required documents had been verified.

It advised successful candidates to check the released list and comply with the stated requirements to facilitate the collection process.



VISIT OF EU DELEGATION:
Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, Prof. Joash Amupitan (R) presenting a souvenir to the Head of ECOWAS Fact-Finding Mission and former Vice-President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Mr. Victor Bockarie Foh and SAN during the visit of European Union delegation to INEC headquarters in Abuja on Friday.

Cross River debt dropped by ₦70bn under my watch – Otu

CALABAR

Cross River State Governor, Bassey Otu, has said his administration reduced the state's domestic debts by over ₦70 billion during his years in office.

Otu, who disclosed this in Calabar, the state capital, while inaugurating the state's All Progressives Congress Campaign Council for the 2027 general elections, said his government inherited huge debts, insecurity and a demoralised workforce on assumption of office in 2023.

The governor said his administration had focused its first term on stopping the bleeding, recovering lost assets and laying the foundation for economic recovery.

He said, "The state's domestic debt profile stood at over N204 billion as of May 2023 when I assumed office, but this figure has now been reduced as of March 2026, without contracting fresh loans. We inherited huge debts, but we have reduced them by N70 billion. "

He said the state's internally generated revenue also improved from N21.1bn in 2022 to N46.3bn in 2024, attributing the growth to improved fiscal discipline and revenue drive.

"We did not promise all things in one year, but we covenanted to stop the bleeding, clear the ground, recover the losses and restore abandonments. Every debt retired is freedom for our children and house-cleaning for fresh fiscal air," Otu said.

The governor listed some of his administration's achievements to include the recovery of Tinapa from the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria, recovery of nearly N1bn from Etung Cocoa Estates, and moves to reclaim the state's oil wells and protect its interests in Bakassi and the proposed Deep Seaport.

He said his government lifted the embargo on employment, restored over 3,000 Local Government workers to the payroll and paid the first tranche of gratuities after almost 20 years.

On infrastructure, Otu cited the reconstruction of the Obudu Cargo Airport runway, revival of the Teachers Continuous Training Institute, Biase, and the conversion of the College of Education, Akamkpa, to the University of Entrepreneurship, among others.

He said his administration was also investing in agriculture, particularly cocoa, rice, potatoes, oil palm and cassava, to boost food security and rural jobs.

2027: Five media houses to hold Lagos governorship debate Nov. 8

LAGOS

The Nigeria Debate Consortium has scheduled the Lagos State governorship debate ahead of the 2027 general elections for Sunday, November 8, 2026.

The Lagos debate, the first in a series planned for some battleground states, will take place at The Hub by IALA, House of His Glory, in the Lekki area of the state.

It is expected to feature governorship candidates from different political parties, who will present their agendas, defend their policy choices and respond to questions on issues affecting Lagos residents.

This was disclosed in a statement titled 'Lagos 2026: Nigeria Debate Consortium Sets November 8 for Governorship Debate,' and made available to PUNCH Online on Sunday.

The Nigeria Debate Consortium is a collaboration of five leading Nigerian media organisations made up of Channels Television, TVC News, PUNCH Newspaper, TheCable and Vanguard Newspaper, committed to strengthening democratic participation, electoral accountability and informed public discourse through credible, non-partisan electoral debates.

The debate will span several areas, including transportation, infrastructure, security, housing, education, healthcare, job creation and economic growth.

"The Nigeria Debate Consortium, comprising Channels Television, TVC News, Punch Newspaper, The Cable and Vanguard Newspaper, opens the series of debates for the 2027 election season with the Lagos governorship debate and will end with the presidential debate/townhall.

"It is the first in the series of debates in some battleground states of Nigeria ahead of the 2027 elections. The debate will be held on Sunday, November 8, at 7:00 p.m. at The Hub by IALA, House of His Glory, Plot 18, Providence Road, beside Keystone Bank, Marwa, Lekki, Lagos State.

