Polytechnics grounded as SSANIP begins 3-day warning strike

KEBONKWU RUTH

ABUJA

The Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Polytechnics, SSANIP, has commenced a three-day nationwide warning strike over the Federal Government's failure to pay outstanding arrears and implement the 2026 renegotiated agreement.

The strike, which began at midnight on Monday, November 16, is expected to end on Wednesday, November 18, 2026.

The directive was contained in a notice issued by the chapter Executive Committees on Sunday, following resolutions reached at the union's National Executive Council and General Executive Council meeting held on November 11, 2026.

According to the notice, "All SSANIP members are expected to withdraw their services throughout the strike period in strict compliance with the directive of the union's National Secretariat."

The industrial action is aimed at compelling the Federal Government to address two major outstanding demands: the immediate payment of delayed CONTTA arrears and the full implementation of the 2026 renegotiated agreement between the Federal Government and SSANIP.

The union expressed concern over the delay in implementing CONTTA and paying arrears to members, despite repeated assurances by the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, that the funds had been released and domiciled in the accounts of the various institutions.

SSANIP said the assurance was given during the unveiling of the agreement on October 13 and the inauguration of the Implementation and Monitoring Committee on October 14.

"However, several weeks after these assurances, our members remain unpaid," the union said.

The union is also concerned about the failure to implement other critical provisions of the agreement, particularly the movement of non-teaching staff to CONTEDISS 15.

It accused the National Board for Technical Education, NBTE, of failing to issue clear implementation directives to polytechnic managements to facilitate the provision.

The union further directed members to stay away from their duty posts throughout the three-day warning strike,

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

The Nigerian
OBSERVER
That The People May Know
NigerianObserver | @Nigerian_Observer | @NigerianObserver | www.nigerianobservernews.com
PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968 | VOL. 47, NO. 1,398 | TUESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER, 2026. | ₦200

State Police Bill: All 36 State Assemblies give nod, NASS to transmit to Tinubu

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

Nigeria's proposed state police system has moved closer to becoming a reality following the unanimous approval of the constitutional amendment bill by all 36 State Houses of Assembly, with the National Assembly set to transmit the legislation to President Bola Tinubu for assent.

The Clerk to the National Assembly, Kamoru Ogunlana, disclosed this in a statement issued on Monday, November 16, 2026, confirming that all state legislatures had endorsed the proposed constitutional alteration seeking to establish State Police Services.

The confirmation came a day after Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele, announced that 32 State Houses of Assembly had approved the bill, while the remaining four were expected to submit their reports before the National Assembly resumed on Tuesday, November 17.

Bamidele had said the 32 approvals already satisfied the constitutional requirement under Section 9(2) of the 1999 Constitution, which requires the support of at least 24 State Houses of Assembly for a constitutional amendment of this nature.

With the subsequent confirmation of approval by all 36 state legislatures, Ogunlana said the bill had secured 100 per cent endorsement, paving the way for its transmission to the President.

The bill, titled An Act to Alter the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to Provide for the Establishment of State Police Services and for Related Matters, is part of the ongoing Sixth Alteration to the Constitution.

Ogunlana explained that the bill had fulfilled the constitutional and administrative requirements for transmission in accordance with the Constitution and the Acts Authentication Act.

He, however, disclosed that the leadership of the National Assembly had directed a brief delay in its transmission to allow for broader national consensus and engagement with all states of the federation.

With the verification process completed, the Clerk confirmed that the bill was ready for transmission to President Tinubu for assent.

Bamidele had earlier described the development as significant progress in Nigeria's efforts to reform its policing architecture after more than 15 years of unsuccessful attempts to establish state police.

He explained that the proposed constitutional amendment provided for the establishment of both the Federal Police Service and State Police Services, designed to promote community-based policing within constitutional safeguards.

According to him, the initiative is not intended to create ethnic or state armies, as feared in some quarters, but to strengthen the country's security framework through a decentralised policing arrangement.

The Senate Leader said the National Assembly remained committed to fulfilling Nigerians' aspirations for improved security through proactive and evidence-based legislation.

He stressed that the effectiveness of the legislature should be measured not merely by the number of bills passed but by the tangible impact of its laws on the lives of citizens.

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



LAWYERS AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE:
Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (7th left), with members of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Benin Branch, led by its Chairman, Omorodion Omoigui (6th left), when the lawyers paid him a visit at the Government House, Benin City on Monday, November 16, 2026.

Oborevwori presents N1.23trn 2027 Appropriation Bill, earmarks N320bn for roads —Pg 2

54 African countries to converge on Abuja over stolen assets —Pg 3

China seeks balanced global trade through shared prosperity, market access —Pg 15

Nigeria boxing fans can win $5,000 in Mayweather vs. Floyd promo bout —Pg 22

NEWS



BUDGET PRESENTATION:
The Governor of Delta State, Sheriff Oborevwori presenting 2027 Appropriation Bill before the State House of Assembly during Plenary in Asaba.

Oborevwori presents ₦1.23trn 2027 Appropriation Bill, earmarks ₦320bn for roads

Joy Odor

ASABA

Gov. Sheriff Oborevwori of Delta on Monday, presented a N1.23 trillion 2027 Appropriation Bill before the State House of Assembly, earmarking 65 per cent for capital expenditure, with N320 billion allocated to road infrastructure.

Presenting the bill to the state assembly during plenary in Asaba, Oborevwori said the budget was tagged "Budget of Sustained Prosperity and Enhanced Growth".

NAN reports that the proposal comprised N806.8 billion for capital expenditure and N430 billion for recurrent expenditure.

The governor also said the proposed budget represented a 28.5 per cent reduction from the N1.729 trillion approved for the 2026 fiscal year.

According to him, the budget will prioritise the completion of ongoing civil and industrial projects, initiation of new high-impact programmes and consolidation of development achievements recorded over the past three years.

He explained that infrastructure development, economic growth and improved public service delivery remained central to his administration's priorities.

He also explained that the two Ministries of Works would receive N320 billion for road infrastructure, while N50 billion and N74 billion were allocated to the health and education sectors respectively.

He noted that government would also prioritise electricity reforms, agriculture, youth empowerment and social intervention programmes to improve residents' living conditions.

"My administration remain committed to inclusive development, particularly addressing the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, irrespective of ethnicity, gender or social background.

"Infrastructure like roads, bridges and flyovers are also critical to my administration as they are drivers of economic development, community integration and improved access to markets," he said.

The governor added that functional road networks were essential for connecting rural communities to urban centres, facilitating transportation and expanding economic opportunities.

"Without roads, there are no transport routes. Roads connect people, communities and markets," he said.

According to him, feedback from town hall meetings and community engagements has consistently identified road infrastructure as a major priority among residents.

He said that improved connectivity would facilitate the movement of agricultural produce, reduce transportation difficulties and stimulate commercial activities across rural and urban communities.

Oborevwori emphasised that his administration would intensify efforts to complete ongoing infrastructure projects while commencing new ones in the 2027 fiscal year.

On revenue generation, he identified statutory allocations, internally generated revenue, mineral resources, Value Added Tax (VAT), capital receipts and proceeds from approved asset sales as major sources of funding.

He further said that the budget was anchored on realistic revenue expectations, prudent financial management and effective implementation of priority projects.

He reaffirmed his administration's commitment to consolidating previous achievements, expanding economic opportunities and ensuring that development benefits reached communities across Delta.

Responding, the Speaker of the House, Mr Dennis Guwor, assured the governor that the Assembly would give the proposed budget thorough, objective and timely consideration.

Guwor said the consideration would be guided by the approved 2027–2029 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and Fiscal Strategy Paper, with emphasis on prudent resource allocation, accountability and projects that would positively impact residents.

He commended the governor's performance in implementing the 2026 budget, particularly in road infrastructure, healthcare, education, social welfare and human capital development.

The speaker also praised the governor's commitment to workers' welfare, particularly his assent to the 13th Month Salary Law, describing it as a landmark initiative.

State Police Bill: All 36 State...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Bamidele also highlighted some legislative achievements of the National Assembly, including the Student Loan (Access to Higher Education) Act, 2024, and the National Social Investment Programmes Act, 2023.

He disclosed that the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) had disbursed more than N204 billion to applicants across 323 tertiary institutions nationwide.

The beneficiaries, he said, included students from 89 colleges, 108 polytechnics and 126 universities, with the initiative helping to reduce dropout rates in tertiary institutions.

Other legislative achievements he listed included the Minimum Wage Amendment Act, 2024, Tax Reform Acts, 2025, Investments and Securities Act, 2025, Electoral Act, 2026, Nigerian Insurance Industry Reform Act, 2024, and the Regional Development Commissions Acts.

On media practice, Bamidele reaffirmed the National Assembly's commitment to press freedom, an open parliament and sustained engagement with journalists.

He, however, urged media stakeholders to address irresponsible social media practices, including character assassination, misinformation, blackmail and deliberate distortion of facts, which he said had affected individuals and public institutions.

He challenged media organisations, including the Nigerian Guild of Editors, Nigeria Union of Journalists and Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria, to promote responsible information dissemination in line with international best practices and national development objectives.

Meanwhile, Ogunlana commended the 36 state governors, speakers and members of the State Houses of Assembly, as well as other stakeholders, for their cooperation and commitment to reforming Nigeria's policing system.

The unanimous endorsement represents a significant milestone in the country's constitutional reform process and brings the proposed state police arrangement closer to the presidential assent required for its eventual implementation.

Polytechnics grounded as...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

adding that a monitoring and enforcement task force would be deployed across campuses to ensure compliance.

It stated that normal official duties are expected to resume on Thursday, November 19, 2026, pending further directives from the national leadership.

SSANIP warned that failure to meet its demands between November 19 and 24 would trigger an indefinite nationwide strike from November 26, in addition to a nationwide mass protest scheduled for Wednesday, November 25, 2026.

ICPC to publish recovered assets, owners, status

ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has pledged to periodically publish recovered assets, their status and owners, to promote transparency and accountability.

Prince Hassan Mohamed, Chairman, Local Organising Committee (LOC) of the maiden General Assembly of the African Asset Recovery Practitioners' Forum (AARP-F), gave the assurance during a pre-conference media briefing in Abuja

Mohamed, also Director of Special Services at ICPC, said that nothing concerning recovered assets was hidden, emphasising that the information would remain accessible to the public.

The assurance comes as 54 countries prepare to converge on Abuja to discuss strategies for preventing the loss of billions of dollars through corruption and illicit financial flows.

He spoke during a question-and-answer session ahead of the assembly, scheduled to hold from Nov. 17 to Nov. 20 in Abuja.

NBA Benin commends Okpebholo over improved security in Edo

Richard Eweka

BENIN CITY

Says cultism, kidnapping now under control

The Benin Branch of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for what it described as significant improvement in the security situation in Edo State, saying cultism and kidnapping are now under control.

The Chairman of the branch, Mr Omorodion Omoigui, gave the commendation on Monday when he led members of the newly inaugurated executive of the association on a courtesy visit to the governor at Government House, Benin City.

The visit was also to formally invite Governor Okpebholo to the association's annual dinner scheduled for December 11, 2026.

Omoigui congratulated the governor on his second anniversary in office, attributing the relative peace currently enjoyed in the state to the administration's efforts to tackle insecurity.

He equally commended the government's road rehabilitation programme, noting that previously deplorable roads across the state, including roads in Evbuotubu, his neighbourhood, had benefited from the intervention.

Omoigui further expressed appreciation to the governor for appointing members of the legal profession into his cabinet, assuring him of the association's willingness to partner with the government in advancing the development of the state.

On requests earlier presented by the branch, the governor advised the association to formally document and submit them for consideration.

"Government is about documentation," he said, explaining that requests for government intervention must be properly documented and subjected to the necessary procurement procedures before approval.

The governor thanked the association for its commendation and assured its members that his administration would remain focused on delivering development and improving the welfare of Edo residents.

He said the government would not be distracted by any challenge but would remain committed to fulfilling its mandate to the people.

NEWS

54 African countries to converge on Abuja over stolen assets

ABUJA

No fewer than 54 African countries are set to participate in the maiden General Assembly of the African Asset Recovery Practitioners' Forum (AARP-F) scheduled to hold in Abuja from Nov. 17 to Nov. 20.

The Chairman of the Local Organising Committee (LOC) for the event, Prince Hassan Mohamed, disclosed this at the pre-conference media briefing in Abuja on Saturday.

Mohamed, who is also the Director of Special Services at the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), said all African countries would attend the Assembly virtually.

According to him, the assembly is a continental gathering of 54 countries aimed at stopping the loss of billions of dollars to corruption and illicit financial flows.

He said the main purpose of the Assembly was to harmonise the fight against corruption, especially now that asset recovery has become an integral part of the work of anti-corruption agencies globally.

"The purpose of the programme is to harmonise, to synergise, synthesise, come up with strategies to deal with this menace," he said.

He said the choice of Abuja was strategic, giving Nigeria an opportunity to contribute to Africa's collective asset recovery agenda under the auspices of the African Union.

"By hosting this Assembly, Abuja will provide a meeting point for African and international stakeholders to exchange experiences, strengthen partnerships and collectively advance a shared continental agenda.

The Assembly has the theme, "From Commitment to Action – Enhancing Africa's Asset Recovery Architecture through Effective Implementation of the Common African Position on Asset Recovery (CAPAR).

"The Forum was established in Nairobi, Kenya, in April 2025, to strengthen cooperation among practitioners and advance the implementation of CAPAR," he said.

He said that African Union considered it necessary to set up the forumm to ensure that recovered assets were put to use for the benefit of the masses.

"Asset recovery has become an integral part of the fight against corruption globally, and the African Union is advancing that aspect of the fight," he said.

He said that Africa continued to lose resources critical to its development to corruption and illicit channels.

"Every successfully recovered public asset represents an opportunity to redirect resources towards the needs of citizens, improve public service delivery, strengthen institutions and rebuild confidence in governance systems," he said.

Mohamed said that no single country could confront transnational financial crimes alone.

He called for stronger partnerships, improved information exchange and more effective international cooperation.

He said participants, including heads of anti-corruption agencies, asset recovery practitioners, representatives of Financial Intelligence Units and international partners, would review progress, adopt governance instruments and agree on strategic action plans.



AWARDS:
From left: Executive Director of Keystone Bank Ltd, Mrs Nnenna Okoro; Managing Director of the Bank, Mr Hassan Imam; Chairman Board of Directors, Keystone Bank Ltd., Lady Ada Chukwudozie; Independent Non-Executive Director, Keystone Bank Ltd., Mrs Lola Ade-John; Executive Director, Mr Ladi Oluwole, after the bank received 'Banking Transformation Leader of the Year Award' during the Nigerian Business Leadership Awards (NBLA) 2026, organized by BusinessDay Media Limited, in Lagos.

Reps expose alleged N7.1bn gap in UNILAG accounts, probe 9 varsities

Kebonkwu Ruth / Aghedo Iyobor

ABUJA

The House of Representatives Committee on University Education has uncovered alleged financial discrepancies in the records of nine federal universities, directing their vice-chancellors to account for public funds and comply strictly with budgetary provisions.

