EIRS boss attributes Edo's national IGR award to Governor Okpebholo's non-linterference and innovative tax technology

BENIN CITY

Edo State has received national recognition for its impressive performance in Internally Generated Revenue (IGR), emerging as the sixth most revenue-independent subnational government in Nigeria in 2025.

The recognition comes as the Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS) receives the prestigious Achievement in IGR Award 2026.

Receiving the award on behalf of the Revenue Service, Executive Chairman of EIRS, Mr. John Odior, attributed the state's revenue breakthrough to the operational free hand granted the revenue agency by Governor Monday Okpebholo, alongside the strategic adoption of innovative, technology-driven tax administration.

In his acceptance remarks, Mr. Odior expressed deep appreciation to Governor Okpebholo for his commitment to technology-driven governance and the comprehensive modernisation of tax administration in Edo State.

Speaking through an EIRS press release made available to the Nigerian Observer Newspaper on November 6, Odior explained that the state government has provided key institutional backing to the EIRS to help it deploy modern technological solutions, improve operational efficiency, and eliminate revenue leakages.

Highlighting one of the agency's standout technological innovations, Odior pointed to the digital processing and issuance of Tax Clearance Certificates (TCCs). He disclosed that applicants can now obtain their tax clearance certificates with-

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The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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COAS commends Okpebholo's support to Nigerian Army in Edo

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.-Gen. Waidi Shaibu, has commended Gov. Monday Okpebholo of Edo for his support and commitment to the Nigerian Army in the state.

Shaibu gave the commendation on Friday when he paid a courtesy visit to the Edo Government House, Benin.

The COAS said he was in the state to attend several military functions and inspect projects designed to improve the welfare and operational effectiveness of officers and soldiers

According to him, senior officers promoted to the rank of Major-General are encouraged to give back to their communities as part of efforts to appreciate the communities that contributed to their growth and development.

Shaibu thanked Okpebholo for his administration's support to the Nigerian Army and wished him a prosperous tenure.

Responding, Okpebholo expressed delight at receiving the Army chief and his entourage, saying he had decided to remain in Benin to personally receive him despite having plans to travel out of the state.

The governor said there was "something special" between Shaibu and Edo, noting that the Army chief had paid particular attention to issues affecting the state since assuming office.

"I think there is something special between you and Edo, because since you came into office, you have specially paid attention to things about Edo, most especially the 83 Division that is coming to our state," Okpebholo said.

He said Edo people were excited about the planned establishment of the 83 Division in the state, describing it as a significant development.

Okpebholo also commended the Army chief for appointing a Brigade Commander whose activities, he said, had contributed significantly to improving security in the state.

"Let me tell you, the best gift that you have given me is the Brigade Commander that you brought to Edo.

"Since I became the governor, his coming is like a comfort to me, because today, nobody is talking about kidnapping in our state," he said.

The governor said the Brigade Commander had remained committed to maintaining peace and security across the state, adding that Army personnel and the sister agencies had demonstrated readiness to respond promptly to security challenges.

He recalled that there was a time when residents of Ekpoma could hardly sleep due to insecurity, but said the situation had significantly improved following the intervention of security agencies.

"As I speak to you, Ekpoma is in peace. People can now go to their farms," Okpebholo said.

He also identified Okpella as another area that had experienced security challenges, saying that the security agencies efforts have restore peace and stability in the community.

"There is nothing he is not doing to restore peace across the state. I am happy working with him. He is someone that is ready to work for the people and ready to serve," the governor said.

Okpebholo expressed appreciation to the Nigerian Army for its support in securing the state and assured the Army chief of his administration's continued cooperation.He welcomed Shaibu and his entourage to Edo and expressed confidence that the partnership between the state government and the Nigerian Army would continue to yield positive results for the people.

A vote for Tinubu is a vote for Okpebholo, says Edo Governor

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has urged residents of Orhionwon Local Government Area to support the re-election of President Bola Tinubu in 2027, declaring that a vote for the President is equally a vote for his administration and the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The governor made the declaration at an APC campaign rally in Abudu, the headquarters of Orhionwon Local Government Area, where he called on the people to sustain their support for the APC and its progressive agenda.

He said, "A vote for President Tinubu is a vote for Okpebholo. It is a vote for APC and a vote for the progress of this country.

"The removal of fuel subsidy is the redemption of this country because Nigeria's resources were in the hands of a few individuals. The gains of that action are why we are able to pay salaries today. We are working and developing the country."

Governor Okpebholo urged the people to appreciate the economic reforms of the Tinubu administration, noting that the benefits were creating opportunities for governments at all levels to meet their obligations and deliver development to the people.

The people of Orhionwon South erupted in jubilation at the rally, applauding Governor Okpebholo for approving the

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COURTESY VISIT:
Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (Right) presenting a souvenir to the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Waidi Shaibu when he paid a courtesy visit to the Edo Government House, Benin City at the weekend.

One dies in NDC campaign rally in Asaba —Pg 2

66% of Nigerian inmates await trial, Igbinedion varsity don warns of justice system crisis —Pg 3

Presidency dismisses claims Tinubu borrowed ₦120 trillion in three years —Pg 06

Houthis say at least 33 killed in Saudi air strike —Pg08

NEWS

COAS commissions, hands over school keys to Edo Govt

Bernadette Idalu

BENIN CITY

The Chief of Army Staff, (COAS) Lt. General Waidi Shaibu on Friday, commissioned and handed over keys to the remodelled Ezomo Primary and Secondary Schools to the Edo State Government to boost Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), within their area of operation in Edo State.

The COAS, who was special guest of honour at the commissioning and handing over ceremony of the "Special intervention civil-military cooperation project," executed by Maj. Gen. Thompson Bobby Ugiagbe, for use and educational benefit of residents of Uzebu and Oliha quarters, used the opportunity to call on the Edo State Government, host communities and school authority to take ownership and adequate maintenance of schools facilities.

Governor Monday Okpebholo who received an award and souvenir in recognition of the standing partnership between the military and Edo State Government, affirmed that aside being a partner in progress, the Army was a model to society and a call to the affluent to think Edo.

Represented by his deputy, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, Gov. Okpebholo appreciated the Army for siting a CIMIC project in Uzebu quarters, Benin City. He said the remodelled school would boost development in the education sector in the vicinity and strengthen civil-military relations.

Okpebholo called on Nigerians, especially those of Edo State extraction to embark on interventions which support the governor and help to develop the state.

Commissioner for Education, Hon. Washington Osifo while thanking the Nigerian Army for the CIMIC project in the Edo State capital, reeled out interventions of Governor Monday Okpebholo in the education sector through reliance on the SHINE Agenda of governance.

Calling Okpebholo a visionary leader

who understood the importance of education, he credited the governor for his ability to built and renovate over a 100 schools, thousands of classrooms, and purchased over 5000 chairs, since he assumed office.

Within this time in review, he pointed out that Okpebholo has also hired over 5000 teachers, and, a few weeks from now, based on the policy tilt of the Edo State Governor, government shall be advertising to hire another 3000 teachers, Osifo assured.

Highlighting other achievements of the Governor, Hon. Washington Osifo stated, "He recently purchased and distributed over 100 mobile laboratories, each of which contains nothing less than 200 apparatus. We will be ordering for two more tranches of 100 laboratories, to go round our schools for science development."

In hindsight, CIMIC projects and interventions are "community development and quick impact initiatives designed to strengthen trust, foster partnerships, and improve grassroots relations between the Nigerian Army and civilian populations."



CAMPAIGN RALLY:Gov Monday Okpebholo (4th left), his Deputy, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa (4th right),and other political leaders at APC Campaign Rally in Abudu, Orhionmwon LGA of Edo State, at the weekend.

...EIRS boss attributes Edo's national IGR award to Governor Okpebholo

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

in 24 hours without physically visiting EIRS offices or collecting printed copies. Under this streamlined digital process, applicants simply submit their requests online, download their certificates, and use them in either digital or printed formats for their various official and business transactions.

Odior commended Governor Okpebholo for allowing the revenue agency to operate with complete professional independence, free from political interference.

He revealed that since assuming office in March 2026, he has not received a single telephone call from the governor seeking preferential treatment or political intervention for associates, family members, or friends who might have failed to comply with the state's tax regulations.

Emphasising the core philosophy behind EIRS' current success, Odior stated that separating tax administration from political considerations and backing it with modern technology is essential to achieving sustainable revenue growth and effective tax compliance.

Presenting the award to the EIRS boss, Chief Frederick Olukayode Apeji, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Alford Conferences Limited, publisher of REVENUE Magazine and convener of the annual Nigerian States IGR Awards (NSIA) stated that Edo State generated ₦132.21 billion in internally generated revenue in 2025, representing 40.39 per cent of its combined revenue of ₦327.31 billion from IGR and Federal Allocation (FAAC).

This performance he noted placed Edo State second among the six states in the South-South geopolitical zone, fifth among the 17 southern states, and sixth among Nigeria's 37 sub- national governments, comprising the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

Beyond its impressive revenue independence ranking, Edo State has sustained its position among Nigeria's top 10 IGR performing states since 2019, when the Nigerian States IGR Awards programme commenced.

Edo's national IGR rankings over the seven-year period are as follows - in 2019 it placed in the 9th position, in

2020 it was placed in the10th position,and in 2021 got the 8th position and maintained the same 8th position in 2022. By 2023, the state shot to the 6th position and in 2024 it went to the 7th position and 2025, retained the 7th position.