"The initiative will provide a credible, non-partisan platform for participating governorship candidates to present their agendas, defend their policy choices and respond to questions on the issues that matter most to Lagos residents.

"From transportation and infrastructure to security, housing, education, healthcare, job creation and economic growth, the debate will put the candidates' ideas, priorities and readiness to govern under public scrutiny," the statement partly read.

Kaduna Igbo community endorses Uba Sani

KADUNA

The Igbo community in Kaduna State has endorsed Governor Uba Sani for a second term ahead of the 2027 governorship election.

The community announced its support for the governor during its 2026 Igbo Cultural Day celebration held at the Nigerian Correctional Service Staff College, Barnawa, Kaduna, on Saturday.

At the event, Sani, who was represented by the All Progressives Congress deputy governorship candidate, Jerry Adams, donated a brand-new bus and N20m to the community.

Announcing the donations, Adams, on behalf of the governor, said the gesture was aimed at strengthening the relationship between the state government and the Igbo community.

He said, "On behalf of the governor, I am pleased to announce the donation of a brand-new bus and the sum of N20m to the Igbo Community Welfare Association, Kaduna State, in recognition of your contributions to the development of the state and in support of your community activities."

The President-General of the Igbo Community Welfare Association, Kaduna State, Chief Walter Temple, said the endorsement was informed by the governor's inclusive leadership style and his administration's support for the Igbo community over the years.

Temple, who delivered the community's welcome address, said the governor had demonstrated a commitment to peaceful coexistence and the welfare of residents, irrespective of their ethnic and religious backgrounds.

He said, "Your administration's disposition towards inclusiveness, peaceful coexistence and the welfare of residents, irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds, is highly appreciated.

"As a community, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting your administration and maintaining the cordial relationship that exists between us."

The community leader also commended Sani for his previous donation of an official vehicle and appreciated him for fulfilling his 2024 promise to provide the association with another bus.

In his remarks, the governor described Kaduna as a home for people of different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds, noting that the Igbo community had contributed significantly to the state's economic development through trade, commerce, professional services and job creation.

Sani said, "Kaduna State is grateful to the Igbo community for its contributions through trade and commerce, skilled hands, professional excellence, businesses you have built and jobs you have created. You have invested here and made Kaduna your home."

The governor recalled that he donated a Nissan Serena bus to the association in 2019 when he was the APC senatorial candidate for Kaduna Central, adding that his relationship with the Igbo community predated his emergence as governor.

He said the latest donation of a bus and N20m was another demonstration of his administration's goodwill and commitment to strengthening its relationship with the community.

Sani also said his administration had appointed people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds to his cabinet and other positions of responsibility, adding that development projects were being distributed across communities without discrimination.

He cited completed and ongoing road projects, including the Television Garage-Sunday Road project, saying the projects were intended to connect residents to markets and economic opportunities.

The governor thanked the community for endorsing his second-term ambition, saying, "Your endorsement is not a

CHANGE OF MIDDLE NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **OGBEIFUN OSAGIE ENDURANCE**. and **OGBEIFUN OSAGIE EDDY** are one and the same person, Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as **OGBEIFUN OSAIGE EDDY**. All former documents Remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **AKPAN AKANIMOH** now wish to be known and addressed as **OKON AKANIMOH**. All former documents remain valid. Pension fund administrators, all concerned authorities and general public please note.

NEWS

Minister seeks army battalion, tougher enforcement to curb illegal mining

ABUJA

The Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr Dele Alake, says the establishment of an Army battalion in Zurak, Plateau, and stronger enforcement against illegal mining can prevent mining-related tragedies.

Alake said strengthening agencies such as the Mining Marshals and establishing a military presence in the area would help secure mining sites, deter illegal operators and prevent a recurrence of incidents such as the February gas poisoning.

He made the call on Friday in Abuja after receiving report of the High-Level Investigation Committee on the Zurak mining gas poisoning incident in Wase Local Government of Plateau.