The committee also directed the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Prof. Folasade Ogunsola, to submit details of the institution's 2024, 2025 and 2026 budgets and appear before it next week over an alleged N7.1bn excess in its financial records.

The Chairman of the committee, Abubakar Fulata, disclosed this in a statement on Saturday following an oversight visit to universities and inter-university centres in the South-West.

Fulata said the exercise exposed inconsistencies in financial reports, inadequate transparency and possible breaches of budgetary regulations in some institutions.

He said: "In some cases, the documents submitted contradict each other. You claimed to have generated N9bn and spent N10bn — where did you get the N1bn from?

"In another instance, you will see N12bn generated as income and only N8bn spent without any information regarding the whereabouts of the balance of N4bn."

Fulata maintained that the 2027 general election would not distract lawmakers from their constitutional oversight duties, despite political activities ahead of the polls.

The committee further called on university authorities to observe the federal character principle in staff recruitment and student admissions to promote fairness and equitable representation.

As part of its directives, the committee asked the University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Federal University of Technology, Akure, and Federal University of Health Sciences, Ila-Orangun, to update their financial records and submit comprehensive reports on the implementation of their 2024, 2025 and 2026 budgets.

Ogunsola was reportedly unavailable during the committee's visit to the University of Lagos, while officials who represented her could not adequately explain the alleged N7.1bn excess in the institution's 2024 and 2025 financial records or provide further details requested by the lawmakers.

Other institutions visited included the University of Ibadan, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Federal University of Agriculture and Development Studies, Iragbiji, Federal University of Technology and Environmental Studies, Iyin-Ekiti, and the Nigeria French Language Village, Badagry.

The committee said the exercise formed part of the National Assembly's constitutional responsibility to scrutinise public expenditure, assess budget implementation and ensure that government institutions properly utilise funds allocated to them.

Sanwo-Olu: Food security is Nigeria's most important security challenge

LAGOS

Lagos State Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has reiterated the importance of food security, assuring residents of the state's commitment to strengthening the food system.

Sanwo-Olu made this known at the 2026 Lagos Food Systems Nexus held on Thursday in Ikeja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the event, with the theme, "Food Security is not Agriculture Problem: Connecting the Dots", had in attendance stakeholders across the agricultural value chain.

The governor described food security as the most important form of security, stressing that access to affordable food remained a major challenge globally.

He said food security had become a critical livelihood issue that required urgent attention from governments at all levels.

"The most important security is not gun, is not bows, is not arrow. The most important security globally today is food.

"Food continues to be a major conversation that nationals, both advanced nations, emerging nations, and even third world nations, are still grappling with.

"Food becomes the most single important livelihood of man, and as a nation, as a people, we have so much neglected it that we feel that as Lagos, we have to put it on the front border," he said.

Sanwo-Olu said President Bola Tinubu had also recognised the importance of supporting farmers, including through interest-free financial assistance, to address food security challenges.

He said the Lagos Food Road Map, initiated about four years ago, remained on course, with funding and support from the private sector, state governments and the Federal Government.

The governor, however, stressed that the success of the initiative depended largely on the active participation of stakeholders and practitioners across the food value chain.

He urged participants to understand the state's vision and contribute to efforts aimed at building a sustainable food system.

On her part, the Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Systems, Lagos State, Ms Abisola Olusanya, said the state's approach to food security went beyond agricultural production.

Olusanya said her experience in public service over the past seven and a half years had reinforced the understanding that the food economy extended beyond farmers.

She explained that food security involved businesses responsible for processing agricultural produce, markets, technology and other activities connecting food production to consumers.

Okomu oil palm honours 65 workers for long service

BENIN CITY

The Okomu Oil Palm Company Plc has honoured 65 employees for their dedication, loyalty and meritorious service to the company, rewarding them with household appliances and furniture.

The employees were recognised at the company's 2026 Long Service Award ceremony in Benin City for their commitment to the organisation over 15, 20 and 25 years.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Managing Director of the company, Dr Graham Hefer, described the workforce as a critical pillar of the company's growth, productivity and overall success.

He noted that the dedication and contributions of employees remained central to the organisation's achievements, stressing the importance of recognising and rewarding those who had demonstrated commitment and loyalty over the years.

He particularly acknowledged the company's Smallholder Superintendent, Rev. Sam Aisien, for his 20 years of dedicated service.

In his remarks, the Chairman of the Nigerian Union of Agriculture and Allied Employees (NUAAE), Mr Clifford Ewansiha, commended the management for sustaining a culture of recognising excellence, dedication and commitment among its workforce.

Ewansiha said the initiative would serve as an incentive for employees to remain committed to their responsibilities and contribute meaningfully to the company's continued growth.

He urged the award recipients to sustain their dedication and uphold the values of the organisation, assuring workers that the union would continue to protect their interests and promote their welfare.

The union chairman also presented an award plaque to Hefer on behalf of the workers in recognition of his visionary leadership and contributions to the company's growth.

Some of the award recipients expressed appreciation to the management for recognising their years of service, describing the gesture as a morale booster that had further strengthened their sense of belonging and inspired them to give their best to the organisation.

Under the 15-year service category, 30 junior staff members received a Thermocool freezer each.

Similarly, 21 junior staff members who had served for 20 years were presented with 21-inch LG colour television sets, while four senior staff members in the same category received 5KVA generating sets each.

For the 25-year category, seven junior staff members received a settee and a four-chair dining table set each.

Three senior staff members who had completed 25 years of service were rewarded with fully upholstered sitting-room furniture, queen- and king-sized beds, as well as wardrobes.

The ceremony also featured the presentation of a 25-year Long Service Award to Mr Wisdom Idemudia of the company's Workshop Department by the Managing Director.

REMOVAL OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **OSAHON CYNTHIA**. And **OSAHON CYNTHIA IYOSAYE**. Are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as **OSAHON CYNTHIA**. All former documents Remain valid. Concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **Miss IBHARUNUJELE JOY OMONYE**.Now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs OBOH JOY OMONYE**. All former documents Remain valid. Concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

ARRANGEMENT OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that, **ONOMOE AFEGBAI JOHN**. And **AFEGBAI ONOMOE JOHN**. Are one and the same person.Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as **ONOMOE AFEGBAI JOHN**. All former documents Remain valid. Concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I,formerly known as **EZEWELE INNOCENT BEST**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **PATRICK BEST**. All former documents Remain valid. Concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I,Formerly known as **GINGER OWENS**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **GINGER OLAYINKA OWENS**.All former documents Remain valid. concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **OSAIKHUIWUOMWAN EUNICE OMOROGIUWA** now wish to be known as **UYELE EUNICE OMOROGIUWA**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **BONIFACE FAITH RHODA** now wish to be known and addressed as **BONIFACE FAITH**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **MISS ENAJERE ENDURANCE** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS EKAMA ENDURANCE**. All Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **WILLIAMS EIGBEDION**. now wish to be known and Addressed as **AKHOSION ABRAHAM IRENOSEN**. All former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **OSAIKHUIWUOMWAN EUNICE OMOROGIUWA** now wish to be known as **UYELE EUNICE OMOROGIUWA**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

I formerly known as **PRECIOUS ITSEUGBEMHE**. now wish to be known and Addressed as **PRECIOUS ITSENEGBEMHE**. all former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **MISS. OBASUYI SARAH**. now wish to be known and Addressed as **MRS. ORIAKHI SARAH**. all former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **MISS. ODI - PATRICK OSAMAGBE NICE**. now wish to be known and Addressed as **MRS. EDOKPAYI OSAMAGBE NICE**. all former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

REMOVAL OF MIDDLE NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **OVWATA LUCKY OGHENEVWARE** and **OVWATA LUCKY**. are one and the same person henceforth I now wish to be known and Addressed as **OVWATA LUCKY**. All former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

BENIN CITY, EDO STATE OF NIGERIA
PROBATE REGISTRY

WHEREAS the person whose name is set out in the first column hereunder died intestate on the date and at the place stated in the column;
AND WHEREAS the persons whose names, addresses and claimed relationship to the deceased are set in the second column hereunder have applied to the Probate Registrar, High Court of Justice, Edo State of Nigeria for a grant of Letters of Administration of the real and personal property of the deceased.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration will be granted to such persons unless a NOTICE to prohibit the grant is filed in this Registry within Twenty-One (21) days from the date of the publication of this notice.

1. **PRINCESS. DR. MRS. IROGHAMA AKENZUA-IDEHEN**, late of Orogho, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 19th day of August, 2026 in Benin City.	**PED/883/2026** Mr. Monday Eddy Idehen and Mr. Joseph Agbons Idehen of No 129, Uselu-Lagos Road, Benin City, widower and brother in law respectively of the deceased.

DATED THIS 16th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2026.

B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

BENIN CITY, EDO STATE OF NIGERIA
PROBATE REGISTRY

WHEREAS the person whose name is set out in the first column hereunder died intestate on the date and at the place stated in the column;
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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration will be granted to such persons unless a NOTICE to prohibit the grant is filed in this Registry within Twenty-One (21) days from the date of the publication of this notice.

1. **MR. SOLOMON OKOEDO-OKOJIE**, late of Ebhoiyi Uromi, Esan North East L.G.A., who died on the 29th day of October, 2018 in Benin City.	**PED/852/2026** Mr. Solomon Okojie and Mr. Samuel Okojie of No 51, Wire Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.

DATED THIS 16th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2026.

B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar



Edo security: Cleric, APC chieftains hail Okpebholo

...Say Edo has never been this peaceful in decades

Matthew Okagha

BENIN CITY

Three prominent Edo personalities, Prophetess Patience Azeta Edoriawhe, JP, General Overseer of God's Gift Church of Jesus Christ; Elder Jolly Igbinovia, an APC chieftain in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area; and Hon. Elder Napoleon Agbama, a former Chairman of Uhunmwode Local Government Council, have applauded Governor Monday Okpebholo for what they described as his determined efforts to end the persistent bloodshed and insecurity associated with cult-related clashes in Edo State.

In separate interviews, the trio expressed satisfaction with the prevailing security atmosphere in the state, declaring that Edo had not experienced such a level of peace and calm in several decades.

They attributed the improvement to the governor's political will, commitment to security and determination to restore public confidence, noting that the relative peace has brought renewed hope to residents, business operators and communities that had endured years of violence, killings and fear.

For Prophetess Edoriawhe, the restoration of peace in Edo State goes beyond government policy and security operations; it is also an answer to prayers and a demonstration of the importance of divine intervention in the affairs of humanity.

The woman of God described peace as a priceless gift from God, stressing that no meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere of fear, bloodshed and uncertainty.

She noted that for years, families had been thrown into mourning, young people had lost their lives prematurely, and communities had lived under the frightening shadow of cult-related violence.

According to her, the present atmosphere of relative calm is a welcome development that deserves commendation, encouragement and sustained prayers.

The prophetess said Governor Okpebholo had demonstrated courage and a sense of responsibility by tackling the security challenges confronting the state, adding that leadership requires not only the formulation of policies but also the determination to protect human lives.

She urged the governor not to relent, emphasising that the task of sustaining peace requires constant vigilance, wisdom and God's guidance.

Prophetess Edoriawhe also called on religious leaders, parents and community stakeholders to intensify prayers and moral guidance, particularly for young people vulnerable to cultism and other social vices.

She maintained that the church has a significant role to play in promoting godliness, forgiveness, discipline and respect for human life, adding that lasting peace must begin with a transformation of the human heart.

For Elder Jolly Igbinovia, the prevailing security situation represents a significant departure from the painful experiences of the past, particularly in communities that had suffered the consequences of cult clashes.

The APC chieftain, who spoke from the perspective of community development, said the relative peace had restored confidence among residents, many of whom previously lived with anxiety over the possibility of violent confrontations.

He observed that when communities are peaceful, people can go about their legitimate businesses, traders can operate without fear, parents can send their children to school with greater confidence, and young people can pursue productive ventures without the threat of violence.

Igbinovia said the governor deserved commendation for taking the security challenge seriously, noting that the protection of lives and property remains the most fundamental responsibility of government.

He, however, urged residents to complement the government's efforts by providing useful security information, discouraging criminal associations and refusing to shield perpetrators of violence.

He stressed that security should not be left exclusively to government and security agencies, insisting that community participation and collective vigilance are essential to sustaining the gains.

Similarly, Hon. Elder Napoleon Agbama, a former Chairman of Uhunmwode Local Government Council, described the prevailing peace as a welcome development for Edo communities, particularly those that had experienced the devastating consequences of cult-related violence.

Agbama said the memories of recurring killings and violent confrontations remained painful for many families, adding that the relative calm currently being experienced has given communities fresh reasons to hope for a safer future.

He noted that the benefits of peace are best appreciated at the grassroots, where residents are directly affected by insecurity and where the consequences of violence extend beyond the immediate victims to families, businesses and entire communities.

According to him, the governor's efforts have created a more reassuring environment for social and economic activities, while restoring confidence among residents who had become apprehensive about their safety.

The former council chairman called on traditional rulers, community leaders, religious institutions, youth organisations and political stakeholders to support the government's security initiatives.

He particularly urged parents and guardians to take greater responsibility for the upbringing of their children, warning that the fight against cultism cannot be won through security operations alone without addressing its social and moral foundations.

Agbama maintained that the peace being celebrated must be protected through collective responsibility, community cooperation and sustained government commitment.

The three personalities agreed that while the government deserves commendation for the improvement in the security situation, the ultimate test of success lies in sustaining the peace and ensuring that Edo people never return to the dark days of recurring cult violence and needless bloodshed.

Uhunmwode vice chairman loses wife

EHOR

The Vice Chairman of Uhunmwode Local Government Council, Hon. Agie Joseph Samuel, has lost his wife, Insp. Mrs. Juliet Agie.

Mrs. Agie reportedly died on November 13, 2026, after a brief illness at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH).

The Uhunmwode Local Government Council, in a condolence announcement issued on November 15, expressed deep sorrow over her demise, describing it as a painful loss to the bereaved family, the Council and the entire community.

The deceased was a devoted wife and loving mother of four children.

The Council, while commiserating with Hon. Agie Joseph Samuel and the entire family, prayed that God would grant them the strength, comfort and fortitude to bear the loss.

It also stated that details of the burial arrangements would be communicated by the family in due course.

The Council prayed for the peaceful repose of the deceased's soul.



LATE MRS. JULIET AGIE



COURTESY VISIT:
From left: Chairman, Boad of Trustees Pipeline Professionals Association of Nigeria (PLAN), Mr Geoff Onuoha; Group Chief Executive Officer, OILSERV Group, Dr Emeka Okuosa; Vice President of PLAN, Mr Audu Ibrahim; Group Chief Executive Officer, NNPC Limited, Mr Bashir Ojulari and the Managing Director, NGIC and PLAN, NNPC Focal point person, Mr Adeche Omotosho-Oboro, during the Association's courtesy visit to the GCEO NNPC Limited in Abuja.