Chief Apeji described this consistency as particularly remarkable, considering that although Edo is located in the oil-rich South-South region, it does not enjoy the 13 percent oil revenue derivation benefit available to Delta, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and Bayelsa States.

He highlighted Edo's significant IGR growth of 45.05 per cent, rising from ₦91.15 billion in 2024 to ₦132.21 billion in 2025. According to him, 2025 marked the first time Edo State crossed the ₦100 billion threshold in annual internally generated revenue since the award organisers began tracking subnational IGR performance.

Acknowledging the contributions of the current and immediate past leadership of EIRS, the award organisers commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for providing the political support and institutional independence required to strengthen revenue administration in the state.

Chief Apeji noted that the success of state revenue agencies largely depended on the commitment of their respective governors to appoint competent professionals, protect them from unnecessary political interference, and provide the necessary institutional backing to perform their responsibilities.

Drawing from the organisers' engagements with revenue agencies across the country, he observed that states such as Lagos, Ogun, Kwara, Ondo, and Nasarawa had demonstrated the benefits of professional leadership and political support in improving internally generated revenue.

He identified Edo State as another clear example of this approach, recommending it as a model for other states seeking to strengthen their revenue systems. He also stressed that stronger subnational economies would be critical to Nigeria's ambition of achieving a $1 trillion Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2035.

Established in 2020, the Nigerian States IGR Awards (NSIA) is an annual performance-based recognition programme designed to promote healthy competition among Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory in the area of internally generated revenue. The initiative recognises, honours, and celebrates states that demonstrate outstanding performance in revenue generation through an annual nationwide awards roadshow.

Since its inception, the programme has visited the revenue agencies of 25 out of Nigeria's 37 subnational governments across the six geopolitical zones. The 2026 edition, the seventh in the series, features four award categories:

* Governor of the Year in IGR Awards 2026 (2 recipients)
* Excellence in IGR Awards 2026 (10 recipients)
* Achievement in IGR Awards 2026 (10 recipients)
* Excellence in Municipal IGR Awards 2026 (3 recipients).

To ensure transparency and objectivity, the organisers rely on annual sub-national IGR reports published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), alongside FAAC allocation data published by the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF).

Edo State's recognition at the 2026 Nigerian States IGR Awards represents an important milestone in its efforts to strengthen internally generated revenue, modernise tax administration, and reduce dependence on federal allocations.

With IGR collections rising above ₦132 billion in 2025, the state has demonstrated significant progress in expanding its revenue base. The award also places renewed attention on the role of institutional independence, technology adoption, professional revenue administration, and political commitment in building a more financially sustainable state economy.

...A vote for Tinubu is a vote for Okpebholo

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

electrification of the area, which they said had been without electricity for over 25 years. The residents described the approval as a major milestone that would end decades of darkness, improve economic, and enhance the quality of life in their communities.

They expressed appreciation to the governor for responding to their long-standing demand and demonstrating his administration's commitment to extending development to rural communities.

Other prominent APC leaders who addressed the rally included the Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa; Director-General of the Edo State APC Presidential Campaign Council, Senator Matthew Uroghide; former Deputy Governors, Dr Pius Odubu and Dr Lucky Imasuen; and Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu, among others.

The speakers called for sustained support for the APC, highlighting the need for party unity and collective commitment to the party's electoral success.

The rally also witnessed the defection of new members into the APC, with the party's Deputy State Chairman, Sylvester Aigbobor, formally receiving the decampees into the party.

One dies in NDC campaign rally in Asaba

. as Delta govt condemns political violence, orders investigation

Ajuwa Victor

ASABA

The Delta State Government has condemned the political violence that erupted in Asaba, the state capital, on Saturday, leaving one person dead and four others seriously injured.

The government described the incident as unacceptable, warning political parties and their supporters against actions capable of threatening public peace and security.

In a statement issued by the Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Mr Charles Aniagwu, the government reiterated its zero tolerance for political violence, intimidation and other forms of political rascality.

Aniagwu said the government had repeatedly cautioned political parties against engaging in activities capable of disrupting the peace, stressing that the unfortunate incident could have been avoided if the organisers had heeded security advice.

He explained that the police had advised the organisers to shelve the proposed street march and instead hold their campaign at a designated venue where adequate security arrangements could be provided.

The government expressed concern that the advice was ignored, resulting in a confrontation that claimed a life and left several others injured.

NEWS

66% of Nigerian inmates await trial, Igbinedion varsity don warns of justice system crisis

EDWARD OSEGBE

OKADA

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration) of Igbinedion University, Okada, Professor Osaretin George Izevbuwa, has called for urgent and comprehensive reforms of Nigeria's criminal justice system, warning that institutional failures have left thousands of citizens languishing in detention without trial.

Izevbuwa, who raised the alarm on Thursday, October 29, while delivering the university's 27th Inaugural Lecture and the fifth in the Oba Erediauwa College of Law, disclosed that approximately 66 per cent of inmates in Nigerian correctional facilities were awaiting trial.

The lecture, held at the institution's main auditorium, was titled "Institutional Pathologies and Systemic Reforms: The Gatekeepers' Role in the Administration of Criminal Justice in Nigeria."

Citing 2024 statistics, the professor said Nigeria's correctional population stood at 79,237, with 52,519 inmates awaiting trial, describing the situation as a troubling reflection of systemic weaknesses across the criminal justice institutions.

He identified arbitrary arrests, torture, coerced confessions, corruption, abuse of police powers in civil disputes, judicial delays and prolonged remand as interconnected challenges undermining public confidence in the justice system.

Illustrating the human consequences, Izevbuwa cited the case of Giff Tobia, who was arrested in Port Harcourt in 2017 over a robbery incident despite having no connection with the crime. Tobia reportedly spent eight years and four months in detention without trial before securing his freedom through the intervention of a human-rights lawyer.

He stressed that meaningful reform requires fundamental changes in the conduct, accountability and coordination of the four principal justice-sector gatekeepers: the police, prosecutors, judiciary and Nigerian Correctional Service.

Among his recommendations was the expedited passage of the National Policing Bill to establish a three-tier policing structure involving federal, state and local government police services, supported by safeguards for funding, recruitment, training and oversight.

He also advocated independent civilian oversight, improved police investigations through forensic laboratories and digital capabilities, enhanced human-rights training, greater prosecutorial independence and digitisation of case files.

For the judiciary, he recommended mandatory pre-trial case management, digital case administration and stricter enforcement of procedural standards to eliminate unnecessary delays.

He further called for wider application of bail, probation, community service and restorative justice, particularly for minor offences, to address overcrowding in correctional facilities.

Emphasising the need for an effective Justice Information Management System, he said cases must be tracked from arrest through prosecution and trial to conviction or discharge.

Izevbuwa maintained that reform must produce measurable outcomes, including suspects arraigned within 24 hours, credible investigations, timely trials and pre-trial detention treated as an exception rather than the rule.



TRAINING:
A cross section of beneficiaries at the just-concluded National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy (NPRGS) training, organised by the office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education, Dr Abiola Arogundade, in Enugu.

Bayelsa Boat Tragedy: Navy rescues commissioner, 6 others, search for police officer

STORIES BY JOY ODOR

BAYELSA

The Nigerian Navy has averted a potentially deadlier tragedy in Bayelsa State after rescuing seven passengers, including the state's Commissioner for Trade, Industry and Investment, Dr Ebieri Jones, from a passenger boat mishap in Brass Local Government Area, while a police officer remains missing.

\The boat, which was travelling from Yenagoa to Akassa with eight persons aboard, encountered disaster around Abedigbene waters on November 5, 2026, triggering an emergency search and rescue operation by personnel of the Nigerian Navy's Forward Operating Base (FOB) FORMOSO.

The incident exposed the dangers confronting passengers navigating the state's waterways, as the fate of one of the eight occupants remained uncertain after seven others were successfully pulled to safety.

According to a statement issued by the Nigerian Navy, the rescue operation began after a local fisherman raised the alarm over the mishap.

Naval personnel stationed at Labrador Lagosgbene Houseboat immediately mobilised to the scene, launching a coordinated rescue effort with local divers and members of the Abedigbene Fishing Community.

The operation resulted in the rescue of Commissioner Jones, an officer of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and five other passengers. The survivors were evacuated to the naval houseboat, where they received first aid. Preliminary medical assessments indicated that they had no visible injuries.

But the operation remains incomplete, as a police officer identified as the eighth passenger is still missing, with search and rescue teams continuing efforts to locate him.

The seven survivors were subsequently conveyed to Yenagoa on November 6 to reunite with their families.

The successful intervention has highlighted the importance of rapid naval response and community participation in emergencies along Bayelsa's waterways, where local knowledge and the assistance of fishermen and divers proved crucial to the rescue operation.

The Commanding Officer of FOB FORMOSO praised the naval personnel for their prompt response and professionalism, while acknowledging the invaluable contribution of local divers and the Abedigbene community.

The Navy reaffirmed its commitment to protecting lives, strengthening maritime safety and responding swiftly to emergencies within its operational area.

However, despite the successful rescue of seven passengers, the continuing disappearance of the police officer leaves a painful question hanging over the incident as the search operation presses on.

NYSC, NIMC move to strengthen online corps registration through decentralised identity verification

ABUJA

The Director-General of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Brigadier General Olakunle Nafiu, and his counterpart at the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), Engr. Abisoye Coker-Odusote, are collaborating to overhaul the country's corps registration system, with plans to enable prospective corps members to complete their enrolment from the comfort of their homes or anywhere in the world.