The report was submitted to him by the Co- Chairman, Mr Faruk Yabo.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that about 37 people died and 25 others were hospitalised following exposure to toxic gases at an underground mining site in Kampani Zurak on Feb. 18.

Following the incident, the Federal Government ordered the closure of areas covered by Mining Licence 11810, operated by Solid Unit Nigeria Ltd and constituted a committee to investigate the immediate and remote causes of the tragedy.

The minister described enforcement as the most effective approach to tackling illegal mining, stressing that relevant agencies required greater operational capacity.

Alake said the Mining Marshals had recovered more than 100 mining sites from illegal operators and apprehended scores of illegal operators, some of whom had been prosecuted or were undergoing prosecution.

The minister said strengthening the agency with more personnel, equipment, armaments and modern technology would improve its nationwide operations.

"With minimal inputs and requirements, the mining marshals have been able to achieve so much in so short a time.

"Imagine if we were able to strengthen its capacity, have a presence in almost every local government of the country," he said.

Alake said the proposed Army battalion would complement the Mining Marshals, particularly because Zurak was remote and difficult to access.

Expert urges businesses to strengthen resilience amid global uncertainties

LAGOS

Mr Oluwole Adelokun, Partner, Strategy and Customer Solutions, KPMG West Africa, has urged Nigerian businesses to strengthen resilience amid economic reforms and global uncertainties.

Adelokun gave the advice at the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce (NBCC) Members' Evening on Thursday in Lagos.

The event had the theme: "Leading Through Change: Building Resilient Businesses in Nigeria's Evolving Economy".

He said Nigeria's evolving economic landscape had created a two-speed economy, with improving macroeconomic stability coexisting with persistent pressures on businesses and households.

According to him, economic recovery does not automatically translate into stronger profit margins, improved cash flow or increased purchasing power.

He said businesses must, therefore, reassess their strategies and prepare for changing economic conditions.

Adelokun said the foundations that supported global stability in the past were under pressure, as emerging forces continued to reshape growth and prosperity, particularly across Africa.

He identified declining trust, rising nationalism, geopolitical tensions, commodity price volatility, trade fragmentation, inflation and increased spending on artificial intelligence as factors reshaping the global business environment.

He said these pressures, alongside Nigeria's ongoing reforms, required business leaders to reconsider their operating models, supply chains, financing arrangements and investment priorities.

Adelokun noted that the country's 2027 election cycle would mark another turning point for policy direction and business operations.

He urged businesses to prepare for different possible outcomes rather than rely on a single forecast.

He identified four capabilities critical to business resilience: anticipating risks, absorbing shocks, adapting to changing conditions and accelerating efforts to seize emerging opportunities.

He explained that anticipating involved identifying emerging risks and preparing for possible scenarios before disruptions occurred.

Absorbing shocks, he said, required protecting critical operations, liquidity and core business activities through financial buffers and contingency plans.

He said adapting involved reallocating resources, capabilities and priorities as market conditions changed, while accelerating meant moving faster than competitors to seize emerging opportunities.

To strengthen resilience, Adelokun urged businesses to diversify supply chains and financing sources, maintain sound capital structures and build operational flexibility into their business models.

He also emphasised the importance of earning customer trust through consistent service, relevance and stronger direct relationships.

He advised businesses against relying solely on established market positions or institutional advantages to retain customers.

On technology, Adelokun urged businesses to prioritise AI applications that addressed specific operational challenges and delivered measurable commercial value.

He said technology investments should be matched with workforce readiness, reskilling, leadership development and employee empowerment.

According to him, these measures would help organisations adapt to new technologies and evolving business models.

The KPMG partner also called for policies to reduce the cost of doing business, improve regulatory consistency, strengthen infrastructure and deepen investor confidence.

He urged the NBCC to play a stronger role in translating the economic partnership between Nigeria and the United Kingdom into tangible commercial opportunities.