Rotary Club Of New Benin to host lecture on Rotary Foundation, giving

...Osagie to speak on importance of supporting humanitarian service

BENIN CITY

The Rotary Club of New Benin is set to host a public lecture on the Rotary Foundation, with emphasis on the importance of giving and supporting humanitarian services.

The lecture, scheduled for Thursday, November 19, 2026, will hold at Urban Oasis Hotel, Oguola Crescent, off Reservation Road, Benin City, at 4:30 p.m.

The guest speaker, PAG. Nosa Francis Edo Osagie, MD, FCAI, is expected to speak on the topic, "The Rotary Foundation and the Need to Give."

The programme is designed to explore the impact of the Rotary Foundation in serving humanity and the importance of individual and collective contributions towards sustaining its humanitarian activities.

The programme is expected to provide an opportunity for members and guests to explore the role of the Rotary Foundation in supporting humanitarian initiatives and improving the lives of people in communities across the world.

The Rotary Foundation is widely associated with Rotary International's humanitarian programmes, which focus on promoting peace, fighting diseases, providing clean water, supporting education, protecting mothers and children, and strengthening local communities.

According to the event announcement, the lecture is designed to highlight the impact of giving and the importance of individual and collective contributions to sustaining humanitarian interventions.

The President of the Rotary Club of New Benin for the 2026/2027 Rotary Year, Rtn. Reynolds Eigborebhe, has extended an invitation to all members and guests to attend the programme.

The event is expected to bring together Rotarians and other interested members of the public to reflect on the values of service, generosity and commitment to humanity.

NEWS

FG captures 34m learners, 700,000 teachers on digital platform

ABUJA

The Federal Government says it has captured more than 34 million learners and 700,000 teachers on the Nigerian Education Data Infrastructure (NEDI) as part of efforts to digitalise the country's education system.

Mr Adebayo Onigbanjo, National Project Coordinator, Special Programmes Operations and Implementation Unit, Office of the Minister of Education, disclosed this on Monday in Abuja.

He spoke at a news conference ahead of the launch of the National Educational Technology (EdTech) Strategy.

Onigbanjo said NEDI, which had also captured 340 schools, would serve as the data backbone of the education system, providing reliable information for planning, resource allocation and accountability.

He said the platform had replaced largely manual data collection processes, which often resulted in delays and outdated information, with digital systems that enabled schools to upload information directly to a central database.

"The Nigerian National EdTech Strategy represents the Federal Government of Nigeria's commitment to building a unified, data-driven and future-ready education system.

"It provides a coherent national framework for integrating technology across teaching, learning, education management, teacher development, digital infrastructure and governance.

"It ensures that investments in education technology translate into improved learning outcomes and greater equity across the country," he said.

He said the platform would also help government identify out-of-school children, monitor enrolment and target interventions at learners and communities that needed them most.

Onigbanjo identified five pillars of the strategy as data and interoperability, digital infrastructure, technology and procurement, teacher transformation, and governance and coordination.

He said the data component would establish common standards to enable existing education technology systems to share information while protecting personal records in line with the Nigerian Data Protection Act.

On infrastructure, he said the strategy would prioritise reliable electricity, broadband connectivity and access to digital devices, especially in rural and underserved communities.

He added that the teacher transformation pillar would establish standards for digital skills, certification and career progression through the National Teachers Digital Competency Framework (NTDCF).

According to him, a National Teacher Professional Development Portal would also provide online, offline and blended learning opportunities for teachers.

The strategy would further introduce AskFM, a digital assistant designed to provide parents, students, teachers, institutions and the public with information on the ministry's programmes, policies and services.

2027: Don't allow opposition secure 25% votes in FCT

...Wike charges campaign council

ABUJA

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mr Nyesom Wike, has directed President Bola Tinubu's campaign council in FCT to block opposition parties from securing 25 per cent of votes in the territory during the Jan. 16, 2027 general elections.

Wike gave the charge while inaugurating the 466-member All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council and Rainbow Coalition in FCT on Monday.

The minister specifically named the opposition parties as the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC).

He said the campaign team's mandate goes beyond a simple victory to achieving an overwhelming margin for Tinubu and APC National Assembly candidates.

"We're not talking about winning; we're talking about winning overwhelmingly.

"We must not allow them to go with 25 per cent. They don't deserve to get 25 per cent," Wike told the gathering, which included council members, party supporters, and members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Addressing claims by opposition figures regarding political dominance ahead of the 2027 polls, Wike dismissed assertions that the ADC held sway in northern states or stood a chance in the nation's capital.

He singled out the ADC's presidential candidate, noting his tenure as Vice President from 1999 to 2007, and argued that past administrations failed to deliver foundational policy reforms for the FCT.

Wike also challenged former Rivers governor, Rotimi Amaechi, whom he referenced in connection with opposition remarks about an APC rally in Port Harcourt, to test his party's popularity in Rivers.

"The FCT is for no other party other than the APC," Wike declared, warning council members that they would be held directly accountable for the election outcome in the territory.

To persuade voters, the minister urged the council to campaign on the current administration's governance reforms and infrastructure record rather than mere promises.

According to him, Tinubu's administration has introduced historic structural changes since 2023, including appointing an FCT representative to the Federal Executive Council for the first time since Abuja's creation in 1976 and establishing dedicated Mandate Secretariats for Women and Youth.

He noted that the administration also created the FCT Civil Service Commission, appointed the first Head of Service for the FCT, and enabled career civil servants to rise to the rank of Permanent Secretary.

On financial autonomy and land administration, Wike said the removal of the FCT from the Treasury Single Account (TSA) allowed direct access to financial markets for capital projects, leading to the signing of over 20,000 Certificates of Occupancy (C of O) within three years, compared to roughly 8,000 issued between 1999 and 2023.

ASUU, SSANU protest alleged land allocation in UniAbuja

ABUJA

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), University of Abuja (UniAbuja) Chapter, has urged the FCT Minister, Mr Nyesom Wike, to stop the alleged allocation of the university's land to private individuals.

The ASUU Chairmam, University of Abuja chapter, Prof. Sylvanus Ugoh, made the call during a peaceful protest in Abuja, on Monday.

The protest by ASUU was in collaboration with the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU), and others.

The protest, held within the university campus, saw members carrying placards with various inscriptions, expressing their dissatisfaction over the allocation of the university land to private individuals.

NAN reports that union members marched from the university gate to the road carrying placards with inscriptions such as: "We will resist to exist,"

Other placards read: "We need intervention not land grabbing. No to land encroachment. Court orders must be obeyed, governance is not arbitrariness," among others.

Ugoh said that the action of the minister was a breach of the rule of law and an attempt to undermine the long-term development of the institution.

He said the land was allocated to the university in 1988, when it was established, adding that successive ministers had respected the institution's ownership of the land.

"University is a public good. University is a public interest. There is nowhere in the world where you take public interest for individual interest.

"One thing this administration has always done, they have always reiterated that ASUU and university unions would not go on strike.

"But what the FCT minister is doing is actually capable of undermining that because the unions in this university will not fold their hands and see this land that belongs to generations yet unborn being taken away from us.

"University is a public good and university will outlive every other person and we cannot remove what is a legacy to the unborn generation and give it to individuals", he said.

Ugoh said that the unions would not remain silent and watch land reserved for the institution's future development being allocated for private purposes.

He said that the unions rejects the possibility of using the university's land to build filling stations, shopping malls or residential houses, adding that the land should remain only for academic development.

ADDITION OF NAME

I, **ABIGAIL ODIASE EMMANUEL**. And **ABIGAIL EMMANUEL**.Are one and the same person as appeared on some of my documents. Henceforth, I hereby wish to be known and addressed as **ABIGAIL ODIASE EMMANUEL**. All former documents Remain valid. Concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF MIDDLE NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **AKPOGUMA HARRISON AWUSA** and **AKPOGUMA HARRISON OJARUARE** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known as **AKPOGUMA HARRISON OJARUARE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

LOSS OF DOCUMENTS

The general public is hereby notified that I, **IMAFIDON EHIOROBO KINGSLEY** is the rightful owner of a parcel of land measuring 100by100 ying and situate at no. 18, Upper Adesuwa Grammar school road, GRA, Benin city, Edo state, which comprises 2 floors, 15, bedrooms, suites, reception, stores, kitchen, balcony and stairway. The original title documents of the said property were destroyed by flood, occasioned by the sudden overflow of accumulation of water, when my kitchen sink got blocked, and the water flooded my residence and submerged several of my valuable personal belongings and documents sometimes in 2007. That the DEED of my landed property with the registration number: 10/10/1004. Was completely destroyed by the water: Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

SIGNED: **IMAFIDON EHIOROBO KINGSLEY**

OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL
KING'S SQUARE, P.M.B. 1052,
BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.

Our Ref: ABC1501/49
Date:16th November,2026

ADDENDUM TO ADVERT PUBLICATION

RE: INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE UNDERLISTED PROJECTS;

Construction of Ultra Modern Health Center in Ward 3
Construction of Modern Shopping Complex at Ogiso Market (Block A)
Construction of Modern Shopping Complex at Ogiso Market (Block B)
Construction of Modern Shopping Complex at Ogiso Market (Block C).

With reference to the advertisement published in The Nigerian Observer on Tuesday 3rd November 2026.

Oredo Local Government Council hereby informs all interested bidders and the general public that the bid opening exercise earlier scheduled to hold on 13th November 2026 has been postponed.

The postponement was due to unforeseen official engagements that took place on 12th and 13th of November 2026. Consequently, the bid opening exercises has been rescheduled to Monday, 23rd November 2026, at the same venue and time.

All other items, conditions and information in the original advertisement remain unchanged and valid.

Signed: **Engr. EMMANUEL IBHADODE**
HOLGA, Oredo Local Government Council.
For, Executive Chairman,
Oredo Local Government Council.

NEWS

10 feared killed, 2,000 displaced in Anambra communal clash — NEMA

AWKA

The National Emergency Management Agency said no fewer than 10 persons had either been killed or declared missing, while about 150 houses were destroyed during the communal clash between Umuoba Anam and Aguleri communities in Anambra East Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Similarly, the agency said no fewer than 2,000 persons were displaced during the crisis.

The Head of Operations, NEMA Enugu Zonal Office, Priscilla Madukwe, disclosed this when she led a team to the affected areas for an impact assessment on Saturday.

The assessment team, comprising NEMA and SEMA officials, was led to the devastated communities by the Chairman of Anambra East Local Government Area, Ifeanyi Chinweze, alongside some community leaders and security operatives.

Recall that the communal clash, which occurred in October, led to the destruction of houses, shops, factories, automobiles and other property belonging to residents of the communities, including non-indigenes.

The palace of a monarch was also razed, prompting the state governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, to convene a high-level stakeholders' peace meeting at the Light House, Awka, to address the protracted crisis.

Our correspondent gathered that, more than one month after the incident, the affected areas remained deserted, with some security personnel stationed there to maintain peace and order.

However, during the visit, the NEMA Head of Operations said the magnitude of the destruction prompted the Federal Government, through the agency, to visit the affected communities to evaluate the extent of the damage, with a view to assisting the victims.

Speaking during the exercise, Madukwe said, "No fewer than 150 houses were destroyed during the communal clash that occurred in Umuoba Anam and Aguleri communities in October.

"Similarly, about 2,000 persons were displaced while 10 persons were either killed or declared missing during the crisis in the affected areas.

"The destruction prompted the Federal Government through the NEMA, to visit the affected communities to evaluate the extent of damage, with a view to assisting the victims.

"The level of damage is unfortunate. Our findings will be submitted to the Federal Government for possible assistance to the victims to enable them to return to their homes."

Madukwe, however, called on community leaders and stakeholders in the affected areas to ensure that the crisis was resolved and guard against a recurrence.

Also speaking, the Chairman of Anambra East Local Government Area, Ifeanyi Chinweze, assured that efforts were being made to resolve the differences that led to the disturbance.

Chinweze, therefore, called on the people to embrace peace and dialogue, stressing that the curfew imposed in the area had contributed to restoring calm to the zone.

He thanked the Federal Government for sending the assessment team and expressed the hope that relief would come to the people to reduce the pain caused by the crisis.

In an interview, the Head of Administration, Anambra State Emergency Management Agency, Ndidi Omega, said the government had set up a committee to look into the crisis, recommend ways to prevent a recurrence and suggest assistance for the victims.



DEDICATION:
From left: Nigerian Navy Chaplain Services, Roman Catholic, VRF Richmond Diala; Archbishop of Abuja, Bishop Ignatius Kaigama and representative of the Chief of the Naval Staff, Rear Adm. Adedokun Siyanbade, during the dedication Curpus Christi Catholic Church Admiralty Estate Asokoro in Abuja.

Reviving Kano industries key to fixing North, says Obi

KANO

The presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress, Peter Obi, has said reviving Kano's moribund industries is critical to addressing Northern Nigeria's economic challenges, describing the state as one of the country's most important commercial centres.

Obi made the remarks in Kano while speaking at the fifth convocation ceremony of Skyline University Nigeria, where he lamented the decline of the state's manufacturing sector and called for urgent efforts to restore its industrial capacity.

He said Kano had historically played a major role in Nigeria's commerce, business and manufacturing, but regretted that many factories that once drove its industrial growth were no longer operational.

"As I was coming to Kano this morning, I met several people, and I told them that Kano is one of the most important commercial centres in Nigeria.

"This city represents the country's strength in commerce, business and manufacturing. Kano was once a major industrial hub, with several factories operating here. Today, many of those factories are no longer functioning. We need to bring them back, revive manufacturing and create employment opportunities for our people," he said.

The former Anambra State governor said restoring the factories and strengthening manufacturing would create jobs, reduce poverty and improve the economy.

He cited Vietnam as an example of a country that had made significant progress through manufacturing, noting that Nigeria needed to strengthen its productive capacity rather than depend heavily on the export of raw materials.

"Countries such as Vietnam have made significant progress through manufacturing, earning substantially more from manufactured goods than Nigeria does," Obi said.

He also highlighted the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises, urging the government to create an enabling environment for businesses to grow, expand and employ more people.

"Small businesses are also critical to economic development. In countries such as Indonesia, small and medium-sized enterprises account for a significant proportion of employment. Nigeria must create an environment where businesses can grow, expand and employ more people," he said.

Obi further called for increased investment in young entrepreneurs, saying government support for promising business ideas could help tackle unemployment and poverty.

He recalled meeting a young entrepreneur who told him about a competition in which successful participants received between N5m and N10m to develop their businesses.

Obi questioned why the government could not provide more substantial support to young people with viable business ideas, arguing that resources saved from fuel subsidy removal could be channelled into productive investments.

"I asked myself why Nigeria cannot do more to support young entrepreneurs. The government reportedly saved N17.8tn from fuel subsidy, an expenditure that was not sustainable and had serious implications for the economy," he said.

NGE condemns prosecution of FIJ journalist, demands release

LAGOS

The Nigerian Guild of Editors has condemned the arrest, detention and remand of Foundation for Investigative Journalism correspondent, Daniel Ojukwu, at the Kuje Correctional Centre, Abuja, demanding his immediate release on bail.

The Guild described Ojukwu's criminal prosecution as an attack on press freedom and the right of Nigerians to receive information.