The proposed partnership seeks to eliminate the registration bottlenecks that have subjected thousands of Nigerian graduates to long queues at designated cybercafés, while forcing foreign-trained graduates to travel to Nigeria solely to complete the registration process for national service.

The two Agency Heads are pursuing a digital registration arrangement that would integrate NIMC's biometric and national identity database into NYSC's online enrolment platform, providing a more accessible and reliable means of verifying the identities of prospective corps members.

The initiative emerged during a meeting between Brigadier General Nafiu and Engr Coker-Odusote at the NIMC headquarters in Abuja, where the NYSC director-general sought the commission's technical support in developing an application that would allow eligible graduates to register using their personal devices without being physically present at designated registration centres.

Brigadier General Nafiu said the existing registration arrangement had generated complaints from prospective corps members because of the time and logistical difficulties involved in completing the process.

Nigeria, 4 neighbours face critical test as 330kv power corridor hits 75%

ABUJA

West Africa's ambitious plan to build an integrated regional electricity market is facing a critical delivery test, with insecurity, contractor performance problems and mounting implementation challenges threatening the completion of a major five-country transmission project that has achieved just over 75 per cent progress.

The West African Power Pool (WAPP) North Core 330kV Interconnection Project, linking Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo, is approaching a decisive stage, but financing partners have warned that unresolved bottlenecks in any of the participating countries could undermine the benefits of the entire regional electricity investment.

The warning came as representatives of the African Development Bank (AfDB), World Bank, participating governments and national electricity utilities opened the 8th Joint Supervision Mission in Abuja, scheduled to run from October 26 to November 6, 2026.

The mission is expected to scrutinise outstanding construction works, assess contractor performance, tackle security-related disruptions and establish practical measures for accelerating implementation without compromising the project's completion schedule.

Representing the Chairman of the WAPP Executive Board and Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), Engr. Sule Ahmed Abdulaziz, the General Manager, Programme Coordination, Engr. Aminu Tahir, called for stronger coordination, timely decisions and renewed commitment from all stakeholders.

Tahir said the 75 per cent completion milestone represented years of engineering commitment and cooperation among participating governments, technical personnel, contractors and development partners.

NISO raises alarm as gas shortages, dwindling reservoirs deepen Nigeria's power crisis

ABUJA

The Nigerian Independent System Operator (NISO) has blamed persistent gas supply shortages and declining water inflows into hydroelectric reservoirs for the latest slump in electricity generation, warning of mounting pressure on power supply across the country.

NISO disclosed on Thursday that the twin challenges had significantly reduced the volume of electricity available on the national grid, triggering increased load shedding by distribution companies (DisCos) and leaving consumers with shorter hours of electricity supply.

In a statement issued on November 5, 2026, the system operator explained that inadequate gas supply had constrained the operational capacity of affected thermal power plants, preventing them from generating electricity at their available levels.

It also identified reduced water inflows into reservoirs as a major setback for hydroelectric stations, limiting their capacity to contribute electricity to the national grid.

The combined impact, NISO said, had reduced the quantum of electricity available for allocation to DisCos for onward distribution to households, businesses and industrial consumers.

The development has translated into increased load shedding across distribution networks, with the severity of supply disruptions varying from one electricity distribution company to another, depending on available generation and allocated power.

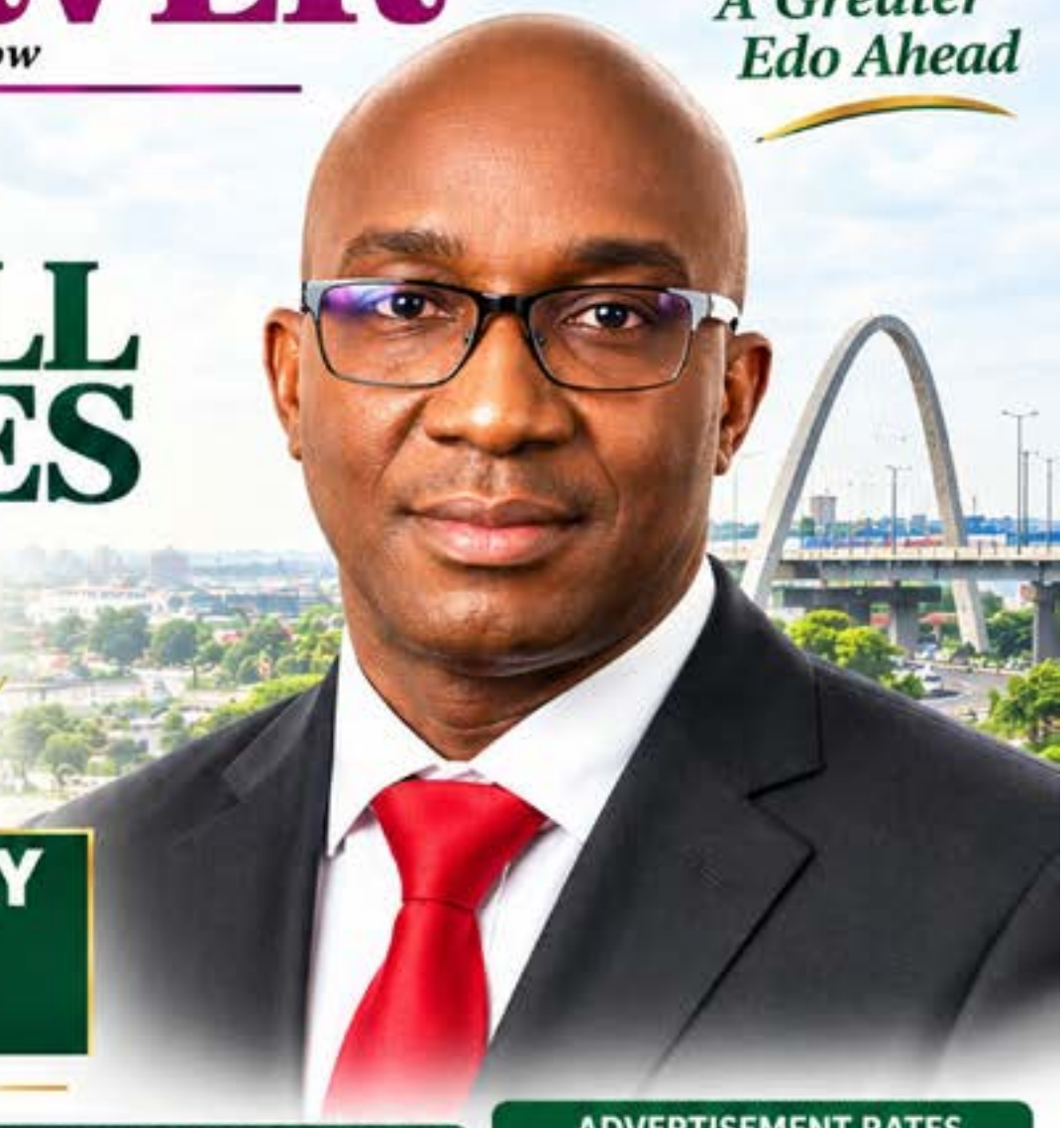
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Two Years of Progress, A Greater Edo Ahead

SPECIAL EDITION

INVITATION TO PLACE GOODWILL MESSAGES IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 2ND Years ANNIVERSARY OF GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO'S ADMINISTRATION

EDO STATE



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This is an opportunity to reflect on the administration's achievements, recognise key programmes and milestones, acknowledge partners and stakeholders, and convey your best wishes for the continued development of Edo State.

Let's celebrate the journey, recognise the milestones and share the goodwill!

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The Nigerian Observer looks forward to your valued participation in this special anniversary edition as we join other stakeholders in celebrating two years of transformative governance and reaffirming our collective aspirations for a safer, healthier, more prosperous and progressive Edo State.

Thank you for your continued patronage and support.

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NEWS

Adeboye ordered refund of billions in illicit donations, says EFCC boss

ABEOKUTA

The Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Ola Olukoyede, has revealed that the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Pastor Enoch Adeboye, ordered the refund of billions of naira donated to a church project after the funds were traced to proceeds of crime.

Olukoyede said Adeboye directed the immediate return of the money within 24 hours after the church was alerted to its illicit source.

The EFCC chairman disclosed this while addressing workers of the RCCG in the early hours of Saturday, November 7, during a meeting organised by the church ahead of its annual Holy Ghost Congress.

According to Church Times Nigeria, which reported the development on Saturday, Adeboye had "invited Olukoyede to address the workers on financial propriety and the need for churches to maintain transparent financial records."

Recounting the incident, Olukoyede said "a church member had donated billions of naira towards an RCCG project, but investigations later revealed that the money was proceeds of financial crime."

He commended "Adeboye for ordering the refund shortly after the church was alerted."

According to the report, Olukoyede did not disclose the identity of the donor, the specific RCCG project or the exact amount involved, but said the billions of naira donated were later discovered to be proceeds of crime.

The EFCC boss, who is also an ordained pastor, expressed concern over the increasing number of cases involving church leaders implicated in financial crimes, as well as allegations relating to contracts for church projects.

He warned "church workers against accepting suspicious donations and pursuing money through questionable means."

Another church in ponzi scheme

Olukoyede also recalled a separate case involving "another church allegedly implicated in a Ponzi scheme, saying its leader initially resisted the commission's intervention but eventually refunded a substantial amount after the EFCC threatened legal action."

Names and details about the church and said ponzi scheme were also withheld.