NEWS CONFERENCE :
Director of Defence Media Operation, Maj.-Gen. Michael Onoja (3rd R), exchanging pleasantries, with members of Defence Correspondents, during the monthly news conference for October in Abuja on Friday.

Only 59% ready for data localization January deadline -NITA

LAGOS

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) says only 59 per cent of financial institutions surveyed are expected to meet the Jan. 1, 2027 deadline for local storage of critical financial data.

Dr Muhammad Lawal, Special Assistant on Policy to the Director-General of NITDA, made this known in a joint regulatory survey presented at the CBN–NITDA Executive Regulatory Dialogue in Lagos.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the findings focused on the implementation of the Nigerian Sovereign Cloud Initiative and compliance with regulatory requirements for local data storage.

Lawal highlighted the gaps in the financial sector's preparedness for the data localisation deadline.

He said the survey showed that 26 of the 44 financial institutions that responded to the readiness question had completed or were likely to complete the required actions before the deadline.

The deputy governor, however, cautioned that data localisation alone would not guarantee security.

She said there was the need for robust cybersecurity, business continuity, disaster recovery and risk-management arrangements.

According to her, financial institutions will remain accountable for risks arising from their relationships with cloud and other third-party technology providers.

The CBN official called for collaboration among regulators, financial institutions and technology providers to address implementation challenges without undermining innovation or the competitiveness of Nigeria's financial sector.

Earlier, Mr Kashifu Inuwa, Director-General of NITDA, said that the Nigerian Sovereign Cloud Initiative was designed to strengthen the country's digital self-determination by developing domestic capacity for critical technologies and infrastructure.

He said Nigerian companies spent more than 850 million dollars annually on cloud

He said 15 institutions said completion was unlikely or very unlikely, while three could not assess their readiness.

"The survey also revealed that 22 of the 44 institutions had yet to begin implementation, with budgeting, contract negotiations and system migration among the outstanding tasks.

"79 per cent of digital infrastructure providers surveyed were ready to accommodate new workloads from the financial sector.

"Which means that the challenge extends beyond infrastructure availability to deployment, contracting and migration", he said.

According to him, the initiative seeks to strengthen Nigeria's control over critical digital infrastructure, improve data security and expand domestic capacity for hosting essential services.

Lawal said that respondents also called for stronger coordination among CBN, NITDA and the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC), alongside access to reliable local infrastructure.

He said the survey, conducted between Oct. 13 and Oct. 27, received responses from 47 financial institutions and 42 digital infrastructure providers, although the number of responses varied across individual questions.

He said the findings were self-reported, anonymised and aggregated and did not amount to a compliance assessment.

In her keynote address, Dr Rakiya Yusuf, Deputy Governor, Financial System Stability, CBN, said financial institutions must ensure that critical payment transaction data was stored and managed within Nigeria in line with applicable regulatory requirements.

She said that the Jan. 1, 2027 deadline was intended to strengthen regulatory visibility, improve resilience and safeguard critical financial data.

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He said Nigerian companies spent more than 850 million dollars annually on cloud services, adding that developing local capacity could create jobs, retain more economic value within the country and reduce exposure to external disruptions.

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10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
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4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980
3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595
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NEWS

FOREIGN

India's opposition holds mega rally seeking election of chief's resignation

Tens of thousands of people have gathered in Delhi for a major opposition rally demanding the resignation of India's chief election commissioner.

The rally, organised by the opposition INDIA bloc and led by Rahul Gandhi's Congress party, is taking place at Ramlila Maidan, a large ground in central Delhi known for hosting cultural events and political protests.

Visuals showed Gandhi in an open-top jeep alongside other opposition leaders heading towards the venue. The Gen Z-led pressure group Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has also pledged support, though its leaders have yet to be seen.

Security has been tightened, with thousands of police and paramilitary personnel deployed near the grounds.

Sunday's event is the latest show of opposition anger over a voter-list revision exercise that has removed 130 million names from draft electoral rolls in India.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) says the exercise is aimed at updating the voters' list by purging names of people who have died or moved away from their registered addresses.