In a statement issued on Sunday and signed by its President, Eze Anaba, and General Secretary, Onuoha Ukeh, the NGE said the journalist was being prosecuted for raising questions about the expenditure of public funds.

"The Guild is deeply alarmed that a journalist whose professional duty is to investigate and report matters of public interest is being subjected to criminal prosecution and incarceration over reports that raised serious questions about the expenditure of public funds by the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals.

"Ojukwu's investigation reportedly exposed the alleged payment of more than M N147 million (approximately $109,000) to an Abuja-based restaurant for the construction of classrooms and a skills acquisition centre at a primary school in Lagos. His findings raised questions about the existence of the projects and the capacity and track record of the company involved in the contract.

"These are legitimate issues of public accountability that deserve transparent answers, not the criminalisation of the journalist who brought them to public attention," the statement read.

Ojukwu and FIJ founder, Fisayo Soyombo, face allegations of cyberstalking and criminal defamation in connection with investigative reports on President Bola Tinubu's Senior Special Assistant on Sustainable Development Goals, Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire.

Justice Joyce Abdulmalik of the Federal High Court in Abuja ordered Ojukwu's remand at the Kuje Correctional Centre on November 10, pending the hearing of his bail application on December 1.

The journalist pleaded not guilty to the 12-count charge, which also named Soyombo as a defendant.

The prosecution alleged that the reports placed Orelope-Adefulire in fear of death, violence or bodily harm.

Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu, also requested a bench warrant against Soyombo, but the court rejected the ruling that such an order could not be issued against a defendant who had not previously been brought before it.

Soyombo subsequently said he would appear in court on December 1, despite alleging that he had not been served with the charge and proof of evidence.

The NGE said the resort to arrest, detention and criminal prosecution over journalistic work raised questions about the authorities' commitment to press freedom and freedom of expression.

It said, "Investigative journalism is not a crime. Asking questions about public expenditure is not cyberstalking. Demanding accountability from public officials is not defamation."

The Guild added that public office holders should understand that their management of public resources was subject to scrutiny.

Akwa Ibom gov gifts car, N5m to abandoned-at-birth bride

UYO

Akwa Ibom State Governor, Umo Eno, has gifted a brand-new car and N5m to a woman who was abandoned at birth and raised at the state's Special Children's Home on her wedding day.

The governor disclosed this on Saturday in a social media post on the traditional marriage and reception of Abigail Edet and her husband, Kevin Etiemana, held at Ibom Hall, Uyo.

Eno said he served as the Father of the Day at the ceremony, describing Abigail's journey from being abandoned at birth to starting a family of her own as a reminder that everyone has a purpose and destiny.

He said, "Abigail, who was abandoned at birth and raised at our Special Children's Home, has today been blessed with a family of her own.

"Her story reminds us that no matter the circumstances of our birth, God has a purpose and destiny for each of us."

The governor said the gifts were presented to support the couple as they began their married life.

"As a demonstration of our love and support, I presented the couple with a brand-new car and N5 million to help them begin their marital journey," he said.

Eno also disclosed that he offered the newlyweds advice on their responsibilities to each other as they begin their marriage.

"I encouraged Kevin to love, protect and cherish his wife, and urged Abigail to honour and support her husband as they build their home together," he said.

The governor prayed for the couple, wishing them a peaceful and fulfilling marriage.

NEWS

Edo community lauds Gov. Okpebholo's developmental stride

UMUERI (ANAMBRA)

The people of Egoro Na-oka Community, in Egoro Kingdom, Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State, have lauded the developmental stride of his Excellency, Senator Monday OKpebholo.

The indigenes of the Community applaud the governor's major projects as a step towards fulfilling the administration's commitment to opening up rural communities and connecting residents to greater economic opportunities. They gave the commendations at the Uhiele-Egoro-Naoka-Ebudin road flag-off ceremony.

Speaking at the flag-off ceremony, Sir Francis Iria Aikhu, the Chairman Egoro Na-oka Development Association, EDA, said, praise must go to the Governor for the bold courage to take the bull by the horn.

Aikhu, described governor Monday OKpebholo's construction of the Uhiele-Egoro-Naoka-Ebudin road as a historic intervention, noting that its completion would improve access to markets, strengthen transportation networks and create better opportunities for farmers, traders, young people and families along the road corridor.

According to Aikhu, 'governor OKpebholo's administration does not allow political disagreements to determine the distribution of infrastructure and other development projects across the state."

He said the Egoro Na-oka road had remained a major challenge for residents for several decades, explaining that its deplorable condition had affected transportation, wastage of agricultural products, healthcare delivery and other socioeconomic activities.

He said, "the governor has shown the true leadership of a father who takes responsibility in caring for all his children," he stated.

He appealed to all the Indigenes of Egoro Na-oka both home and abroad to key into the governor's SHINE agenda.

"Please love development as the governor will not be distracted," he declared

He commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his leadership and economic reforms, expressing appreciation for the Federal Government's support towards development at the state level.

"For so many years, the Egoro Na-oka road has been a nightmare, a story of pain and loss. It is a road that cuts off our people during the rainy season. Farmers lose their produce, mothers find it difficult to access hospitals, and our economic life is crippled by flooding and failed portions," he said.

Also speaking, CSP John Akharaiyi (rtd), President General EDA praised the governor for the development he has carried out in Egoro Na-oka Community since stepping in as the governor of Edo State.

He said Egoro Na-oka has become a mini London since the governor's assumption of office. " We are indeed grateful to His Excellency for giving the community the desired attention."

Akharaiyi assured the Governor of massive votes for all the elections as it concerned him and his party APC,to his eight years rule in Edo state.

Earlier, Supl.Johson Oyamenda,(rtd) chronicled the long history of the Egoro Na-oka Community road. He said, "since I was born about 45 years ago my people have been begging for this road to be tarred."

He stated that all efforts to make previous administration to come to the community's aid failed, adding that within his two years in office, "the amiable governor has given us everything that we need."

The chairman, Esan West Local Government Council, Honourable Blessing Albert Ebhodaghe

expressed appreciation to the Governor for commencing the project. The council chairman recalled that Governor OKpebholo had promised to construct the road from Uhiele to Ebudin in Esan Central Local Government Area.

He described the flag-off as the beginning of the fulfilment of that commitment, noting that the project would ease transportation and improve the living conditions of residents.

He pledged the support of the local government and community stakeholders towards the successful execution of the project.

Also speaking, the Chairman CEO of the construction Company, CLIFORDIA CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, the contracting firm handling the project, Engr. Clifford Ordia thanked the Edo State Government for the confidence reposed in the company and promised to complete the project within the stipulated period. He disclosed that the road project is 13-kilometre long.



NEWS CONFERENCE:
From left: Head of Internal Security, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Mr Henry Hwande; Head of External Cooperation, ICPC, Mr Ahmed Abdul; and the Director of Special Services of ICPC, Prince Hassan Mohammed, during a news conference on the maiden general assembly of the African Asset Recovery Practitioners Forum (AARP-F) organised by ICPC in Abuja.

Fresh storms gather after installation of Odionwere

Monday Oise

BENIN CITY

A new phase of crisis is brewing in Erua community, Uhunmwode Local Government Council Area of Edo State, barely after eight months of the installation of the Odionwere, Pa. Peter Osakue Eresuwa

The Odionwere had walked a difficult road to his installation following resistance spear headed by the former Okaighele (Youths Head), Ayo Omoregbe

This led to a prolonged internal crisis which had posed an obstacle to the installation of the Odionwere, and the spending of huge sums of money in finding a solution to the situation.

Verifiable internal sources who preferred to be anonymous; disclosed that this time, the brewing crisis is a fall out of the refusal of the Odionwere, Pa. Eresuwa and his children to honour the memorandum of understanding (MOU) they entered with financiers during the crisis which threatened his installation.

Our reliable sources narrates that the financial benefactors have requested that they be paid both the money spent on the struggle and as compensation.

But the Odionwere and his children are not prepared to hear this let alone honour the demand as they argue that the amount of money being demanded has been over quoted.

The financial benefactors were said to have therefore tried using internal family mechanisms to resolve the disagreement and in one of such meetings, the Odionwere and his children were told to pay in full as demanded either in cash, or portions of land in equivalent be given to them.

The financial benefactors noticing that the Odionwere and his children were not showing any readiness to comply with the resolution, they decided to drag them to the law court where a date for hearing of the matter is said to have been fixed for on the 17 November, 2026.

Meanwhile, the daughter of the Odionwere who allegedly spent the sum of N2.m for the struggle, has been paid the sum of N5.7m both in refund and compensation via a portion of land sold in the community.

According to our source, the community approved 20 plots of land to be sold to buy a vehicle for the Odionwere and used in taking care of his other pressing needs.

In the midst of this, a pastor acting on the instructions of the Odionwere's son, began erecting structures in the land which has further escalated tension, our source said.

But the Odionwere who we reliably gathered was aware of the development and solidly behind the activities, denied knowing anything when the family members confronted him.

All the persons involved in this story except the pastor, are said to be close family relations; father, children, uncle, nephews and cousins.

Though the alleged persons have been contacted for reaction, they have been evasive as at the time of filing this story for publication,

However, the situation is closely being monitored following the existing ban on CDA activities by the Edo State Government, and the Palace of the Benin Monarch, HRM Oba Ewuare II.

NUJ Demands Immediate Release of Detained FIJ Journalist Daniel Ojukwu

ABUJA

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), has expresses grave concern over the continued detention and prosecution of Daniel Ojukwu, an investigative reporter with the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ). Following his arraignment at the Federal High Court in Abuja on Tuesday, November 10, 2026, on 12 counts of alleged cyberstalking and criminal defamation.

Mr. Ojukwu was remanded in prison custody until December 1, 2026, for his bail hearing—a prolonged 21-day incarceration stemming from investigative reports published in 2023 and 2024 regarding public expenditure by the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (OSSAP-SDGs). Alongside local and international rights organizations, the NUJ demands the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Ojukwu and calls for the withdrawal of all charges against both him and FIJ founder, Fisayo Soyombo.

The Union strongly cautions the Nigeria Police Force and other state security agencies against the recurring weaponization of the Cybercrimes Act and criminal defamation laws to harass, abduct, and silence media practitioners. Having previously endured a 10-day abduction by police operatives in May 2024 over the exact same investigative work.

"Journalism is a constitutionally mandated public service, not a crime; deploying the apparatus of the criminal justice system to punish reporters for scrutinizing public spending undermines the very foundations of Nigeria's democracy.

"We remind the Police and prosecuting authorities that Section 22 and Section 39 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), alongside regional and international treaties to which Nigeria is a signatory—including Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—explicitly guarantee freedom of expression and charge the press with holding the government accountable to the people. Subjecting investigative journalists to prolonged pre-trial detention over stories of overriding public interest creates a chilling climate of fear across the media landscape.

"The Nigeria Union of Journalists stands in full solidarity with Daniel Ojukwu, the management of the Foundation for Investigative Journalism, and all Nigerian journalists committed to truth and transparency. We urge the Federal Government, the Inspector-General of Police, and the judiciary to uphold the rule of law, respect press freedom, and ensure that media professionals can discharge their constitutional duties without fear of arrest, detention, or persecution,"
Alhassan Yahya, National President, NUJ, noted.

FEATURE



NEW YORK CITY

America: A Harbour of Hope

AHUSEMERE OGBEIDE

The United States of America is the pride of the world and the most powerful nation on Earth, blessed with abundant human and natural resources. With its diverse population, entrepreneurial spirit, and strong institutions, it has established itself as a global power.

Beyond its material strength, America is known for generosity and compassion, qualities which define its national character and attract people from all walks of life through its promise of opportunity, a better life, and individual freedom.

The country's leadership prides itself on having the most powerful military, the world's largest economy, and the most advanced technological development. It also identifies itself as the champion of democracy and leader of the free world. Through its global partnerships, defence commitments, and strategic alliances, the US has extended its power across continents; as a result, its decisions and policies affect the world.

The idea that all men are created equal and must be treated with dignity and respect was a belief of the founding fathers, and it reverberated across nations, centring human dignity and rights, free speech, access to knowledge, liberty, and religious tolerance.

However, the ideas of the founding fathers have yet to be fully realized. America is working to make this a reality by expanding civil rights, building strong democratic institutions, eliminating barriers to inclusion, and correcting historical errors. These efforts have also gone beyond its borders through alliances, economic cooperation, foreign relations, global security, and humanitarian gestures.

Its democratic credentials serve as a criterion for many democratic nations. Its history is defined by the trust it has built over the years through strategic cooperation and global defence, which has led other powerful nations to rally behind its leadership voluntarily. Despite foreign criticism and setbacks, its international relationships and role as a champion of democratic values and norms have contributed to global stability.

In 2025, President Donald J. Trump returned to the White House after surviving an assassination attempt. Americans voted for him over his opponent, Kamala Harris, after he promised to ease the high cost of living, improve border security, end all wars, and promote global peace and economic growth.

In the 2026 midterm election, Americans saw the problems that had plagued this Republican-led government, and the results reflected that shift. This historic election reshaped American politics, as states long held as Republican strongholds, including battleground states, were swept by the Democratic wave.

History was made, and the people's voice was heard across the globe. The election expanded political space and broke new ground, as women, racial minorities, ethnic minorities, indigenous Americans, religious minorities and members of the LGBTQ+ community have increasingly sought and secured political representation in public office. From Texas to Arizona, from Michigan to South Carolina, from Georgia to Ohio, from North Carolina to Kansas, from New Hampshire to Maine, and from New Mexico to Iowa, voters made clear they were dissatisfied with the current administration.

The importance of the midterm election extends beyond party lines. This groundbreaking historical win, which saw the transfer of congressional control from Republicans to Democrats, has elevated the political profile of US politics, as it can influence global affairs, and reaffirmed the belief that America is a Harbour of Hope, a place where new ground is broken, possibilities happen and a land of faith; that if you struggle, work hard, believe and pray, the unattainable becomes attainable.

America's democratic journey is not without challenges. It has been tested on several fronts, from institutional independence to economic inequality to immigration and border control and public confidence, and these challenges have helped build the resilience of the country's political system.

As the world stumbles through these uncertain times, America has the opportunity to provide responsible leadership, reaffirm its strength as a global leader, and use it to promote peace and stability worldwide.

America, your greatness is defined by the opportunities you create, the rights you protect, the institutions you preserve, and the democratic choices you respect. Your ability to reflect on and learn from your experience, self-correct, adapt to change, and renew the promise of your founding ideals is an important part of what makes you great.

America, may God bless the works of your hands and the faith and character of your people as you keep advancing the tenets of freedom, justice, human dignity, and peaceful cooperation, for it's in these enduring blessings that nations flourish; through your generosity, lives are saved; through your entrepreneurial spirit, economies are developed; through your trust, alliances are built; through your wonders, things happen; and through your strength, adversaries are constrained.

Legislators In Action



Rt Hon Yekini Idaiyi, Speaker Edo State House of Assembly (right) being invested as a member of district 9141of Rotary Club by the Governor of the Club, Rotarian Tony Chibuzor Olikagu during the club courtesy call to Mr speaker in his office, Benin city.