He warned that the "commission would not spare anyone involved in financial crimes, regardless of their religious position or affiliation."

The EFCC chairman further "cautioned church members against materialism, unhealthy competition and leadership struggles, saying such tendencies could expose religious institutions to financial misconduct."



INAUGURATION:
From left: Executive Chairman, Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas and Electric Vehicles (Pi-CNG & EV), Mr Ismaeel Ahmeed; Permanent Secretary, State House, Mr Temitope Fashedemi; Senior Special Assistant to the President on Special Duties and Domestic Affairs, Mr Oluwatoyin Subair and the Chief Executive Officer, Rolling Energy, Alhaji Mubarak Dambatta, during the inauguration of CNG Integrated Refueling Unit (IRU), in Karu Abuja.

Maritime Journalists to host unity conference on seaports modernisation in Lagos

RAHEEM IBRAHIM.

LAGOS

The Network of Nigeria Maritime Journalists (NNMJ) has planned to host nation's seaport high ranking stakeholders in its Unity Conference this month to discuss the performance, policy direction and operational efficiency of the maritime industry under President Bola Tinubu's administration, with particular emphasis on port modernisation, trade facilitation and revenue generation.

The event, which is expected to host representatives of federal government, private enterprises, Port experts and stakeholders is set to hold in Ikeja, Lagos at November ending.

The conference would bring together key policymakers, maritime regulators, industry leaders and other stakeholders to examine the future of Nigeria's maritime sector.

In a statement jointly signed by Chairman and Public Relations Officer of NNMJ, Elder Dele Aderibigbe and Jerry Aguigbo respectively, the conference, scheduled to commence at 11:00 a.m., will be chaired by the former Director-General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Barrister Temisan Omatseye, while the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, His Excellency Adegboyega Oyetola, will attend as the Special Guest of Honour.

Renowned maritime lawyer, Barrister Emeka Akabogu, SAN, will deliver the keynote address at the event, which is themed "Seaport Modernisation, Trade Facilitation and Revenue."

The Comptroller -General of the Nigeria Customs (CGC), Bashir Adewale Adeniyi along with other senior security officers connected with seaports sector are to grace the program.

The conference is expected to provide a platform for constructive engagement among government officials, maritime professionals and private-sector operators on practical strategies for strengthening Nigeria's maritime industry and maximising its contribution to national economic growth.

Key areas of discussion will include the modernisation of seaports and the renewal of critical infrastructure, improved trade facilitation, enhanced ease of doing business, revenue growth and measures to curb financial leakages.

Participants will also examine opportunities for expanding the marine and blue economy, creating employment, strengthening maritime safety and security, and improving the overall competitiveness of Nigeria's maritime sector.

The gathering is expected to attract heads of government agencies, managing directors of shipping companies, terminal operators, freight forwarders and other prominent stakeholders across the maritime value chain.

US mid-term polls: President of African Lawyers Union salutes Edo-born Texas lawmaker-elect

BENIN CITY

The President of the African Public Interest Lawyers Union (APIL), Chief Adaze Andrew Emwanta, has congratulated incoming congressman Odus Evbagharu, a US based politician of Edo origin, on his victory in the United States mid-term elections for the Texas House of Representatives, District 135. Evbagharu, whose parents are Benin descendants from Edo State Nigeria was born in London but later moved to the US for his education. His mother is from the Aihie family in Benin City.

Evbagharu, who ran on the Democratic Party ticket, defeated his Republican opponent, Liz Ramos, by a wide margin. With about 99 per cent of votes counted, he polled 37,727 votes, representing 67.4 per cent, against Ramos' 18,267 votes, or 32.6 per cent, a margin of about 19,500 votes.

In a congratulatory message, Emwanta, who is also an Edo indigene and a Nigerian based politician , described the victory as a source of pride for Edo people at home and in the diaspora.

"His win shows the confidence the people of his district have placed in him. It is also a powerful example to young Africans everywhere that vision, hard work and service can open doors at the highest levels of public life," he said.

Emwanta said he was particularly encouraged to see a young man of Edo extraction take his place in a legislative chamber in a highly politically competitive US State like Texas. He expressed the hope that the lawmaker-elect would use the platform to champion justice, equity and the rule of law, and to serve all his constituents with integrity.

"We wish him a fruitful tenure and God's guidance as he takes up this responsibility. APIL stands ready to support efforts that advance public interest, human rights and good governance," he added.

The APIL President concluded by congratulating the lawmaker-elect, saying, "Edo, Nigeria and Africa are all proud of you."

Varsities should produce job creators, not job seekers – Airline CEO

ABUJA

The Chairman of United Nigeria Airlines, Prof Obiora Okonkwo, has challenged Nigerian universities to prioritise entrepreneurship and practical skills development, saying graduates must be prepared to create jobs rather than depend solely on paid employment.

Okonkwo, who made the call at Veritas University's 15th convocation ceremony in Abuja, advocated integrating entrepreneurship education into all academic departments, including medicine, law, engineering and the sciences.

In a statement issued on Sunday by Okonkwo, he argued that the country's higher education system must move beyond awarding certificates to equipping students with the knowledge, skills and mindset required to become self-reliant and contribute meaningfully to national development.

The airline chairman maintained that entrepreneurship should not be treated as a peripheral discipline but as a core subject for every university student, irrespective of their course of study, among other recommendations.

"Entrepreneurship I am advocating should not just be a by-pass discipline; it should be a core subject that must be made available to all the students in every department.

"So that if you are studying medicine, you are thinking of entrepreneurship for medicine. What if tomorrow you want to be a private practitioner? If you are going to law, even if in the science department, these researchers will be able to think of the entrepreneurial aspect of their research outcome," he said.

Okonkwo, a professor of entrepreneurship, argued that the quality of education should not be measured merely by the number of graduates produced but by the knowledge, skills, moral values and sense of responsibility they acquire.

The entrepreneur, who disclosed that he established his business while still a student, said he had never been an employed person after graduation.

He said his experience had reinforced his conviction that entrepreneurial training should begin early in students' academic journeys.



Odus Evbagharu

NEWS

Presidency dismisses claims Tinubu borrowed ₦120 trillion in three years

ABUJA

The Presidency has dismissed as misleading claims that President Bola Tinubu borrowed N120 trillion in just three years while also removing the fuel subsidy.

In a statement posted on X on Sunday, Special Assistant to the President on Social Media, Dada Olusegun, described the figures as the product of "Opposition's propaganda machines."

He said the claim that 16 past Nigerian leaders borrowed a combined N46 trillion over 63 years, while Tinubu borrowed N120 trillion in three years, does not reflect the full picture.

"Opposition's propaganda machines claim that in 63 years, 16 past Nigerian leaders borrowed N46 trillion combined, while President Tinubu borrowed N120 trillion in just 3 years and still removed the fuel subsidy.

"But in reality, the N46 trillion figure from late 2022 hid N22.7 trillion in Central Bank 'Ways and Means' overdrafts that weren't officially put on the books until May 2023," Olusegun stated.

He added that earlier calculations converted foreign debt using an artificial exchange rate of N448 to $1, when the street value was over N700.

"When the exchange rate was unified in June 2023, the exact same dollar debt instantly looked N13.4 trillion larger on paper overnight without a single new dollar being borrowed."

In actual dollar terms, he said, Nigeria's public debt rose from $113.4 billion in June 2023 to $120.9 billion by June 2026 — an increase of only $7.5 billion.

On the fuel subsidy, Olusegun noted that its removal had boosted monthly Federation Account Allocation Committee funds shared to states and local governments from N656 billion in April 2023 to N2.4 trillion by September 2026.

The claims being rebutted originated from a viral social media graphic that compared cumulative borrowing under previous administrations with the Tinubu government's record and highlighted the subsidy removal.



SENSITIZATION CAMPAIGN:
FONWIP and Foundation Builders members during the sensitization campaign on voters education ahead of the 2027 election at a market in Benin city recently.

BEDC raises staff salaries after industrial dispute

BENIN CITY

The Benin Electricity Distribution Company has announced a salary increase for its members of staff effective December 1, 2026.

The electricity utility provider, which distributes electricity to Edo, Delta, Ondo and Ekiti states, disclosed this on Saturday in a statement obtained from its official Facebook page.

The company affirmed the decision during an engagement with the National Union of Electricity Employees and the Senior Staff Association of Electricity and Allied Companies.

The meeting was led by BEDC's Acting Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Jonathan Lawani, alongside the Deputy General Secretary of SSAEAC, Dr Innocent Lord-Douglas, and the Assistant General Secretary (Field Services) of NUEE, Mbang Ntukubes, among other representatives.

"BEDC Electricity Plc has successfully concluded negotiations with representatives of the National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE) and the Senior Staff Association of Electricity and Allied Companies (SSAEAC), reaching a mutually agreed resolution on consequential salary adjustments, effective December 1, 2026.

"The meeting, held on November 6, 2026, took place on the date previously agreed by Management and the labour unions for the conclusion of the process.

"Following extensive deliberations, all parties reached a consensus, with the agreements formally signed for implementation from December 1, 2026," the statement read partly.

The meeting addressed critical issues affecting electricity workers, including consequential adjustments, personal protective equipment, staff promotions, staff welfare, salary harmonisation, and overtime payments. The resolutions reached included the immediate restoration of overtime payments and a three-week timeline for BEDC management to address the remaining issues in consultation with the unions.

In his remarks, however, Lawani noted that the successful conclusion of the joint negotiation and review process, which began in March 2026, "demonstrates the shared commitment of Management and the unions to staff welfare and the overall performance of BEDC."