But opposition parties allege that the exercise - known as the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) - could benefit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) by removing eligible voters from the rolls. They accuse the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the BJP of "vote chori (theft)". Both the BJP and the ECI have denied the allegations.

The controversy intensified in September when The Indian Express newspaper in its investigation reported that the CEC, Gyanesh Kumar, made key decisions related to the exercise without the agreement of the two other election commissioners, who had raised objections on more than a dozen occasions.

The Election Commission said differences of opinion were normal in any institution and did not affect its functioning.

But concerns over the revision process have continued, with the opposition parties, the CJP and student groups organising a number of protests in Delhi and other Indian cities.

On Saturday, leaders of the INDIA bloc staged a symbolic impeachment of Kumar at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's residence in Delhi. The INDIA bloc - short for Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance - is a group of opposition parties formed in 2023 to take on the governing BJP-led National Democratic Alliance.



THE PROTESTERS:
Protesters clash with police and shops looted in Germany

Shops looted as German cost of living protests turn violent

Rioters looted shops in central Frankfurt late on Saturday as clashes erupted in German cities over the cost of living.

Besides Frankfurt - Germany's financial hub - there were incidents of violence in Berlin, Cologne and Hamburg, with police saying they used water cannon to disperse protesters targeting emergency workers with fireworks, stones and bottles.

Thousands joined largely peaceful demonstrations earlier in the day. They were organised by the campaign group Gen Z regelt - meaning "Gen Z takes charge" - to protest against underfunding in schools, the high cost of living, public spending cuts and military service.

The unrest in Germany follows similar youth-led mass protests in France, where more than 320,000 people also demonstrated on Saturday.

As night fell, demonstrations turned violent.

A large section of Frankfurt's main shopping street was closed off by police. A police spokesperson said many arrests were made in the city.

Authorities in Frankfurt, Munich and Berlin reported as many as 18,000 protesters, roughly half of what the organisers had estimated on their website. German media say tens of thousands protested in German cities on Saturday.

Gen Z regelt spokesperson Lina Friedrich said the demonstrations were "to fight for peace and freedom, rather than for war and coercion".

She said: "What matters most to us is better support for the health and education systems. We are against compulsory military service and we are in favour of a fairer distribution of the burden."

Europe's youth is on the march - but does anything actually unite them?

Thousands demonstrate in Paris as protests spread across Europe

On Saturday night Frankfurt police said "violent riots" were occurring in the city centre and that special police units had been deployed. The windows of several shops had been smashed and molotov cocktails were thrown at emergency services, police said.

Officials said the windows of a gun shop were smashed and that they had seized two weapons after arresting a suspect. People also broke into other shops, stealing trainers and other items, local media reported.

Roman Poseck, interior minister of Hesse state, of which Frankfurt is the biggest city, said that "around 100 clearly identified left-wing extremists" had infiltrated the protest in the city. He added that it was "shameful" how the protests had ended.

Poseck said: "We all have those images from France in our minds - looting, burning houses, burning police vehicles, and attacks on police officers... France must not be held up as a model in this regard."

Police said the situation calmed down overnight into Sunday in the city.

Similar instances took place in other German cities, following earlier largely peaceful demonstrations.

In Cologne, police said officers were attacked near the main train station, with bottles thrown and a bicycle launched.

Cologne's police chief Johannes Hermanns said it was "deeply saddening that young people who wanted to peacefully demonstrate for their future were infiltrated today by extremists who had nothing but violence in mind".

A smaller demonstration in the evening in Berlin - following larger protests in the day - resulted in 27 police officers being injured, and up to 56 people temporarily detained, Berlin police said.

In Hamburg, people dressed in black set off fireworks and set barricades on fire, with public broadcaster NDR reporting that 120 people were arrested.

The protests in Germany took place on the same day as other large-scale demonstrations in Europe.

In France, more than 320,000 people took part in a third consecutive weekend of largely peaceful protests in cities across the country, demanding action on the high cost of living and poor public services, especially in the education sector.