Hon Natasha Osawaru, minority leader Edo State House of Assembly (left) moving a motion of urgent public importance calling on the state government, relevant bodies and agency, to curb indecent dressing in the state, while Hon Atu Evbaguehita deputy speaker of the house sitting right, during the house plenary session.



Rt Hon Yekini Idaiyi, Speaker Edo State House of Assembly (right) being invest as a member of district 9141of Rotary Club by the Governor of the Club, Rotarian Tony Chibuzor Olikagu during the Club courtesy call to Mr speaker in his office, Benin city yesterday.



Hon Andrew Uzamere Edobor, member representing Ovia North East constituency 11, Edo State House of Assembly (left) and Hon Jonathan Ibhamawu, member representing Esan West constituency in the house during a motion calling on relevant authority to curb indecent dressing in the state at house plenary session.

Photos by Godwin Iseguan.

Edo Assembly passes education quality, accountability bill, refers Auditor- General nominee for screening

… Mandates committee to submit report within two weeks

Ken Abu

BENIN CITY

The Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA) on Monday passed a bill establishing the Edo State Agency for Education Quality and Accountability into law.

The passage followed a clause-by-clause consideration of the bill by the lawmakers at the Committee of the Whole, following a motion moved by the Majority Leader of the House, Hon. Sunny Ojiezele.

Following the passage, the Clerk of the House, Mr. Yahaya Omogbai, was directed to forward clean copies of the bill to Governor Monday Okpebholo for his assent.

The proposed agency is expected to strengthen quality assurance, promote accountability and ensure compliance with educational standards across the state's education sector.

In another development, the House announced the receipt of a letter from Governor Monday Okpebholo seeking confirmation of the nomination of Ohimamen Abbas Suleiman as the Auditor-General of Edo State.

The request, contained in a letter signed by the Secretary to the State Government, Barr. Musa Ikhilor, and dated November 11, 2026, was read during plenary by the Clerk of the House.

The House subsequently mandated its Committee on Rules, Business and Government House to screen the nominee and submit its report for consideration within two weeks.

Meanwhile, the member representing Igueben Constituency, Hon. Eugene Inegbebhor, informed the House of the burial ceremony of his late father, Hon. D. S. Negbebhor, scheduled for November 25.

According to the lawmaker, his father died on July 25, 2025.

The lawmakers thereafter observed a minute of silence in honour of the deceased.

Also during plenary, the member representing Oredo West Constituency, Hon. Dr. Richard Edosa, drew the attention of the House to a tragic gas explosion at Agbado Market on November 13, which claimed the life of a 12-year-old child and left the victim's sibling in critical condition.

Edosa described the incident as a painful reminder of the dangers associated with inadequate safety measures in public places and densely populated areas.

He called for strict compliance with safety regulations and the adoption of preventive measures to avert similar tragedies.

Responding, the Speaker of the House, Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku, expressed sympathy to the families of the victims and commiserated with Hon. Edosa over the unfortunate incident.

The Speaker prayed for the peaceful repose of the deceased and wished the injured victim a speedy recovery.

Edo police arrest woman over husband 's alleged murder

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Police Command has arrested a woman, Juliana Bello, over alleged conspiracy and complicity in the murder of her husband, Chief Julius Bello Ogata, in Fugar community, Etsako East Local Government Area of the state.

The deceased was reportedly murdered on November 9, 2026, by his son, who allegedly attacked him with a hammer in his room before fleeing the community.

Reports indicated that the suspect had travelled from Lagos to visit his family when the incident occurred.

The son allegedly committed the crime following claims that a pastor had accused his father of being responsible for his lack of success in life.

According to the police spokesperson, the woman allegedly confessed to collaborating with and encouraging her son to execute the plan.

She further disclosed that the suspect allegedly provided her son with charms to ensure the success of the operation.

Ikoedem said the woman had made a confessional statement and was currently in police custody.

She added that the command had intensified efforts to apprehend the principal suspect, who is currently at large, and ensure that he faces justice.

Investigations into the circumstances surrounding the killing are ongoing.



FEATURE

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT:
Okpebholo prioritises workers' welfare, strengthens public service



Matthew Okagha/
Richard Eweka

Human development and workers' welfare have remained important components of the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo as it consolidates its development agenda in Edo State.

Recognising that an efficient public service is indispensable to effective governance, the Okpebholo administration has pursued policies aimed at improving workers' welfare, strengthening institutional capacity and enhancing productivity across the state civil service.

One of the notable interventions is the regular payment of workers' salaries, with the administration sustaining a practice of paying salaries on or before the 26th of every month. This has provided greater financial predictability for civil servants and their families.

The administration has also sustained the payment of the 13th-month salary, introduced in December 2024, as part of efforts to improve workers' financial well-being and reward their contributions to public service.

In another significant intervention, the state government increased the minimum wage from N70,000 to N75,000, reflecting its commitment to improving workers' earnings amid prevailing economic challenges.

The resolution of outstanding promotion arrears and the timely processing of promotions have equally featured in the administration's efforts to address longstanding concerns within the civil service.

Beyond remuneration, the government has taken steps to strengthen the workforce through the recruitment and regularisation of thousands of personnel, helping to address manpower gaps and improve service delivery across ministries, departments and agencies.

Building an efficient civil service

The administration's human resource development agenda also places emphasis on capacity building, professionalism and institutional efficiency.

Through the Edo Public Service Reform Programme (EDO-PREP), the government is strengthening the capacity and performance of public servants, with a focus on accountability, improved work ethics and efficient service delivery.

The adoption of EdoCloud and other digital governance initiatives is another step towards modernising public administration, reducing unnecessary paperwork and promoting a more efficient and transparent system of government.

> The well-being of workers, the dignity of pensioners, the development of professional skills and the efficiency of public institutions are equally important indicators of development.

The administration has also approved the provision of 20 new vehicles for permanent secretaries to strengthen administrative coordination and facilitate the discharge of their official responsibilities.

These interventions formed part of a broader effort to reposition the civil service as an effective instrument for implementing government policies and programmes.

Attention to pensioners' welfare

The welfare agenda extends beyond serving public officers to include retired workers who devoted years of service to the state.

In a major intervention, the government doubled its monthly allocation for gratuity payments from N200 million to N400 million, thereby increasing the resources available for settling outstanding obligations to retirees.

The administration also approved an additional N1 billion to address outstanding gratuities, with particular attention to retirees from 2012 in the local government and primary school sectors.

The commencement of payments to the 2012 gratuity beneficiaries earlier in 2026 represents an important step towards addressing a longstanding concern among affected pensioners.

For many retirees who have waited for years to receive their entitlements, these interventions offer renewed hope and demonstrate the importance of giving attention to the welfare of those who served the state.

Human development as a development priority

The Okpebholo administration's approach to human development reflects the understanding that government achievements should not be measured exclusively by roads, bridges and physical structures.

The well-being of workers, the dignity of pensioners, the development of professional skills and the efficiency of public institutions are equally important indicators of development.

As the administration moves into the next phase of its mandate, sustaining these welfare interventions, expanding opportunities for human capacity development and ensuring that public servants remain motivated will be critical to achieving its broader SHINE Agenda.

Ultimately, a motivated workforce is an important asset in building an efficient government, while a society that cares for its workers and retirees lays a stronger foundation for inclusive and sustainable development.

FEATURE



Okpebholo's two years: **Edo records major gains in road infrastructure**

MATTHEW OKAGHA/
RICHARD EWEKA

Flyovers, urban road renewal and rural connectivity headline administration's infrastructure drive

BENIN CITY

Road infrastructure has emerged as one of the defining features of Governor Monday Okpebholo's two-year administration, with several construction and rehabilitation projects undertaken across Edo State as part of efforts to improve transportation, stimulate economic activities and open up communities.

Since assuming office, the governor has placed road construction, rehabilitation, drainage and urban renewal at the centre of his development agenda, recognising that good road networks are fundamental to economic growth, social integration and improved living conditions.

One of the administration's early interventions was the award of 28 road projects covering approximately 255 kilometres across the state. The programme was subsequently expanded, with the Ministry of Works disclosing in October 2026 that contracts had been awarded for more than 60 roads.

A major highlight of the infrastructure programme is the construction of flyovers at Ramat Park and Adesuwa Junction along Sapele Road in Benin City. The projects represent a significant milestone in the state's urban transportation development, particularly against the background of increasing vehicular movement and persistent traffic congestion within the Benin metropolis.

The Ramat Park Flyover has been completed, while construction work on the Adesuwa Junction project is progressing. Both projects are designed to ease traffic congestion, improve vehicular movement and enhance connectivity along some of the city's busiest transportation corridors.

Beyond the flyovers, the administration has embarked on the rehabilitation and construction of several strategic roads in Benin City and other parts of the state.

Among the projects listed as completed by the Ministry of Works are sections of the Benin-Auchi Road, from Obadan Junction to Iruekpen, Prince Harrison Road, Prince Jimoh Momodu Road, Palace Road, Versity Road, Okpagha-Amufi Road, Iyoha Street, Isikhuemwen Street and adjoining roads in Akho-Irrua.

Other roads receiving attention include Benin-Sapele Road, Old Sapele Road, Evbukhu, Amagba, Ohoghobi, Oghehe, Uhie Road, Okhabere, Charismatic Renewal Road, Ugbiyoko and Oghede Upper Ekenhuan Road.

The Benin-Sapele Road intervention is particularly important because of the strategic commercial value of the corridor, which connects communities and facilitates the movement of people and goods. The use of concrete pavement in some sections is also intended to improve road durability.

The administration has equally recognised the relationship between road infrastructure, drainage and environmental protection. Its intervention at Obaseki Street, Ikpoba Hill, through a gully reclamation project, is aimed at addressing erosion and environmental challenges that have affected residents.

Another important dimension of the infrastructure programme is the extension of development to rural communities. The government has supported local government councils with road construction equipment, including graders, excavators and rollers, to strengthen their capacity to construct, rehabilitate and maintain roads at the grassroots.

This intervention is expected to improve access to farms, markets, schools, healthcare facilities and other essential services, while reducing the difficulties associated with transportation in rural communities. For farmers and traders, improved road connectivity can make a significant difference in moving agricultural produce to markets, reducing transportation costs and expanding commercial opportunities. It also provides communities with better access to social and economic services.

To ensure that public investments translate into durable infrastructure, the Ministry of Works has emphasised project monitoring, quality assurance and timely delivery. In October 2026, contractors handling ongoing projects were directed to submit updated work programmes to accelerate construction and ensure compliance with approved specifications.

> The government has supported local government councils with road construction equipment, including graders, excavators and rollers, to strengthen their capacity to construct, rehabilitate and maintain roads at the grassroots.

The ministry also stressed that defects identified before the formal handover of completed projects would have to be corrected by the contractors at no additional cost to government.

The overall significance of the road construction programme goes beyond the physical appearance of roads and bridges. Improved transportation networks are expected to stimulate economic activities, encourage investment, create employment opportunities and strengthen connectivity among communities across the three senatorial districts.

Nevertheless, the administration faces the continuing responsibility of ensuring the completion of ongoing projects, maintaining those already delivered and sustaining the momentum of infrastructure development.

Two years into Governor Okpebholo's administration, road infrastructure remains a prominent pillar of its development agenda. From the Ramat Park Flyover to the expanding network of urban and rural roads, the government is pursuing an ambitious programme aimed at addressing infrastructure deficits and improving the quality of life of Edo people.

Ultimately, the success of this drive will be measured not simply by the number of contracts awarded or roads listed, but by the quality of projects delivered, communities connected and the lasting impact on the people.

FEATURE

SECURITY: **Okpebholo strengthens Edo's security architecture, intensifies war against criminality**



Men of the Edo state security corp undergoing training at Ogida police traning school

MATTHEW OKAGHA/
RICHARD EWEKA

From security equipment and personnel recruitment to forest surveillance and stronger collaboration with security agencies, the administration is pursuing a more coordinated approach to protecting lives and property.

Security has remained one of the defining priorities of Governor Monday Okpebholo's administration, recognising that peace and stability are indispensable to economic growth, investment and sustainable development.

One of the administration's significant interventions has been the provision of operational vehicles and mobility equipment to security agencies. During its first 100 days, the government announced the provision of 38 Toyota Hilux vans and 16 Prado jeeps for security operations, alongside additional plans to equip the Edo State Security Corps.

The administration subsequently reported the procurement of 80 Hilux patrol vehicles and 400 motorcycles to improve security surveillance and response operations across the state. These interventions are designed to strengthen patrols, improve rapid response and extend security coverage to difficult terrains and vulnerable communities.

The initiative is particularly important given the security challenges associated with remote forests, kidnapping and attacks on rural communities.

Improved operational support and intelligence gathering

The administration has equally strengthened collaboration with the Nigerian Army, Police, Department of State Services, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and other security formations.

In February 2026, Governor Okpebholo reaffirmed his administration's partnership with the Nigerian Army in tackling kidnapping and other criminal activities. The governor acknowledged the contributions of the Army's 4 Brigade, particularly its operations in forests and remote locations where criminal elements sometimes seek refuge.

For Governor Okpebholo, the ultimate test of the security component of the SHINE Agenda is the ability to create an environment where farmers can access their farmlands without fear, traders can conduct business freely, investors can operate confidently and families can sleep peacefully.

The administration's investments in security personnel, operational equipment, forest protection and inter-agency collaboration provide an important foundation for this objective.

Ultimately, security is not merely about deploying personnel or procuring patrol vehicles; it is about guaranteeing the safety, dignity and confidence of the people.

A peaceful Edo is a productive Edo, and a secure Edo is an Edo ready for greater development.

Okpebholo changes the narrative on kidnapping, cultism in Edo

..Over 500 youths renounce cultism as governor vows no criminal will be spared

> Today, under Governor Monday Okpebholo, the state is witnessing a renewed push against criminality, alongside efforts to give repentant youths a second chance.

AGHEDO IYOBOR

The narrative is changing in Edo State.

For years, cultism, kidnapping and violent crimes cast a dark shadow over communities, instilling fear among residents and threatening the future of many young people. Today, under Governor Monday Okpebholo, the state is witnessing a renewed push against criminality, alongside efforts to give repentant youths a second chance.

In a significant development, more than 500 youths have renounced cultism, reportedly abandoning their former associations and embracing the path of peace. The development represents an encouraging milestone in the state's ongoing efforts to tackle cult-related violence and restore public confidence in security.

A GOVERNOR WHO MEANS BUSINESS

From the outset, Governor Okpebholo has maintained a firm position against kidnapping, cultism and other forms of criminality: Edo must not become a safe haven for criminals.

His administration has demonstrated this resolve through support for security agencies, intensified security operations, the dismantling of criminal hideouts and enforcement of laws against kidnapping and cult-related activities.

The governor's message is unmistakable: those who persist in criminal activities will face the full weight of the law, irrespective of their connections or influence.

FROM DARKNESS TO A NEW BEGINNING

For the more than 500 youths who have renounced cultism, the decision marks an opportunity to turn a new page.