"He, however, described the recent industrial action as avoidable, noting that it resulted in revenue losses, reputational damage and hardship for customers.

"He explained that the process finalised at the November 6 meeting had already been agreed upon during the previous meeting held on October 7, 2026. He, therefore, expressed regret that the industrial action occurred before the pre-agreed date for its conclusion," the statement added.

FONWIP in collaboration with Foundation Builders (FB) kicks off voters education sensitization ahead of 2027 election in Edo State

The Forum of Nigeria Women in Politics (FONWIP) in collaboration with Foundation Builders has commenced a statewide market sensitization campaign on Voters Education ahead of the 2027 General Election.

The campaign which is designed to cover the three Senatorial Districts of Edo State, officially kicked off in Benin City with massive sensitization in major markets and streets.

Areas covered in the flag-off include:

Owina street, Igun street, Akpakpava road, Forestry road, Mission road market , Oba market, Lagos street, Agbado market and environs.

During the sensitization, the team educated market women, youths, and traders on the Importance of Permanent Voters Card (PVC) collection as the exercise is on going and so everyone are encourage to get theirs.

The Need to vote and not sell their votes, how to vote correctly to avoid void votes.

The need for people to vote and defend their votes with a passionate appeal for people to support and vote women candidates in all the election.

FONWIP encouraged women to create time to come together at their convenience to pray for the peace and success of the forthcoming election

and the need to vote for credible candidates that can represent them well.

Speaking during the exercise, the president of FONWIP Hon. Dr. Florence Gbinigie JP, ably represented by Hon. Favour Oseki and Foundation Builders Mrs. Adodo Joy in their respective engagement said that the goal is to ensure every eligible voter, especially women in the grassroots are well informed and ready to actively participate in the 2027 election without fear or intimidation.

The sensitization on voters education will continue in Edo Central and Edo North Senatorial Districts in the coming days.

Yobe IPAC chairman, secretary reject impeachment

DAMATURU

The Chairman of the Inter-Party Advisory Council in Yobe State, Umar Jajere, and its Secretary-General, Mustapha Gado, have rejected their purported impeachment, describing the exercise as invalid.

The two officials insisted that they remained the council's recognised leaders, accusing those behind the move of violating the provisions of the IPAC Code of Conduct (2019).

The officials, who made their position known in a statement on Saturday, said the purported impeachment contravened several provisions of the council's code and was, therefore, unacceptable.

Jajere and Gado's removal was announced by the council in a statement signed by its Acting Secretary, Habiba Umaru last Thursday, following an emergency meeting held at its secretariat along Potiskum Road, Damaturu, the state capital.

It said the decision followed a vote of no confidence in the two officers, who were accused of failing to consult member political parties on important decisions and neglecting regular meetings of the council's executive and general assembly.

The council also alleged that the former leaders used its name to receive quarterly palliatives from the North-East Development Commission and other government and non-governmental organisations for their personal benefit without the knowledge or involvement of member parties

However, Jajere and Gado said the meeting failed to meet the requirement of having at least 50 per cent of the membership of either the State Executive Council or the State Assembly, as stipulated in Sections 8(ii) and 8(iv) of the code.

"The meeting did not satisfy the required quorum prescribed by the IPAC Code of Conduct. Any decision reached without meeting this fundamental requirement cannot be considered valid," they said.

INEC to meet over Atiku's 2027 ticket

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission has said it will not take a position on the leadership crisis rocking the African Democratic Congress until it obtains and studies the certified true copy of the Federal High Court judgment which invalidated the leadership the David Mark-led leadership of the African Democratic Congress.

INEC's position followed Thursday's judgment of the Federal High Court in Abuja, which nullified the Mark-led caretaker committee and invalidated decisions taken under its leadership, including the emergence of former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar as the party's presidential candidate for the 2027 general elections.

Speaking to newsmen, the INEC National Commissioner and Chairman of the Information and Voter Education Committee, Mohammed Haruna, said the commission's next line of action following the judgment would be to first obtain the certified true copy before making any decision.

"We can't take a position until we see tthe judgement ourselves. We have to get the certified true copy because we don't take decisions or reports of what the court said based on reports because the reports could be wrong," he said.

Haruna added that the matter would be considered at the commission's meeting next week.

"Well, this one is very straightforward even then, we are all here till next week when the commission meets. We will have to meet over it," he said.

Haruna also indicated that the commission would comply with any further court order arising from an appeal by the Mark-led faction.

"Obviously, if the David Mark faction should appeal, which I am sure they will, and they get an injunction for stay of execution, obviously, we'll have to obey that judgement," he added.

Justice Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court, Abuja, on Thursday, nullified the leadership of the Mark-led caretaker committee, declaring its emergence contrary to the ADC constitution, relevant provisions of the Electoral Act and the 1999 Constitution.

The judgment followed a suit marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1819/2025, instituted by a former ADC Deputy National Chairman (North-East), Nafiu Bala Gombe, who challenged the process through which Mark and other members of the caretaker committee assumed control of the party.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **OSOIWANLAN EHEBHOLORIA JOSEPH**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **OSOIWANLAN TUNDE**.All former documents Remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **MISS. OGUWUIKE PEPERTUA**. now wish to be known and and addressed as **MRS. BELLO - ODINANKARU PEPERTUA CHISARA**. All former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

NEWS

Nigeria must tackle insecurity, unemployment -Obasanjo

LAGOS

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo has called for urgent action to address worsening insecurity, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria, warning that leadership failures are forcing citizens to seek better opportunities abroad, often through dangerous migration routes.

Obasanjo spoke on Saturday during a panel session themed "Lest We Forget" at the Creative Africa Nexus Weekend 2026, organised by the African Export-Import Bank in Lagos State.

The former president, who reflected on Nigeria's security situation since independence, said the country must confront the governance failures responsible for declining safety and economic opportunities.

"We just have to do what we should do to provide job opportunities, to stem the tide of impunity, to stem the tide of poverty, to stem the tide of kidnapping and insecurity," he said.

Obasanjo recalled returning to Nigeria in 1959 after completing his military training in Britain, noting that he could travel freely across the country without fear of attacks or kidnapping.

"I came back to this country after my commission as an officer in Britain in 1959. And I could go anywhere; I was posted to the north; I could go anywhere in the north, by myself alone, by day, by night," he said.

Contrasting that experience with the current security situation, he questioned how Nigeria had deteriorated to the point where citizens could no longer travel safely across several parts of the country.

"Now, if you can't do that, what has gone wrong? We have to correct what has gone wrong," he stated.

He argued that unemployment, particularly among university graduates, had become a major source of economic desperation, making it difficult to discourage young Africans from leaving their countries in search of opportunities.

According to him, governments cannot continue producing graduates without creating sufficient employment opportunities and expect them to remain economically productive.

Obasanjo recalled an encounter with Nigerians arrested for drug-related offences, explaining that one of the suspects had attributed his involvement in the illegal trade to the loss of legitimate employment.

He said the encounter demonstrated how economic hardship could push otherwise productive individuals towards desperate decisions, although he stopped short of justifying criminal activities.

Addressing irregular migration, Obasanjo said he had interacted with Africans who attempted to reach Europe through the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea, describing their experiences as distressing.

"I have got those people who have attempted to cross, and the story they told me is pathetic. Some die in the Sahara, some die in the Mediterranean," he said.

The former president maintained that improving governance and creating economic opportunities would reduce the pressure on Africans to undertake life-threatening journeys abroad.

"We have to improve on our leadership to deliver, and once our leadership delivers, what does any man want in the world?" he asked.

"But if they have nothing here, they will look for whatever they can get anywhere else, and you can't blame them."

2027: Ekiti REC seeks stakeholders' support for credible polls

ADO-EKITI

The Independent National Electoral Commission has expressed readiness for the conduct of the 2027 general elections in Ekiti State.

The state Resident Electoral Commissioner, Dr Bunmi Omoseyindemi, urged election stakeholders in the state to collaborate and play their parts to ensure a successful exercise.

Omoseyindemi, who spoke in Ado Ekiti, the state capital, on Saturday during a stakeholders' meeting convened to discuss the level of preparation for the 2027 general elections, said, "Our (INEC) preparations have been deliberate, comprehensive and proactive rather than reactive."

Speaking to the stakeholders, he said, "Let us be guided by our common interest in strengthening democracy and ensuring that the voice of every eligible Nigerian is heard through a credible electoral process.

"The responsibility is collective. Political parties must conduct their activities within the ambit of the law; security agencies must remain professional and impartial; the media must uphold accuracy and responsible reporting, and citizens must participate peacefully and responsibly. "Let us remember that the credibility of an election is not determined only on the election day; it is built through adequate preparation, effective collaboration and public confidence long before the first ballot is cast."

Omoseyindemi stressed INEC's commitment to conducting elections that are free, fair, credible, inclusive and transparent, saying, "We will continue to uphold the principles of impartiality, accountability and professionalism in the discharge of our constitutional responsibilities."

The REC, who said that security remains a critical component of election preparation, said, "Through the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security, we must continually identify, assess and develop appropriate responses to potential threats.

"We must pay particular attention to political violence, thuggery, vote buying, intimidation, hate speech, misinformation, disinformation and other activities capable of disrupting the electoral process. I urge all security agencies to sustain their cooperation with INEC and ensure adequate intelligence gathering, early warning, prevention and response mechanisms."