Judge dismisses Trump's lawsuit against Wall Street Journal over Epstein birthday book

A US judge has thrown out President Donald Trump's $10bn dollar lawsuit against The Wall Street Journal, ruling the suit was "grasping at straws".

Trump had sued the media outlet's parent company Dow Jones and its leader Rupert Murdoch last year after it reported on a letter allegedly written by Trump to disgraced financier and sex offender Jeffrey Epstein as part of a birthday book in 2003, before Epstein was charged with sex crimes.

Trump has denied writing or signing the letter, which included suggestive language and a drawing of the outline of a woman's body.

Judge Darrin Gayles threw out the case, finding the suit runs counter to the First Amendment, which protects freedom of the press.

Gayles had already once dismissed the defamation lawsuit, which sought $20 billion in damages. Trump's team refiled the suit seeking $10 billion, and this time, the judge threw out the case "with prejudice," meaning the suit cannot be filed again.

The news outlet's story about Epstein's 50th birthday book - and the letter with Trump's name - came as the Trump administration battled intense bipartisan criticism over the summer for its handling of Epstein documents.

Trump had said the newspaper had slandered him and violated libel laws in publishing the article.

In his 20-page ruling, Gayles noted the paper's "thoughtful and detailed investigation" that led to the story and said the lawsuit was "grasping at straws" to "to manufacture flaws" their work.

The judge wrote that Trump's legal team did not prove that the defendants made defamatory statements with "actual malice", which the law requires be proven.

Actual malice is high bar to meet, as it requires proof that the defendant knew the defamatory statement was false or acted with reckless disregard for whether it was true or not.

'We came back from hell', say Ukrainians after years in Russia-occupied front-line city

Olha has one word to describe what life has been like in the front-line city of Oleshky over the past few years: "Horror".

Disembarking alongside her from a coach in the Ukrainian region of Chernihiv with their immediate family and dog, her husband Viacheslav put it this way: "We came back from hell."

The couple were among hundreds of residents evacuated from the Russian-occupied city who crossed into northern Ukraine via Belarus on Saturday, many reuniting with loved ones they had not seen for years.

Oleshky, seized by Russia during the first few days of its full-scale invasion in February 2022, is trapped on one side by the Dnipro River and on the other side by Russian forces.

Olha and Viacheslav had lived there with their son and daughter, both in their 30s. Even as the shelling around them intensified, they feared that trying to escape could be even more dangerous, with routes mined and subject to drone attack.

As supplies dwindled, the couple said they made an attempt to find food by crossing through minefields earlier this month. "People were stepping on mines, dying and being maimed, all just to survive," Olha told the BBC.

Those who were too afraid to go out in the city had resorted to cooking garden weeds to survive.

"We saw that the situation wasn't getting any better, so we realised we had to get out," Olha said.

That opportunity came earlier this week when a humanitarian ceasefire, brokered by US First Lady Melania Trump, took effect in the Kherson region, providing the first few days of peace in the area for four years and allowing Oleshky residents to evacuate.

Up to 6,000 people, including 200 children, were believed to still be living in Oleshky and its surrounding areas, with 1,700 in the city itself.

Residents had a four-hour window on Friday to leave, with a convoy of 25 buses brought in for up to 750 evacuees, along with ambulances for people with limited mobility.

After travelling through Russian-occupied territory to southern Russia, then flying to Belarus, evacuees arrived on buses to a military facility in Chernihiv on Saturday.

FOREIGN

NEWS

Ethiopian PM puts ministers through military training

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has put his cabinet ministers and other senior government officials through military training, saying armed forces discipline can help build stronger leaders and advance the country's development.

Photos shared by him on social media show him taking part in military exercises alongside ministers, deputy ministers and heads of government institutions at the Hurso military training centre.

The move is unusual in Ethiopia, where senior civilian government officials are rarely seen undergoing military training.