Beyond abandoning cult groups, their reintegration into society will be crucial to sustaining the gains of the initiative. Access to education, vocational training, employment opportunities and positive community engagement could help prevent a return to criminal activities.

Community and religious leaders who witnessed the renunciation reportedly described the development as significant, expressing optimism that the initiative would encourage other youths to abandon violence and embrace peaceful living.

CHANGING THE SECURITY NARRATIVE

Edo's security challenge cannot be wished away. Years of cult-related violence, kidnapping and criminal activities have left painful memories in several communities.

However, the reported mass renunciation of cultism offers a positive indication that sustained security enforcement, community engagement and opportunities for rehabilitation can work together to address the problem.

Governor Okpebholo's approach rests on two complementary principles: firmness against those who choose criminality and an opportunity for those genuinely willing to abandon it.

This distinction is important. While the state must remain uncompromising in dealing with criminals, it must also create pathways through which repentant youths can become productive members of society.

THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR

To kidnappers, cultists and other criminal elements still operating in Edo, the message is clear: abandon criminality or face the consequences of the law.

To the youths who have renounced cultism, the message is equally important: society must give you an opportunity to rebuild your lives, provided you remain committed to peace and lawful conduct.

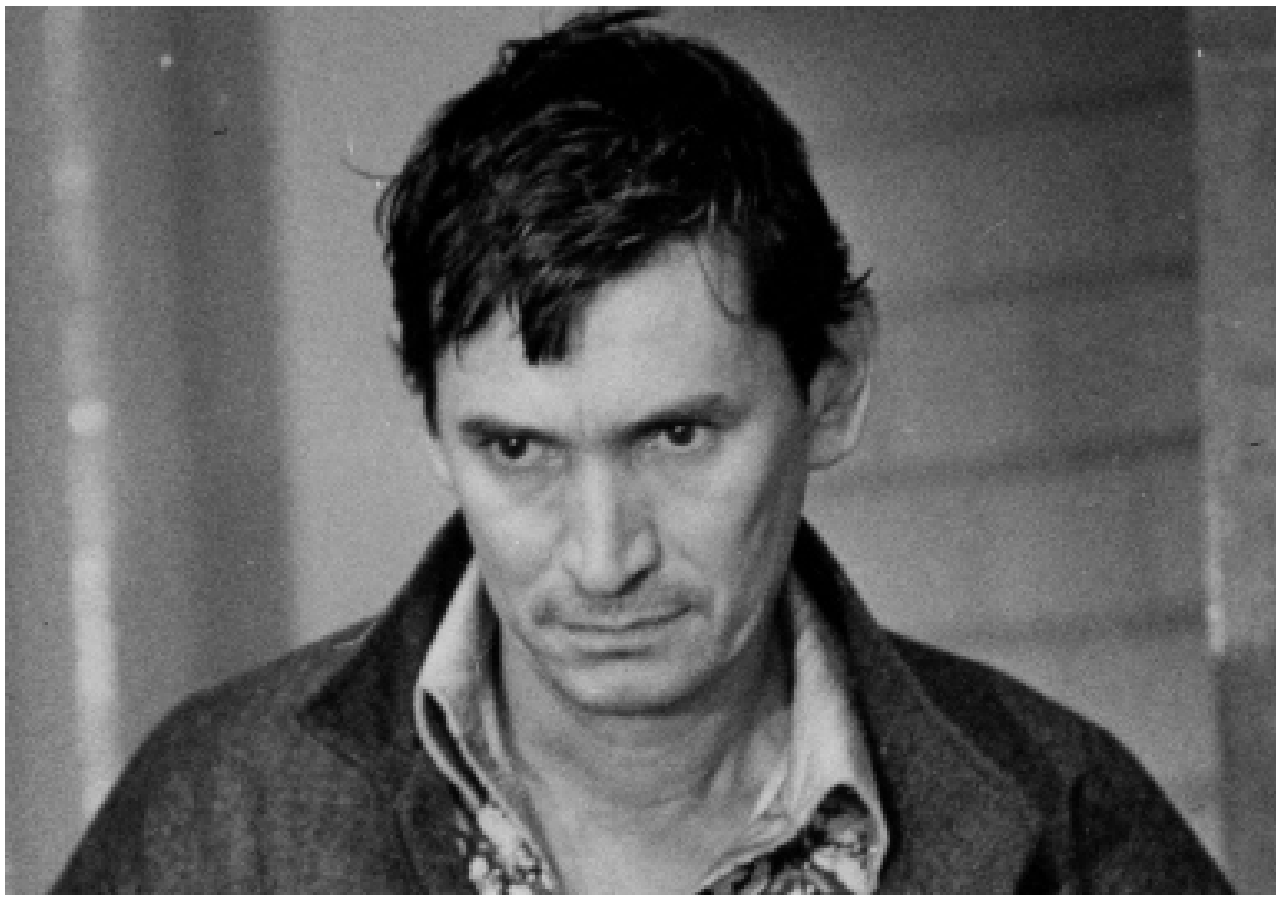
The renunciation by more than 500 youths is an encouraging development in Edo's quest for a safer society. The real test, however, will be sustaining the process, preventing a relapse into cultism and ensuring that communities experience lasting peace.

Under Governor Okpebholo, the ambition is clear: to replace fear with confidence, violence with peace and criminality with opportunity.

Edo must move forward, and the gains in security must be sustained.

FOREIGN

NEWS



MIGUEL ÁNGEL FÉLIX GALLARDO

Mexican drug lord Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo dies age 80

Notorious Mexican drug lord Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo has died in hospital aged 80.

Félix Gallardo was widely considered one of the biggest drug smugglers in history and is credited with building an alliance between criminal groups in Colombia and his own Mexican cartel.

Known as The Godfather or the "Boss of Bosses", Félix Gallardo was the head of the all-powerful Guadalajara Cartel, which reigned over Mexican drug trafficking at the height of the cocaine boom of the 1980s.

At the time, it created a new modus operandi in the illegal drug trade which endures to this day. He had been in state custody since 1989.

The name Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo will echo through the annals of drug-trafficking history more than any other except perhaps Pablo Escobar's.

He led the organisation which revolutionised drug smuggling in the region by entering into partnership with the Colombian cartels, particularly Escobar's Medellín Cartel, to combine production in the Andes with Mexican transportation across the border into the United States.

At one point an estimated 80% of all cocaine that entered the US came from the Medellín Cartel. Félix Gallardo and his organisation played a major role in smuggling it in.

At its height, the Guadalajara Cartel under Félix Gallardo exerted huge influence over Mexican politics and law enforcement, controlling entire police networks and state governorships.

How one DEA killing began a brutal war

In 1985, the net started to tighten around the leaders of the cartel following the torture and murder of a DEA agent, Enrique "Kiki" Camarena.

Camarena had angered them after he had discovered and then destroyed a vast marijuana plantation in Chihuahua, which belonged to the criminal group.

His murder sparked one of the biggest manhunts the US government has ever launched in North America.

In 1989, Félix Gallardo was captured and sentenced to decades in prison. In ill health, he was granted house arrest in 2022 but technical problems with electronic ankle monitoring prevented his transfer. He died in hospital in his native Guadalajara.

Mexican prison police secured the hospital where Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo was admitted earlier this week

In the 1980s, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzmán was introduced to Félix Gallardo, who put him in charge of handling logistics for his drug organisation.

From the subsequent breakup of Félix Gallardo's organisation after his arrest, the Sinaloa Cartel emerged, led by Guzmán, now another man synonymous with large-scale drug trafficking.

In 2019, Guzmán was sentenced to life in prison for charges including drug trafficking and money laundering following one of the most high-profile trials in recent US history.

Félix Gallardo's life has been portrayed in a number of television programmes including the Netflix series Narcos: Mexico. The show depicted his rise to power as well as his relationship with Guzmán.

Australian MP 'full of gratitude' upon leaving hospital after alleged car attack

Australian politician Helen Haines has said she is "full of gratitude" upon being discharged from hospital, four weeks after she was allegedly attacked with a car and left a double amputee.

The independent MP was struck outside her electorate office in Wangaratta, north-east of Melbourne, on October 19, an incident which horrified Australia.

Brendan Nugent, 43, has been charged with dangerous driving causing serious injury, intentionally causing serious injury and the federal offence of causing harm to a public official. He has yet to enter pleas.

In her first public comments since the attack, Haines, 65, said she had moved into the rehabilitation stage of her recovery.

"This is a really positive moment, and I am full of gratitude for the expert and compassionate care I received at the Alfred and am receiving in this next stage," Haines said.

"I appreciate the thousands of warm wishes and supportive messages from people across Indi, throughout Australia and around the world. They are giving me strength as I focus on this next phase of healing."

She added that she had been "overwhelmed" by the generosity of well wishers who had donated to Save the Children in her honour.

Haines, known for supporting stronger climate action and helping establish a national anti-corruption commission, entered parliament in 2019 as the Member for Indi after working as a nurse and midwife.

Victoria Police has said its investigation, with support from the Australian Federal Police, remains ongoing and a motive is yet to be established.

Nugent's father said he and his wife had been long-time friends of Haines, and Nugent's lawyer has said his client has mental health concerns.

The incident sparked a reckoning in the country more broadly over the tone of public debate.

Though a motive is still unclear, politicians, law enforcement, and experts have said heated public discourse is heightening the threat of political violence in the country.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he had been in regular contact with Haines and her "extraordinary" family.

"All our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Helen for her recovery," he said in a statement.

"We continue to provide support to Helen, her family, community and staff as she undertakes her rehabilitation."

Yemeni forces' retreat leaves Houthis in control of key area on coast of Red Sea waterway

Yemeni pro-government forces backed by Saudi Arabia have said they are withdrawing from an area overlooking the strategically important Bab al-Mandab Strait, leaving it under the control of the Iran-backed Houthi movement.

Yemen's military said it was redeploying troops from the key shipping gateway at the southern end of the Red Sea to defend its interim capital, Aden.

The shift ends a weeks-long offensive to try to secure the area near the waterway after the Houthis seized it in a surprise offensive in September, squeezing global oil exports and prompting thousands to flee.

Houthi-run media reported later on Sunday the group had taken control of the territory. Saudi Arabia has not commented.

Pro-government forces said they had "secured" the strait in early October as they sought to retake crucial ground from the Houthis, who said they had captured areas including Perim Island at the mouth of the strait and the strategic port city of Mokha a month prior.

But the Saudi-backed forces fighting on behalf of Yemen's internationally recognised government said on Sunday they were withdrawing to reinforce troops elsewhere, with the southern city of Aden a "priority".

The Southern Armed Forces' statement said troops were being withdrawn "from Dhubab Airport and the Bab al-Mandab area".

It said the decision had been made with the aim of "strengthening the front lines and addressing existing threats".

"This step is driven by the priority of securing the capital, Aden, and neighbouring governorates, reinforcing the front lines and addressing existing threats."

The Houthis said they posed no threat to international shipping passing through the waterway when they captured it, but that they would continue to target vessels from Saudi Arabia.

However, the seizure contributed to a surge in global oil prices because Saudi Arabia had been relying on the Red Sea for oil exports since the US and Israel's war with Iran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz.

A UN Human Rights spokesperson, Ravina Shamdasani, urged all parties to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.

She noted that since the escalation of fighting in August, more than 60% of documented civilian casualties were women and children.

The Houthis have repeatedly attacked the city of Aden in recent weeks, including an assault on 15 October that targeted the presidential palace, killing five and injuring 16.

Saudi Arabia responded with hundreds of air strikes, while the Houthis launched hundreds of drones and missiles at its cities and infrastructure.

The UN has estimated that nearly 330,000 people have been displaced in Yemen as the fighting has since escalated. Hundreds of people are reported to have been killed.

UK and allies call on Israel to allow rapid humanitarian access to Gaza

The UK, Australia, Canada and Italy have issued a joint statement urging Israel to "allow immediate, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Gaza", where they say the situation on the ground is "dire".

The foreign ministers warn recent floods have brought "further suffering" to the war-torn territory, which recently had its first winter storm.

The statement says 150,000 tents and other vital supplies are being held at the border.

The Israeli military authority which controls the Gaza crossings has said it is co-ordinating with the US-led Board of Peace and the UN on a winter plan, and that 93,000 tents and 8,600 aid trucks with winter supplies had entered the territory.

It added that reconstruction "can only begin after Hamas fully disarms".

The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs said the widespread flooding and a landslide led to a number of deaths, thousands of damaged shelters and the suspension of critical services.

The statement from the British, Australian, Canadian and Italian foreign ministers says: "This situation is entirely reversible - and there is still time to act before the winter fully sets in."

"The crossings must be opened, and the tents allowed in. Dual-use items necessary for humanitarian operations and early recovery must be granted entry before it is too late."

The European Union issued a similar statement on Saturday, reiterating its "grave concern" over what it called the "persistent and devastating humanitarian crisis".

The EU also urged Israel to comply with international law.

The war in Gaza was triggered by the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on 7 October 2023, in which about 1,200 people were killed and 251 others were taken hostage.

NEWS

FOREIGN

China seeks balanced global trade through shared prosperity, market access

China has called for a more balanced global trading system anchored on shared prosperity, expanded market access, investment cooperation and innovation.

Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang made the call on Thursday at the opening ceremony of the Ninth China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, themed "New Era, Shared Future."

Inaugurated in 2018, the CIIE is the world's first national-level import-themed expo, held annually in Shanghai, with Country Exhibition, Enterprise and Business Exhibition, among others, as key components.

Ding said achieving sustainable trade balance would require countries to expand common economic opportunities rather than pursue protectionism, unilateralism and restrictive trade policies.Read Economics

He advocated growing the global economic pie through "open markets, deeper integration of industrial chains, technological innovation and stronger international dialogue."

According to him, China's "commitment to expanding imports and opening its enormous consumer market demonstrates its determination to promote inclusive economic globalisation."

Ding said China's imports increased by 22.3 per cent in the first three quarters of 2026, nearly six percentage points above export growth.

He said China's import goods volume had ranked second globally for 17 consecutive years, making it a major export destination for nearly 80 countries.

The Vice Premier said China's average tariff level had plummeted to 7.3 per cent, while a zero-tariff policy was adopted for eligible African countries.

He also highlighted the complete removal of foreign investment access restrictions in manufacturing, alongside expanded openness in services trade and cross-border data flows.Read Economics

Austrian Chancellor Christian Stöcker, addressing the Expo, called for stronger China-Europe economic engagement, fair competition and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Stöcker disclosed that more than 650 Austrian companies operated successfully in China, describing the country as Austria's most important Asian trading partner.

He said economic openness remained fundamental to prosperity, stressing that differences should be addressed through constructive dialogue rather than allowed to undermine international relationships.

Gabonese President Brice Nguema used the occasion to invite Chinese investors to explore opportunities in his country's industrialisation and economic diversification drive.

He particularly highlighted opportunities in timber, manganese, iron ore, agriculture, energy, digital infrastructure, renewable energy and local pharmaceutical production.

Nguema said Gabon was prioritising domestic processing of raw materials to strengthen local value chains, create employment and accelerate economic transformation.