As part of preparation to ensure hitch-free polls, the REC said that the state's electoral commission was working towards ensuring that eligible citizens could update their records and collect their Permanent Voter Cards.

NEMA receives six Nigerian returnees from US

LAGOS

The National Emergency Management Agency has received six Nigerian returnees from the United States at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos State.

NEMA disclosed this in a statement posted on its X handle on Sunday, saying the returnees arrived at the airport's Cargo Terminal on November 4, 2026. The agency said the reception exercise was conducted through its Lagos Operations Office in collaboration with the United States Consulate, the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Nigeria Immigration Service and ExecuJet.

"The returnees arrived at approximately 10:13 p.m. aboard a Beechcraft 1900 aircraft with registration number N62FF. The group comprised five males and one female, all adults.

"Upon arrival, officers of the Nigeria Immigration Service conducted the necessary immigration documentation and profiling to ensure proper identification, record-keeping and a smooth arrival process.

"NEMA coordinated the reception in collaboration with the relevant agencies, while necessary reception and post-arrival support services were provided to facilitate the returnees' transition following their arrival in the country," the statement said.

The agency did not state the circumstances under which the six returned, whether they were deported or returned of their own free will.

US, under President Donald Trump, intensified US immigration enforcement.



CAPACITY BUILDING:
R-L: Executive Director, International Press Centre (IPC), Mr Lanre Arogundade; Resource Person, Prof. Ifeoma Dunu and the Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Enugu State Council, Comrade Obinna Ogbuka during an overview of interface with NUJ members on 'Capacity Building on Professional and Accountability Journalism ahead of the 2027 General Elections ' Sponsored by the European Union in Enugu on Saturday

Oil wells: Churches deny claim against Kumuyi, Adeboye, Oyedepo

LAGOS

The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Living Faith Church Worldwide and the Deeper Christian Life Ministry have reacted to an allegation that former President Olusegun Obasanjo allocated oil wells to their leaders during his administration.

The allegation was made by the founder and President of the Ministers' Prayer Network, Rev. Mosy Madugba, who claimed that Obasanjo allocated oil wells to prominent Nigerian pastors, including the General Overseer of the RCCG, Pastor Enoch Adeboye; the founder of Living Faith Church Worldwide, Bishop David Oyedepo; and the General Superintendent of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, Pastor William Kumuyi.

The claim, contained in a sermon circulating on social media, has generated controversy, with some Nigerians questioning the integrity of the religious leaders and others demanding evidence to substantiate the allegations.

In the video, Madugba alleged that some prominent pastors in Lagos benefited from oil wells allocated to them by Obasanjo during his presidency.

He said, "I don't know whether you know that the big names you have in Lagos have oil wells. Obasanjo gave them oil wells. The head of Winners' Chapel has an oil well, Adeboye has an oil well, Kumuyi has an oil well. They have universities, they have big hospitals. They have schools, and except Kumuyi, they have private jets."

However, a senior media aide to Pastor Kumuyi, who spoke on condition of anonymity, dismissed the claim as ridiculous, insisting that the cleric had no interest in such business ventures.

The official said Kumuyi should not be associated with oil exploration or similar business interests, stressing that the cleric was wholly devoted to preaching the gospel and winning souls.

He said, "Let us be frank, does Pastor Kumuyi look like somebody that will be interested in an oil well? Does he look like someone who would toy with such things? Pastor Kumuyi is devoted to the core; he is devoted to the work of God that he is being called into.

"So, the fact that somebody mentioned somewhere that Obasanjo gave him an oil well is ridiculous; we don't get involved in those things. Our focus is the gospel, how to win souls for the kingdom of God and prepare for heaven; therefore, this is not the kind of thing that he would get involved in."

Similarly, the Director of Media at Living Faith Church Worldwide, Patrick Nkamiang, dismissed the allegations, arguing that oil wells were not the personal property of a president to be distributed arbitrarily to individuals.

He questioned the basis of Madugba's claims, noting that Nigeria's petroleum resources were governed by laws and regulations.

Nkamiang said, "Oil wells are not that cheap to give away, nor are they the personal property of the President that he can just give to anybody.

"Even if oil wells were that cheap as of the time that he said that they were giving out oil wells, what's the value of an oil well then? Oil wells do not even belong to Obasanjo, for him to be sharing? They are natural resources that are governed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria. You cannot just give them away as you like."

Nkamiang maintained that Oyedepo had a zero-tolerance policy towards gifts and donations that could not be traced to legitimate personal or internally generated income.

He, however, ruled out the possibility of the church taking legal action against Madugba, saying it would rather leave the matter to God.

Also reacting, an official in the media unit of the RCCG, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the church would not respond to the allegation until Madugba provided evidence to substantiate his claims.

When Madugba's church eay contacted for a response, an official identified as Blessing Madugba, said, "We will get back to you."

Efforts to obtain Obasanjo's reaction through his Special Assistant on Media, Kehinde Akinyemi, were unsuccessful, as he neither answered calls nor responded to messages sent to him as of the time of filing this report.

Meanwhile, the allegations have generated mixed reactions on social media, with some users expressing concern about their implications for the credibility and independence of religious leaders.

Other users challenged Madugba to provide verifiable details of the alleged oil wells, arguing that such assets could not easily be concealed.

NEWS

FOREIGN



CHILDREN INJURED DURING THE SAUDI STRIKE BEING CARRIED TO A NEARBY HOSPITAL

Russian strikes wound nine and damage Ukraine's power network ahead of talks

Overnight drone and ballistic missile attacks damaged Ukrainian energy infrastructure, President Volodymyr Zelenskyhas said, causing blackouts and disrupting water supplies.

Zelensky said 12 Ukrainian regions came under attack with the capital Kyiv hit hardest.

Nine people are reported to have been hurt across the country, including one child, in the wave of attacks that consisted of more than 30 ballistic missiles and over 170 drones.

The attacks come before Ukrainian and Russian delegations are due to take part in trilateral talks in Abu Dhabi next week.

Zelensky wrote on Telegram that Moscow was preparing for the talks by launching attacks on Ukraine's "critical infrastructure".

Temperatures are dropping in Ukraine, and parts of the country have had the first winter snow.

"The situation in the capital is difficult, with disruptions to electricity, water, and heating supplies. Residential buildings, the North Bridge, and a kindergarten have been damaged," Zelensky said.

"In the Kyiv region, there were strikes on substations that connect the Rivne and Khmelnytsky nuclear power plants to Kyiv and central Ukraine."

In his latest update, Kyiv's Mayor Vitali Klitschko said the city's water supply system is back to operating normally. He also said around 60% of the city's apartment buildings were connected to the heating system.

The energy minister, Denys Shmyhal, said there were power cuts in five regions but did not say how many homes were affected.

Zelensky added that beyond Kyiv, substations were damaged in Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Rivne, Kharkiv and Dnipro regions.

The latest attacks come after US First Lady Melania Trump hosted Russian and Ukrainian delegations at the White House on Thursday.

She called for a "more enduring" ceasefire in Ukraine following a truce last week in the southern region of Kherson.

She thanked both Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin, making no reference to the origins of the war, which began when Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which has caused thousands of civilian casualties and the displacement of millions.

Hundreds of residents of the Russian-occupied Ukrainian town of Oleshky facing starvation and constant bombardment were able to evacuate during a six-day ceasefire, which both Moscow and Kyiv credited Trump with brokering.

"The lives of innocent people must transcend the division of war. I hope Oleshky inspires greater peace," she said.

Earlier this week, a number of people were killed when glide bombs hit an aid centre near Zaporizhzhia, with the death toll rising to 55 as teams search deeper into the ruins.

Zelensky added in his Telegram post on Saturday following the latest attacks that Ukraine was counting on increased bilateral support from the United States.

He wrote: "We are counting on unity between both parties on issues of security, support for Ukraine, condemnation of Russian aggression, and increased sanctions pressure on Putin.

"The resolve and consistency of the United States in supporting Ukraine are of great importance in bringing peace closer."

Meanwhile, Zelenksy's spokesperson would not be drawn on reports that the Ukrainian president is to be invited to the UK for a state visit next year.

Paraguay's former president charged after bank collapse

Prosecutors in Paraguay have charged former president Santiago Peña over his alleged role in a banking scandal that led to his impeachment.

He has been accused of breach of trust and administration for personal gain.

Peña, who denies any wrongdoing, was forced from office after a bank collapse triggered a crisis that left more than half of the country's population without access to their accounts.

He was arrested on Friday minutes after lawmakers, including from his own party, unanimously voted to remove him from office following the collapse of Ueno Bank, which has links to his private business interests.

He had offered to step down but rather than accept his resignation, senators impeached Peña and charged him with misconduct, meaning he has been stripped of the immunity usually granted to ex-presidents.

Peña, who until last year held shares in the company that owned the bank, has denied any wrongdoing.

The impeachment charges that led to Peña's removal alleged he had conflicts of interest, manipulated regulatory oversight, diverted pension funds, and participated in an institutional cover-up involving the central bank.

Peña's deputy, Pedro Alliana, has been sworn in as the new interim president and promised not to "abandon" the millions of people affected by the scandal.

"Compatriots who are now going through a difficult time as a result of the financial collapse will be fully compensated," said Alliana, who will serve as president until 2028.

The demise of the digital bank left more than half of Paraguay's population without access to their savings after it was seized by Paraguay's central bank.

Long lines of people trying to withdraw money from Ueno branches snaked down the streets of the capital Asuncion on Tuesday and Wednesday.