Those taking part include Speaker of the House of Federation Muferiat Kamil, Finance Minister Fitsum Assefa and Health Minister Mekdes Daba.

It is unclear when the training began or how long it is expected to last.

In his post, the prime minister, who is known as Abiy, said Ethiopia's ambition to achieve universal prosperity required its leadership to be physically fit, morally strong and intellectually capable.

He said military institutions offered valuable lessons in discipline, patriotism, teamwork, accountability and leadership.

"Soldiers have targets while civilians have goals. The objective of both is victory," he said, adding that combining military and civilian disciplines would help create a generation capable of achieving both.

Abiy argued that military training could help develop leaders with a strong sense of purpose, responsibility and the ability to work together towards common objectives.

The training comes as Ethiopia faces multiple security challenges, including continued fighting in parts of the northern Tigray region, conflict in Amhara and insecurity in Oromia.

It also takes place amid heightened tensions with neighbouring Eritrea, with concerns over the possibility of renewed conflict between the two countries.

Abiy has previously emphasised military preparedness and national development as central to his government's ambitions.

Why North Korea's 'elite' hackers are the prime suspect in major Binance hack

Two major blockchain analytics firms say they have robust intelligence pointing to a North Korean state-backed group as the likely culprits in the $6.3bn (£4.7bn) hack of Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange.

The Lazarus Group, a North Korean hacking unit also known as TraderTraitor, was identified "with high confidence" by TRM Labs, as well as Chainalysis.

This incident is just the latest linked to the country, one of the poorest in the world and where access to the internet is severely restricted.

Experts accuse the government of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un of relying on cybercrime to finance itself, something Pyongyang has long denied.

Though not financial, the nation's most spectacular suspected hack took place in 2014. The target: Sony Pictures, which had made the Hollywood film The Interview. The film involves a plot to assassinate Kim.

The resulting hack exposed thousands of embarrassing emails exchanged among the studio's top executives.

Last year, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) said North Korea was responsible for the theft of $1.5bn on the Bybit exchange.

In the aftermath of that incident, the agency said TraderTraitor had moved to quickly launder and disperse the stolen assets, converting them to Bitcoin and other digital assets with a goal of eventually turning them into hard currency.

The FBI has broadly accused North Korea of "illicit cybercrime and virtual asset theft activities".

The nation has systematically developed its cyber operations, recruiting the most promising students from universities and channeling them into hacker groups overseen by North Korea's intelligence agency, according to reports.

Some of the cyberwarfare conducted takes place just over the nation's border in China, according to analysis from tech groups.

Much of its hacking activity has centred on monetary gain.

North Korean hackers are also suspected in the theft of $620m worth of cryptocurrency in 2022.

In this most recent heist, North Korean agents are accused of using a special authorisation to turn a Binance hot wallet, which is connected to the internet, into one that moved funds automatically to the attacker.

TRM said it's likely the attacker gained access to Binance's hot wallet signing system as part of the scheme.

Binance has not directly responded to the BBC's queries about the incident's potential links to the area.

The company had initially said it thought an engineer's laptop had been compromised, allowing unauthorised withdrawals, but later said the attack was wider.



CLINICAL TRIALS:
There is no vaccine for this strain of the virus, but clinical trials are under way.

More than 5,000 die from Ebola in DR Congo's deadliest outbreak

More than 5,000 people have died from an ongoing Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, government data shows.

Eight of 26 provinces are now affected, with more than 10,300 confirmed cases.

The outbreak, which started in May, became the country's deadliest in its history in August, public health officials said. The current case fatality rate is 48.6%.

In its latest update, the health ministry said the epicentre of the epidemic remains in the Ituri province, in the northeast of the country, which is a conflict zone, making it harder to contain the virus.

Cases have also been confirmed in Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda.

This marks the 17th outbreak in DR Congo's history, according to the United Nations (UN), and the second largest in history.

The World Health Organization (WHO) office in Africa said a "continued scale-up of key control measures, greater access to affected areas, and community outreach" is needed to end the outbreak.