He also identified the country's Enghok Special Economic Zone, investment incentives, political stability and strategic Atlantic coastline as attractions for international businesses.

UNDP Administrator Alexander De Croo, however, stressed that trade success should be measured beyond commercial volumes, particularly by its impact on jobs, poverty reduction and sustainability.Read Economics

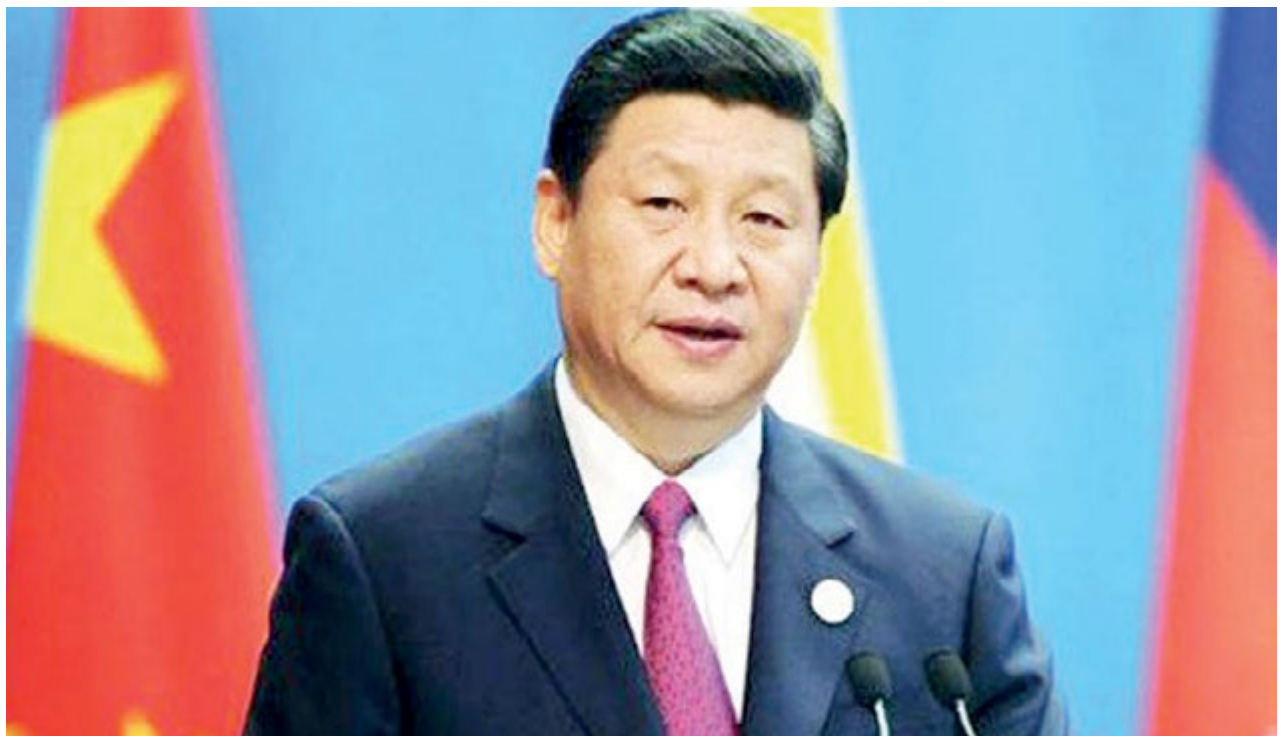
He said market access alone was insufficient without productive capacity, domestic industrial development, skills acquisition and technology transfer to enable developing countries to compete effectively.

De Croo warned that approximately 1.2 billion young people would enter the global labour market within 15 years, demanding genuine employment opportunities and economic security.

He urged governments and businesses to ensure that trade generated decent livelihoods, empowered women and girls, reduced greenhouse-gas emissions and created meaningful opportunities for younger generations.

The four world leaders all underscored the shared imperative of transforming international trade into an instrument of inclusive development, industrial advancement and shared prosperity.Read Economics

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the trade fair, which will run from Nov. 5 to Nov. 10, attracted participants from 162 countries, regions and international organisations.



CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING:

Nigeria, S/Arabia to begin direct Abuja-Jeddah flights in december, says envoy

Nigeria and Saudi Arabia are set to strengthen their air connectivity,with Saudi Arabia's national carrier, Saudia Airlines, scheduled to begin direct flights between Abuja and Jeddah in December.

Nigerian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Dr Yakubu Gambo, disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday.

News subscription service-Gambo said the service would subsequently extend to Lagos and Port Harcourt.

He said Kano would retain its existing direct flight arrangement, while additional routes were expected to be operational before the end of the first quarter of 2027.

"By December, we will start having Saudi air flights directly from Abuja. And it will scale up to Lagos, Port Harcourt and Kano," he said.

Gambo said the arrangement followed adjustments and engagements with Saudi aviation authorities, who expressed willingness to support direct air connectivity between both countries.

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without transiting through other territories.

"They wouldn't want pilgrims coming for Umrah or Hajj to fly through other territories that may not be safe," he said.

The ambassador said President Bola Tinubu had been briefed on the proposal and welcomed the initiative.

He confirmed that direct flights would also be available for Nigerianpilgrims during the 2027 Hajj exercise.



Promotion of 6,207 Ncos personnel reform milestone, says interior minister

The Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, has described the promotion of 6,207 personnel of the Nigerian Correctional Service(NCoS) as a demonstration of ongoing reforms in the ministry.

Buy Maps Tunji-Ojo represented by the Permanent Secretary, Magdalene Ajani, said this at the decoration ceremony for the 2026 promoted officers in Abuja on Monday.

He said the promotion of more than 6,000 personnel in one exercise reflected the Federal Government's commitment to personnel welfare and career progression.

He also said the ministry's reforms were repositioning the NCoS as a centre for transformation, reformation and rehabilitation rather than a mere facility for imprisoning offenders.

He urged the newly promoted officers, particularly those assuming management positions, to demonstrate leadership, take initiatives and address challenges promptly.

"You must play the managerial role of the positions you now occupy.

You are not going to be waiting for directives while things are going bad because you will now be held responsible," he said.

The minister urged the officers to share the service's vision with their subordinates and ensure younger personnel were carried along in implementing reforms.

Earlier, the Secretary of the Civil Defence, Correctional, Fire and Immigration Services Board (CDCFIB), retired Maj.-Gen. Abdulmalik Jibrin, assured personnel that the board would sustain timely promotions and prevent a recurrence of promotion backlogs.

Jibrin said accumulated promotion backlogs had previously affected personnel morale and contributed to the exit of some officers from the correctional service.

He said President Bola Tinubu, following the intervention of the minister of interior, had approved the clearance of outstanding promotion backlogs.

"I want to assure you that I will not allow that to happen again.

Officers who give their best, and are tested and fulfil the requirements will certainly be given their due promotion," he said.

Presenting the promoted officers for decoration, the Controller- General of Corrections, Sylvester Nwakuche, said the exercise involved 6,207 personnel, comprising 4,924 senior and 1,283 junior officers.

Nwakuche said the promotions included three medical professionals elevated from Controller of Corrections to Assistant Controller- General, alongside other senior officers across nine rank categories.

He added that 743 Chief Correctional Assistants were converted to Inspectors of Corrections after completing the required conversion course, while 129 personnel were upgraded to the Inspector cadre upon acquiring relevant qualifications.

He described promotion as recognition of service, competence and experience, urging the officers to justify their elevation through discipline, integrity and professionalism.

"Promotion is not merely an administrative exercise or a change in designation. It is an important recognition of service, competence, experience and demonstrated capacity," he said.

He warned against arrogance, corruption, intimidation and abuse of authority, urging senior officers to lead by example.

The controller-general also directed the officers to embrace the Performance Management System (PMS), saying future career progression would depend partly on performance records, competencies and measurable contributions to the service.

He said the service mandate extended beyond secure custody to reformation, rehabilitation, reintegration and the administration of non-custodial measures.

NEWS EXTRA

Edo SSG warns against fake news, says Okpebholo is working to address inherited challenges

BENIN CITY

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

The Secretary to the Edo State Government (SSG), Umar Musa Ikhilor, Esq., has cautioned residents against the spread of fake news and misleading information, urging them to assess Governor Monday Okpebholo's administration based on its achievements on the ground, as the Governor continues efforts to address developmental challenges inherited from previous administrations.

Ikhilor stated this during special prayers organised by the Edo Muslim community across the three senatorial districts of the state to mark the second anniversary of Governor Okpebholo's administration.

Speaking after the prayers at the Benin Central Mosque, Ogun Street,cBenin City, the SSG warned that the spread of false information on social media could mislead members of the public, particularly those who might not have the opportunity to verify such claims.

"Sometimes, people who spread falsehood and fake news are always online, shouting updates and spreading false information. Ordinary people have no way of verifying, and some will believe it. But it is good that those who are on the ground know exactly what the government is doing and the efforts the Governor is making to correct all the damages that were done in the past eight years," he said.

He explained that many of the roads being criticised had remained in deplorable conditions for several years before the present administration assumed office, stressing that it was unrealistic to expect the government to resolve all inherited challenges within a short period.

The SSG also described the massive turnout at the recent presidential campaign rally at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium as evidence of the people's appreciation and support for the Governor's administration, noting that the crowd had pleasantly surprised visitors from across the country.

He described Okpebholo as a grassroots-oriented leader who identifies with ordinary people rather than the elite, adding that his humility and accessibility had strengthened his connection with the people.

Ikhilor, who described the Governor as a disciplined and God-fearing leader, said his personal qualities were among the reasons he decided to actively participate in politics in support of his administration.

"As a Muslim, I have never done such active politics before. This is the first time that I decided to do active politics with someone because of the kind of man he is. From the first day I knew him, he had the qualities of a good Muslim. He is disciplined. He doesn't involve in alcoholism, smoking or womanising. He tells you what he can do and what he can't do, and he is somebody who is very passionate about God," he said.

He further commended the Governor for promoting religious tolerance and ethnic inclusiveness, noting that people from different ethnic backgrounds, including Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba communities, had been accommodated in government appointments.

The SSG also expressed appreciation to the Muslim community for its continued support and prayers, particularly for the administration's efforts to tackle insecurity, cultism and kidnapping.



WORLD NEWS CONFERENCE:
From left: Director of Media, Public relations and Protocols Unit, (NiDCOM), Mr AbdulRahman Balogun; National President of National Association of Proprietors of Arabic and Islamic Schools (NAPAIS), Mohammad Jamiu; Representative of The Inspector General of Police, ACP. Alhassan Yaqub; and the Special Adviser to the Minister of Education on Imajiri and Out-of-School Children's Education, Dr Balarabe Kakale, during a "World news conference and the inauguration nationwide census of Arabic, Qur'anic and Islamic Schools in Nigeria" at the Al-Habiyyah Islamic Society Centre in Abuja on Thursday.

Ebonyi Council boss begins construction of ultramodern school block

ABAKALIKI

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

The Executive Chairman of Abakaliki Local Government Area, Hon. Chidebere Onyemaechi Alo, has commenced the construction of an ultramodern school block at Ekeru Inyimegu community, reaffirming his administration's commitment to educational development and improved learning facilities for the younger generation.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony, the Chairman assured members of the community that the project would be completed within the shortest possible time, expressing optimism that the facility would be delivered within a few weeks.

He noted that construction activities had already commenced, with work progressing at the project site, and assured the people of his determination to ensure timely delivery.

The initiative is expected to serve as an example for other local government chairmen across the 13 local government areas of Ebonyi State, demonstrating the importance of purposeful leadership, commitment to public service and the translation of campaign promises into tangible development projects.

Hon. Alo's administration, since assuming office, has demonstrated its resolve to align with the development agenda of the Ebonyi State Governor, Rt. Hon. Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru, particularly the principles of the People's Charter of Needs, which emphasises people-oriented governance and the delivery of meaningful development to the grassroots.

The Chairman further assured that his administration would not be limited to making promises but would prioritise practical actions and projects capable of improving the living conditions of residents.

He reiterated his commitment to providing quality leadership, executing people-centred projects and delivering measurable results that would positively impact the lives of the people of Abakaliki Local Government Area.

Fani-Kayode refuses interview invitation after livestream 'exclusion' — SABC

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Corporation, has said Nigeria's High Commissioner to the country, Femi Fani-Kayode, declined an interview invitation following his protest over the exclusion of his speech from a livestream of a diplomatic ceremony hosted by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The SABC, in a statement issued on Sunday, said it regretted the envoy's decision but remained open to engaging with him and the Nigerian High Commission.

The response followed Fani-Kayode's complaint that his introduction and speech were omitted from the broadcaster's livestream of the presentation of letters of credence ceremony held at the Sefako Makgatho Presidential Guest House in Pretoria on Friday.

"We regret that the High Commissioner declined an interview with SABC News, reportedly because of his dissatisfaction with the livestream of the ceremony. We respect his decision and remain open to engaging with him and the Nigerian High Commission," the statement said.

Notably, the SABC did not address the specific allegation that Fani-Kayode's presentation was excluded from the livestream of the ceremony.

The broadcaster, however, rejected the description of it as a state broadcaster, insisting that it was a public service media organisation committed to independent, impartial and credible journalism.

"Two points need clarifying. First, the SABC is a public service media, not a state broadcaster. Our mandate is to serve the public interest through independent, impartial and credible journalism. The Presidency's livestream arrangements and SABC News' editorial coverage are separate matters.

"Secondly, SABC News did cover the ceremony. It was carried on the SABC News LIVE channel on SABC+, and the High Commissioner's arrival was shown during a live crossing on the SABC News Channel (DStv Channel 404). We also published a clip on our official X account of the High Commissioner speaking to President Cyril Ramaphosa," it said.

"The SABC remains committed to upholding the principles of fairness, impartiality and editorial independence in its coverage, as well as value our longstanding relationship with Nigeria," the statement added.

PUNCH Online reports that Fani-Kayode had earlier accused the South African Presidency of deliberately excluding Nigeria's delegation from the livestream of the ceremony, which involved 15 ambassadors presenting their letters of credence to Ramaphosa.

The envoy said the introductions and speeches of 14 other ambassadors were broadcast, while Nigeria's segment was omitted, with the livestream resuming after he had concluded his address.

He also disclosed that he declined an interview offered by SABC News at the venue, saying he had been displeased with the treatment of the Nigerian delegation.

However, the South African Presidency later released the full video of the ceremony, including Fani-Kayode's speech, on its YouTube channel.

The controversy subsequently sparked a public exchange between the Nigerian High Commission and Vincent Magwenya, spokesperson for Ramaphosa.

Nigeria, Saudi Arabia to begin direct Abuja-Jeddah flights in December — Envoy

ABUJA

Nigeria and Saudi Arabia are set to strengthen their air connectivity, with Saudi Arabia's national carrier, Saudia Airlines, scheduled to begin direct flights between Abuja and Jeddah in December.