An estimated three million depositors remain unable to access their savings and pensions, prompting public outrage particularly in the capital, Asunción.

Protests erupted across the country in response, with thousands taking to the streets on Thursday to demand their money.

Earlier demonstrations featured clashes with the police, who used tear gas and water cannons on the crowd.

Peña's impeachment passed with 44 out of 45 senators voting in favour of it. One lawmaker was absent.

"It was never my intention to betray the trust you placed in me," Peña said in a video posted on X announcing his resignation, adding his priority was "the peace of mind of Paraguayans who entrusted their savings to our financial system".

Afterwards, senate president Basilio Núñez said Peña was found guilty of "dereliction of duty".

Senator Rafael Filizzola said: "We are facing the biggest corruption scandal in our democratic history – a tremendous blow to the state, to private citizens, and to the country's credibility and image."

Analysts say Peña is likely to now be prosecuted over the bank's collapse.

His defence lawyer Ricardo Preda described the allegations as a "reckless accusation" that was "irresponsible and opportunistic".

Houthis say at least 33 killed in Saudi air strike

Media linked to the Houthi movement in Yemen say at least 33 people, including women and children, have been killed in air strikes by Saudi Arabia.

There has been no comment from the Saudi-led coalition backing the internationally recognised government in Yemen.

Live video footage on Al Masirah - a television station run by the Houthis - has shown rescuers pulling bodies out of the rubble of several buildings in al-Shariyah, a town to the east of the capital, Sanaa.

The bodies of young children can be seen among those dug out from the ruins.

The television station has also shown a number of injured people being carried on stretchers to hospital.

Saba news agency, which is also run by the Houthis, said the attack was carried out by Saudi Arabia on Saturday. It added that 39 people had been injured.

The Saudis have led a coalition that has been fighting the Houthis for more than a decade in support of Yemen's internationally recognised government.

The war in Yemen had been dormant for several years but reignited as a result of the Iran war.

A truce began to fall apart when Saudi Arabia struck the airport in Sanaa - which is controlled by the Houthis - to prevent an Iranian plane landing there.

The Tehran-backed Houthis subsequently targeted Abha airport in Saudi Arabia, then began hitting Saudi ships that have been using the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen as an alternative oil export route to the Strait of Hormuz.

Major fighting has since resumed in Yemen between the Houthis and forces fighting for the Saudi-backed government of Yemen.

On Friday, an attack on a market in Taiz province, which has been the focus of much of the recent fighting, is reported to have killed 30 people.

The Houthis accused the Saudis of carrying out the strike, while government forces accused the Houthis of having fired a missile at the site.

The United Nations says more than 1,600 people have been killed and more than 300,000 displaced since fighting resumed.

The Saudis have regularly bombed Houthi positions, while the group has fired multiple missiles at targets inside Saudi Arabia, including airports and oil facilities.

Hours before the strike that hit al-Shariyah, the Saudi-led coalition said it intercepted a missile heading towards Riyadh.

A Houthi leader, Mahdi al-Mashat, has vowed that the group will take revenge for the latest attacks in Yemen.

US offers $20m reward for information about Iran's nuclear programme

The US has announced a reward of up to $20 million for information about Iran's nuclear programme.

The State Department's Rewards for Justice is also offering to potentially relocate the person who provides such details.

President Donald Trump claimed last year that Iran's nuclear facilities had been "completely and totally obliterated" following a bombing campaign by the US and Israel.

Iran insists its nuclear programme is peaceful and that it has no intention of developing a nuclear weapon.

Meanwhile, the US military says it is setting up a task force to enhance Washington's efforts to restrict Iran's movement of weapons and sanctioned material across its borders.

The US military's Central Command (Centcom) said Task Force Iron Gate would operate from Tampa, Florida, and would work with other US government agencies.

As well as the movement of weapons, it will also focus on dual-use and illegal revenue streams.

Centcom estimates that its naval blockade of Iran's ports has prevented the country from exporting more than $25bn in crude oil.

Major construction ongoing near Iran missile bases, satellite images suggest

A US State Department statement about its multi-million dollar reward said it was offering the money for information about the Iranian programme, including "facilities, equipment and associated personnel".

It said Iran's "lack of compliance with the IAEA [the International Atomic Energy Agency] on safeguards obligations has led to the agency's loss of 'continuity of knowledge' regarding Iran's production and inventory of key components like [nuclear] centrifuges".

Centrifuges are needed to produce enriched uranium, which can be used to make reactor fuel for civilian use but also for nuclear weapons if enriched to around 90% purity or higher.

There had been mounting speculation that the US might resume significant strikes in Iran after the midterm elections, though Trump told reporters, prior to the polls, that he was in "no rush" to do so.

In an interview with Fox News on the eve of the midterms, the president also said the US "might need to go after Pickaxe [Mountain]", an underground site linked to Iran's nuclear programme.

NEWS

Israel's president tasks opposition leader Eisenkot with forming government

Israel's president says he will task opposition leader Gadi Eisenkot with forming a new coalition government.

Isaac Herzog has been holding talks with political parties after neither Eisenkot's bloc nor that of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu secured a majority in Israel's parliament, known as the Knesset, following last week's election.

Eisenkot will now have 28 days to try to form a new administration, with a potential 14-day extension.

"Now is the time to form a national emergency government. I will do everything to ensure we are worthy," the former military chief wrote on X.

No political party in Israel has ever won an outright majority, meaning all governments have been coalitions.

Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party and its far-right and ultra-Orthodox Jewish allies won 53 seats in the 120-seat Knesset, while Eisenkot's centrist Yashar party and three other Jewish opposition parties in his bloc won 48.

Two Arab-led alliances, the United Arab List and the Joint List, together won an unprecedented 19 seats following a surge in turnout among Arab voters.

That positions them as potential kingmakers. However, all but one of the Jewish parties pledged before the polls not to work with them to form a government.

Herzog said that, after consulting all parties during the week, he would give Eisenkot the first chance to form a government.

A statement from the president's office said he had informed both Eisenkot and Netanyahu of the decision.

Following consultations with delegations from the incoming Knesset members, Eisenkot received 67 recommendations for the premiership and Netanyahu 46, the statement said.

The president has broad discretion to pick someone they believe has the best chance of building a coalition and does not have to choose the leader of the party with the most seats.



General view showing Tripoli city, Libya Thursday Oct. 7, 2010.

Six killed in Krakow gun attack

At least six people were killed and more than a dozen others injured when a gunman suspected to have ties to the far-right opened fire in central Krakow, the second largest city in Poland.

Three bodies were found at his home when it was searched by police. Here is everything we know so far.

How did the attack unfold?

The attack began shortly before 15:00 local time (14:00 GMT) in Krakow's Main Market Square, the bustling central point of the city which is popular with tourists.

Police said a man drove into the square before beginning to fire "at random people from his car".

Footage shows scenes of panic as people fled, with the sound of gunfire clearly heard.

A passing tram was shot at during the apparently random attack, shattering windows but no passengers were injured.

Armed officers raced to the scene and engaged in a gunfight with the suspect, who was shot within three minutes of the attack beginning, preventing a further massacre, officials said.

A 25-year-old man who was arrested remains in hospital after having surgery for a gunshot wound.

Distressing footage authenticated by BBC Verify shows the moment a police officer confronts the suspect on the ground before firing his weapon several times.

The officer then falls to the ground, apparently having been injured himself.

Shop windows in the square have signs of damage, seemingly from bullets, with glass shards scattered along the floor. City officials have urged people who live in the city and tourists to stay away from the area while an investigation continues.

The suspect's car, found at the intersection of Dietla and Stradomska streets, was checked for possible explosive devices, police said, but none were found. Residents of nearby buildings had been evacuated while the operation was under way.

How many people have died and been injured?

Six people - four women and two men - are confirmed to have been killed, including a British national. Three victims are Polish and two have not been identified.

Sixteen people, including five foreigners, two police officers and the attacker, were taken to hospital. The interior ministry later said they were from Austria, Britain, Germany, Portugal and Russia.

Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk later named the injured officers as Senior Constable Jakub Kulik and Senior Constable Artur Morański.

One of the police officers was described as being in a "very critical condition" by a Polish government minister after being shot three times while arresting the attacker. The officer is undergoing surgery, he added.

Polish authorities have not confirmed the names and ages of the other victims.

Tusk said three bodies - two women and one man - were found at the gunman's house when it was searched after the attack.

On Sunday, Polish police confirmed those three victims had been identified as the alleged gunman's parents and his sister, who was 21-years-old.

What do we know about the suspect and motive?

Police have identified the attacker as a 25-year-old Polish man but have not confirmed his name.

Gambia's opposition leader Bensouda files for presidential election despite abuse allegations

Supporters of Gambia's UNITE-led coalition celebrated on Friday as their party leader Talib Ahmed Bensouda filed his candidacy papers for next month's presidential election.

The move comes despite a government report last week accusing the popular former mayor of financial improprieties and abuse of office.

Bensouda's UNITE party has rejected the allegations as "a last-minute political manoeuvre intended to confuse the public…ahead of nominations."

"The NPP government is desperate and afraid because they will lose this election", it said, referring to Barrow's National People's Party.

During his eight years as may of Kanifing Municipality, Bensouda gained a loyal following by implementing regular waste collection. His political star has continued to rise as the tiny west African nation faces prolonged blackouts.

The electricity cuts have led to numerous protests and calls for President Adama Barrow to step down.