Testing and treatment are under way, along with clinical trials of vaccines, it added.

The Bundibugyo species is behind the current outbreak, but there is not yet any treatment or vaccine for this strain.

DR Congo's previous deadliest outbreak saw 2,299 deaths recorded between 2018-2020, the UN said.

The deadliest in history occurred in West Africa between 2014 and 2016, killing more than 11,325 people and spread across several countries, including Italy, the UK and United States, according to the WHO.

The UN warns that the current outbreak is "taking lives at a much faster rate".

Ebola is a rare, deadly disease caused by a virus, and symptoms come on suddenly.

As the disease progresses, vomiting and diarrhoea develop and it can lead to organ failure. Some, but not all, patients develop internal and external bleeding.

The virus spreads from one person to another by contact with infected bodily fluids such as blood or vomit.

Adding to the challenge of treating the disease, some health workers and a politician have been attacked while responding to the outbreak.

Earlier this week, a nurse was killed and another health worker seriously injured in an attack when responding to an Ebola alert. Local youths had accused them of contaminating water sources and spreading the virus, according to the UN-backed Radio Okapi.

Last month, a politician was beaten to death after promoting measures to stop the spread of Ebola, while in August, the Red Cross said its volunteers had been injured and an ambulance set on fire in 11 violent incidents in the outbreak's first 100 days.

In Uganda, two people died and 20 cases were recorded shortly after the outbreak started, but no cases have been reported since August. Travel restrictions remain in place for those crossing into the country from neighbouring DR Congo.

Democrats are used to heartbreak in Texas - could Talarico turn the tide?

The race for a US Senate seat in Texas may prove crucial in determining which party controls Congress next year – a significant prize in its own right - but for both parties it represents so much more than that.

For the Democrats, their losing streak in statewide elections now stretches back more than three decades. In the second most populous state in America, liberals have been in the wilderness for a generation.

But polls suggest their candidate, 37-year-old James Talarico, may be on the verge of breaking through and turning a Texas Senate seat blue for the first time since 1988.

That would be a dream scenario for Democrats - and a potential nightmare for Republicans.

"If the Democrats do pull it off, I think it's going to cause a lot of soul searching and a lot of psychological damage to the Republican Party in Texas and nationwide," said Brendan Steinhauser, a Texas-based Republican campaign strategist.

These dramatic stakes help explain how this Senate race has rocketed to become the most expensive in US history, with total spending reaching more than half a billion dollars.

For Talarico, it has been a remarkable rise for a candidate who in 2025 was a relatively unknown state-level Democrat.

At the Fiesta Center in Lubbock, Texas, on Tuesday night, the line to see the softly spoken former teacher, who studied to be a Christian minister, stretched around the building and down the wide parking lot to a busy road.

In this dusty western plains town of about 250,000, which voted overwhelmingly for President Donald Trump two years ago, a visit from a major Democratic candidate on the eve of an election was unusual.

"It's just so amazing to watch," said Aaron Gonzalez, the Democratic Party chair for Hockley County, which borders Lubbock. "This time is different."

When Talarico took the stage before an estimated 3,000 supporters – with another thousand listening on speakers outside - his pitch was a familiar one for many national Democrats this year, albeit with a Texas twist.

He railed against a conservative political establishment that he said is insensitive to the economic hardship of average Americans. He condemned the corrosive influence of big money in politics. And he promised to advance a "comprehensive anti-corruption agenda" in the Senate.

"Texans are ready for change," he said. "We are done with the extremism and the corruption. We're done with the politics of division, and we are ready for something new."

The slogan for his final two weeks of campaigning – "clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose" – is taken from Friday Night Lights, a popular early 2000s TV show about a plucky small-town Texas high school football team.

His music playlist leans heavily on twangy Texas country music. He celebrates Texas breakfast tacos, quotes legendary Texas singer-songwriter Lyle Lovett and frequently mentions that his ties to the state go back eight generations.