The presidential election is scheduled for December 5, when Barrow will be running for a third term. While the list of election nominees has not yet been made official, leading opposition candidate Ousainou Darboe of the United Democratic Party, who ran against Barrow in 2021, has also said he will run.

If the allegations against Bensouda are proven, he would be disqualified from standing.

Heavy rains leave tens of thousands without shelter in Gaza

Heavy rain on Saturday flooded tens of thousands of displaced people's tents in war-devastated Gaza, Palestinian authorities said, leaving them without shelter.

In a statement, the Hamas-run government media office said that about "70,000 tents sheltering tens of thousands of displaced people were flooded on the first day" of rains.

It also noted the "collapse of dozens of cracked walls and roofs, which caused injuries," some critical, in various areas of the tiny territory.

Since early Saturday, hundreds of displaced families have been seen fleeing camps in parts of Gaza City and in the central and northern areas of the Strip after they were inundated by rainwater.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmoud Bassal told AFP his teams had received more than 1,500 calls during the night from residents requesting urgent assistance after their tents were flooded, explaining that the agency "is operating without any equipment or capabilities."

"We have issued an urgent distress call to the international community and humanitarian organisations to intervene immediately to save hundreds of thousands of displaced people from the flooding of their tents."

"We cannot face the consequences of this storm on our own."

Um Muhammad al-Hersh, 45, who lives with her family in a tent in western Gaza, told AFP: "We were not able to save the mattresses, and all the clothes were soaked. Our suffering is repeated every winter."

Maryam Odeh, 34, who lives with her children in Deir al-Balah, said, "We no longer know how to protect our children. My children ask me where we will sleep tonight, and I have no answer."

For his part, Khaled al-Najjar, 41, said, "We fear for our children not only from the flooding of the tents, but also from the cold and the widespread diseases."

Egypt reopens embassy in Libya as it seeks to rebuild energy ties with Tripoli

Egypt's foreign minister Badr Abdelatty was in Tripoli on Saturday to reopen his country's embassy.

The mission has been closed since 2012, when chaos swept Libya following the ouster of long-time leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The country is now divided between two governments vying for power in the oil rich nation. Cairo previously backed military commander Khalifa Haftar's administration in the east. But it is now mending fences with Tripoli and looking to strengthen energy cooperation.

"All we want now is to begin, on the technical level, the implementation phase," Abdelatty said at the embassy's opening ceremony.

"There are promising projects, particularly the laying of a gas pipeline linking Libya to Egypt, considering that Egypt is the only country in the eastern Mediterranean, in the southern Mediterranean, that possess the facilities required for the liquefaction of natural gas."

IG urges investment in security personnel, youth to enhance peace

LAGOS

The Inspector-General of Police (I-G), Mr Olatunji Disu, has called for more investments in the professional development of security personnel and youths to strengthen peace and security.

He also called for stronger partnership with Rotary International to strengthen community policing, promote conflict prevention and build safer communities across Nigeria.

Disu made the call at the All Nigeria Rotary Peace Summit on Saturday in Ikeja.

The summit had the theme, "Good Governance, Justice and Equity: Foundations for Sustainable Peace."

Disu was represented by Assistant Inspector-General of Police Miller Dantawaye in charge of Zone 13 Police Command.

The command comprises Anambra and Enugu states.

Disu stressed the need to invest in the professional development of security personnel and young people, describing such investments as essential to lasting peace and security.

He reaffirmed the commitment of the Nigeria Police Force to partnerships that would promote justice, responsible citizenship and peaceful communities.

The I-G said sustainable peace went beyond the absence of violence, stressing that it required justice, fairness, good governance, respect for human rights and institutions that would enjoy public confidence.

Disu said that equity and the rule of law were essential foundations for national stability.

According to him, citizens are more likely to resolve grievances through lawful and peaceful means when they believe that the law applies equally to everyone.

He said that equal protection, access to justice and respect for human dignity were necessary for building peaceful and stable communities.

He said the police remained committed to protecting lives and property, preventing and detecting crime, maintaining public order and enforcing law professionally and impartially.

The I-G, however, said that security was not the sole responsibility of the police, noting that effective policing

NDA transforms boy into men –Mongunu, Ex-NSA

ABUJA

Former National Security Adviser (NSA), Retired Maj.-Gen. Babagana Monguno, on Saturday recalled his time at the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA), and declared that "the unforgettable experience usually transform boys into men".

Monguno spoke in Abuja at the launch of a book titled, "Rumbles in the New Academy", written by Sub-Lt. Olufemi Akinwumi.

The NAN reports that in the book, the author recounted his experiences and that of other cadets while at the NDA.

According to Monguno, even the cadets, at the point of admission, did not know the kind of person they would be when they are eventually commissioned.

"As soon as you cross that gate and you are adopted into a new company (or battalion, as is the case now), you drop your old self and begin to discover your new self.

"And, on the day of commissioning, all you are left with is a new person with a new set of values which you will carry on for the rest of your life.

"But, more conspicuously, the most notable feat is the change in attitude, the transition from boyhood to manhood," he said.

He maintained that the experience, though intense, was a good one as it forged relationships.

"These are very genuine friendships which do not expire.

"We tend to gloss over some of our experiences in the military academy and what we went through; it is important we also remember that it was all in the effort to train and retrain ourselves," he said.

He commended the author for the initiative to document his experiences in writing, and also praised the research he conducted to balance the perspectives presented in the book.

Monguno said that the book highlighted the importance of aggregating what had been in existence, especially for civilians who had not experienced the academy.

It will equally serve as a reminder for those with the



GRADUATION CEREMONY:
Senior Special Assistant to President Bola Tinubu on Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education (TVEE), Dr Abiola Arogundade, represented by Dr Abiola Ishaku (M); and beneficiaries at the graduation ceremony of the National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy (NPRGS)

Afreximbank pledges stronger financing for Africa's creative economy

LAGOS

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has pledged stronger financing for Africa's creative economy, with a focus on strengthening production, distribution, branding and intellectual property ownership.

Dr George Elombi, President and Chairman of Afreximbank, made the commitment during his address at the Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) WKND 2026, with theme "One People, United in Culture, Creating for the World", on Thursday in Lagos.

Elombi said African creatives had achieved global recognition through music, films, fashion, literature and visual arts, but the economic value generated by their works remained largely outside the continent.

According to him, Africa's creative economy is estimated at 60 billion dollars by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, representing only two per cent of the global creative economy.

He said tha African creators often generated successful creative products while foreign entities retained ownership of distribution platforms, branding, marketing channels, catalogues and intellectual property rights.

"Our talent is global, our share of the value, unfortunately, is only local," he said.

Elombi said Afreximbank had increased its financing commitment to the creative industry from 500 million dollars to one billion dollars and subsequently to two billion dollars in 2024, following growing demand.

UNIMAID alumni target N1bn scholarship fund for students, members

ABUJA

The Global President of the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID) Alumni Association, Baba Shettima-Kukawa, says the association is targeting a one-billion-Naira scholarship fund to support members and students of the institution.

Shettima-Kukawa said this at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the association on Saturday in Abuja, while speaking on the association's achievements and plans for year 2027.

He said that his administration was committed to building a sustainable association capable of delivering lasting benefits.

According to him, the association plans to introduce scholarship programmes, mentorship initiatives and development projects to achieve its objectives.

He said the association had presented its 2027 agenda to congress, outlining programmes aimed at strengthening professional development and educational support.

He said the association had presented its 2027 agenda to congress, outlining programmes aimed at strengthening professional development and educational support.

"Upon assuming office last year, my administration adopted a three-point agenda focused on mobilisation, structure and impact.

"The first priority is to mobilise graduates of the university and bring them together under one umbrella to strengthen the association.

"The second priority is to establish effective structures, including policies, processes, procedures and governance frameworks to ensure a proper administration," he said.

Shettima-Kukawa said that the association had registered nearly 10,000 members within four months as part of efforts to expand its membership base.

He said that the administration's immediate focus was to build an association that would outlive its current leadership and deliver sustainable benefits.

He said the association's planned interventions would focus on members, the university and the wider community.

"One of the proposed initiatives is the establishment of a Professional Development Board covering five professional fields, including ac-

Diaspora investment requires trust, infrastructure, clear pathways –Experts

LAGOS

Experts in the creative industry have called for stronger investment infrastructure, transparent business operations and ownership of creative works to deepen diaspora participation in Africa's economic development.

They made the call during a conversation session themed "Beyond Borders: The Diaspora's Role in Shaping Africa's Future" at the Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) WKND 2026 on Saturday in Lagos.

Timi Adeyeba, Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of Amplify Africa, said lack of trust and clear investment pathways remained major obstacles to diaspora participation in African businesses.

Adeyeba said many Africans in the diaspora were interested in returning home to invest, establish partnerships and explore business opportunities but often lacked adequate information about the processes involved.

According to him, cultural connection and understanding should precede economic engagement, stressing that diaspora professionals needed to understand local markets, business structures and opportunities.

He said the media had also contributed to misconceptions about doing business in Africa, making it necessary for businesses and institutions to communicate their operations and investment opportunities more effectively.

Adeyeba cited interest generated by the Dangote Refinery's initial public offering (IPO), saying thousands of diaspora investors expressed interest in participating.

He said the experience demonstrated that diaspora participation could increase when investment opportunities were credible and accessible.

Adeyeba, however, stressed that interest alone was insufficient without reliable financial platforms and structures that could translate inquiries into actual investments.

He urged African businesses to strengthen their operational systems and infrastructure to encourage investment and build lasting partnerships.

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