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FEATURE

...ANNIVERSARY...ANNIVERSARY...ANNIVERSARY

Okpebholo's two years: **Reviving healthcare, rebuilding public confidence**

…Reopens long-abandoned hospitals, builds primary healthcare centres, strengthens specialist services

MATTHEW OKAGHA/
RICHARD EWEKA

Healthcare delivery is one of the critical areas through which the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo is seeking to improve the quality of life of Edo residents, with interventions aimed at revitalising public health facilities, expanding access to primary healthcare and strengthening the state's medical workforce.

Under the administration's SHINE Agenda, healthcare occupies an important position, reflecting the government's recognition that a healthy population is fundamental to sustainable development.

One of the notable developments in the sector is the reopening of public health facilities that had remained closed or moribund for several years, denying residents, particularly those in rural communities, access to essential medical services.

Among the facilities brought back to life are the Anegbette General Hospital, which had been closed for 19 years, and the Obayantor General Hospital, which had remained shut for 22 years.

The administration also restored operations at the Usugbenu Cottage Hospital and the Uneme-Osu health facility, both of which had been in a moribund state for about five years.

The reopening of these facilities represents an important intervention in addressing the challenge of access to healthcare, particularly for residents who previously had to travel considerable distances to obtain medical attention.

Beyond the rehabilitation of existing facilities, the government has also pursued an expansion of healthcare infrastructure through the construction of Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) across the state.

As disclosed by the government in April 2026, more than 70 primary healthcare centres had been built, while another 160 were at various stages of development.

The expansion is expected to bring basic healthcare services closer to communities, improve maternal and child healthcare, support immunisation programmes and strengthen early diagnosis and treatment of common ailments.

At the secondary and specialist healthcare levels, the state's hospital development programme includes a 150-bed specialist hospital in Edo Central and a 100-bed hospital at Uwessan, among the major projects identified in the administration's healthcare infrastructure inventory.

These investments are significant in the context of the need to expand the capacity of the state's health system and reduce pressure on existing tertiary healthcare institutions.

Strengthening the health workforce

Recognising that healthcare infrastructure alone cannot guarantee effective service delivery without qualified personnel, the Okpebholo administration has also taken steps to strengthen the state's medical workforce.

The recruitment of 1,376 clinical and non-clinical personnel represents a major component of the government's efforts to address manpower shortages in public health institutions.

The additional workforce is expected to improve service delivery, enhance patient care and support the effective utilisation of rehabilitated and newly established health facilities.

At the tertiary healthcare level, the administration has also recorded developments at the Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital (ISTH), one of the state's foremost medical institutions.

The hospital absorbed 126 contract workers, while additional recruitment and improvements in clinical services have strengthened its operational capacity.

Another significant development is the attainment of full accreditation for its residency training programme, an achievement that enhances the institution's capacity to train specialist medical professionals and contribute to the development of Nigeria's healthcare workforce.

Healthcare with a human face

Beyond infrastructure and institutional reforms, the administration has also demonstrated attention to the welfare of vulnerable residents.

An example was the provision of a wheelchair and crutches to 89-year-old Mrs Marina Darwang, in an intervention aimed at easing her mobility challenges and improving her quality of life.

The items were presented on behalf of the governor by the Commissioner for Health, Dr Cyril Adams Oshiomhole, accompanied by the Permanent Secretary, Dr Eighemherio Paul Ikhumosa.

Although modest in scale compared with major infrastructure projects, such interventions underscore the importance of compassion and social responsibility in public healthcare delivery.

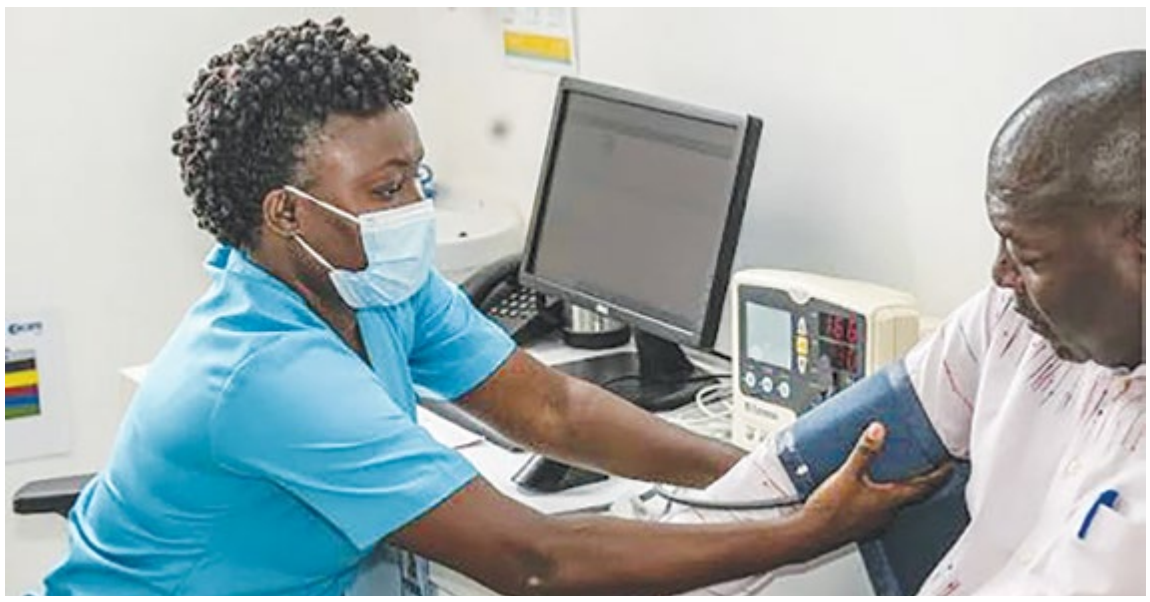
The road ahead

While the developments recorded in the health sector provide evidence of renewed attention to healthcare delivery, the sustainability of the interventions will depend on effective management, adequate funding, regular maintenance of facilities and the continued availability of qualified medical personnel.

The completion and equipping of ongoing hospital projects, the delivery of the additional primary healthcare centres and the provision of essential drugs and medical supplies will also be important in translating infrastructure investments into improved health outcomes.

Ultimately, the success of the administration's healthcare agenda will be measured not merely by the number of hospitals reopened or facilities constructed, but by the extent to which ordinary Edo residents can access affordable, timely and quality medical services.

For an administration whose SHINE Agenda places human development at the centre of governance, the revitalisation of the health sector remains an important measure of its commitment to improving the welfare of the people.





FEATURE

God of the eleventh hour miracle

BY APOSTLE SULE FARADAY AZEKHUMEN

There is a God who is never too late. There is a God who does not work by the timetable of men. There is a God who can show up when all hope appears lost, when the day is almost over, when men have written you off, and still turn your story around in one moment. That God is the God of the eleventh hour miracle.

Those who were blessed before you were blessed by the same God who will bless you. It is the same reward, the same mercy, the same grace. Do not envy anyone who is earning one million today if you are receiving one hundred thousand. You are more blessed than you know, because God will satisfy you even with a little, and He will multiply it in His own time. If you do not want to anger the mercy of the Lord, do not envy anyone.

Some people were hired at different times, yet they still received the same reward from God. This is the mystery of grace. Grace does not work by seniority. Grace works by mercy.

The Bible says in Job 42:10-12, when Job prayed for his friends, God remembered Job and gave him double of all he had ever had before he was afflicted by Satan. Job's latter days were greater than his former days. That is what the God of the eleventh hour does. He does not only restore. He doubles. He does not only heal. He makes the end greater than the beginning.

Some people come to the house of God for money, while some come to the house of God to receive blessing from God. There is a difference. Money can finish. Blessing remains. Money can be spent. Blessing multiplies. When you come to God, come for Him, not just for what He can give. Seek the Blesser, and the blessing will follow you.

Do not envy a board chairman, a director, or a driver. Do not envy them, because your time will definitely come for you to be blessed. Just wait for your time. God met some at the eighth hour, He met some at the ninth hour, and He answered them all equally. Your hour has not passed. Your turn has not expired. Your season has not closed.

When Job was waiting for his eleventh hour miracle, his friends mocked him, and even his wife said to him, why wait, curse God and die, your life is nothing to write home about now. But Job said to his wife, you speak like one of the foolish women. Job refused to curse God. He refused to abandon his faith. He said, I know that my Redeemer liveth.

Concentrate on God. Where you thought those employed at the ninth and tenth hour were tired, God is never too late to change your story to success. God is never too late to rewrite your history. God is never too late to turn your mourning into dancing.

We are in the season and month of celebration. Are you in the house of God for one blessing or the other? You will receive God's blessing. Habakkuk 2:3 says, for the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

God blessed Job more than his beginning because Job waited on his God, and instead of cursing his God, he said, I know that my Redeemer liveth. God blesses everyone at the appointed time. Wait and do not murmur. Murmuring delays your miracle. Waiting in faith accelerates it.

Hannah waited. She never murmured against God, and she got her blessing from God, even when she was mocked by her rival, Peninnah. She still held on to God. She refused to give up because she knew that her miracle was on the way. She prayed, she wept, she poured out her soul before the Lord, and God remembered her and gave her Samuel. If Hannah could wait through mockery, you can wait through your own delay.

Consider Lazarus. How Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Martha said unto Jesus, if you had been here early, my brother would not have died. And Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. John 11:25. Jesus lifted up His eyes towards heaven and prayed. He said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you hear me always. John 11:41-42. God is never too late, and at the eleventh hour, Lazarus was brought back to life from the dead.

I have good news for you. When men say it is over with you, God will step in with a miracle. When doctors say there is no hope, God will step in. When your business has collapsed, when your marriage is struggling, when your children seem lost, when your helpers have forgotten you, God will step in. God is never too late to hire you and to bless you with an eleventh hour miracle. Those He hired months before you were hired, do not worry, you will still have a better testimony than them.

There is a time for everything. There is a time to be born, there is a time to die, there is a time to weep, and there is a time to laugh. There is a time for celebration. The God we serve is not limited by time. He is not limited by any circumstance. Your delay will turn into a miracle, because delay is not denial. Delay is only God's preparation for a greater testimony.

The Lord will do for us what He wants to do if we believe and wait for His promises. The God who promised is faithful to His promises. When all hope seems to be lost, the God of the eleventh hour miracle will show up. He showed up for Abraham and Sarah. He showed up for Joseph. He showed up for Hannah. He showed up for Job. He will show up for you.

If you think you cannot be helped by anybody, commit your ways to the Lord, and by the word of God, help will come from above. Help does not always come from men. Sometimes men will disappoint you. Sometimes your friends will abandon you. Sometimes your family will misunderstand you. But help from above never fails.

Job said, I will wait till my change comes, because I know that my Redeemer liveth. Except you do not have God as your Father, if you have God in your life, you will wait until your change will come. God said He will show compassion on whom He will show compassion, and mercy on whom He will show mercy. Mercy is not earned. Mercy is given. And today, mercy is speaking for you.

When you come to pray to God, look unto Jesus. Stop greeting people around when you are in God's presence. Concentrate on God while in His presence, because the presence of God carries anointing and power to break every chain and to stop every activity of the satanic world. You live in the world of God. You have to be sensitive to the Spirit of God. Being in God's presence is not the time to exchange pleasantries, but a time to be focused in order to receive God's blessings.

Many people miss their miracle in church because they are distracted. They are looking at who came late, who wore what, who is sitting where. Beloved, when you enter the presence of God, shut the door to distraction. Focus. Worship. Pray. Listen. Your eleventh hour miracle may be released in that one moment of focus.

I do not know what you understand as a blessing. What I understand as a blessing will come at the appointed time. Genesis 21:1-6 tells us that God visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken. God is ready to bless His people even when their appointed time seems to have passed. Even when your body says it is too late, even when your age says it is too late, even when your bank account says it is too late, God says, it is not too late.

All those who waited for God for the fruit of the womb, those who waited for businesses to grow, those who waited for financial breakthrough, your time is now. The God of eleventh hour miracle can bring restoration like that of Job your way. Your business will rise again. Your womb will open again. Your finances will be restored. Your career will be revived.

Acts 10 tells us about Cornelius. Cornelius was a prominent man in the Bible. He was the first Gentile convert to the Christian church. Cornelius helped people a lot. He gave alms generously. He prayed continually. And his time also came that the Lord remembered him for good. God remembered his prayers and his giving. God has not forgotten your prayers. God has not forgotten your giving. Your book of remembrance is about to be opened.



APOSTLE SULE FARADAY AZEKHUMEN

God remembered Esther. The God of eleventh hour miracle will open the book of remembrance and give you the miracle you deserve. Esther was an orphan, a slave girl in a foreign land, yet God lifted her to become queen at the eleventh hour. What about Joseph? His time also came. He was thrown into the pit, and then into prison in Egypt, but the God of eleventh hour miracle showed up for his restoration. From prison to palace in one day. That is what God can do.

God will open the book of remembrance and give us all our own blessings. He will remember your tears. He will remember your sacrifices. He will remember your faithfulness when no one was watching. He will remember you.

God of eleventh hour miracle will hire you. Ask the Lord to hire you today. Ask Him to remember you. We were not told that the king who remembered Mordecai was a born again child of God. Mordecai had served faithfully, and one night, the king could not sleep, and he asked for the book of remembrance to be read. That night, Mordecai was honoured. Your king will not sleep until you are remembered. Your helper will not rest until your miracle is released.

If you have a dream, write it down, and a time will come that your dream will take effect. Habakkuk said, write the vision, and make it plain. Write down what you are believing God for. Write down your business. Write down your marriage. Write down your admission. Write down your breakthrough. And wait for it. A day will come when that dream will speak.

Look unto God. It is when God hires you that man will hire you. If God has not hired you, men may employ you and still sack you. But if God has hired you, no man can fire you. If God has lifted you, no man can bring you down. If God has blessed you, no enemy can curse you.

You cannot say you love God and you are persecuting God's children. If you speak against the President, you speak against yourself. If you speak against the Governor, you speak against yourself. Anytime you criticize your leadership, you are criticizing yourself. Do not bite the hands that fed you. Honour authority. Pray for your leaders. Bless them, and you will be blessed. John 1:1 says, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Let the Word guide your tongue.

There are many people whose lives are going to and fro because they are working against the current of God. People claim to be led by God, but they are led by their senses. They follow feelings, not faith. They follow noise, not the Spirit. Be sensitive to the Spirit of God. Discernment is not suspicion. Discernment is hearing God clearly and following Him obediently.

Beloved, as I close, I declare over you: Your eleventh hour has come. Your waiting is over. Your mourning is turning to joy. Your delay is turning to testimony. The same God who remembered Job, Hannah, Joseph, Esther, Mordecai and Lazarus will remember you.

Do not envy. Do not murmur. Do not give up. Wait on God. Trust Him. Focus on Him. And when men say it is over, God will step in and say, it is just beginning.

Your miracle is on the way. Your change has come. Your Redeemer liveth.

Amen.

Compiled by Helen Bazuaye

FEATURE

How Modular cooperatives and bioremediation are rewriting the Niger Delta's downstream future

Isaac Eranga

For decades, the global narrative surrounding the Niger Delta has been anchored to the upstream sector: the thrum of seismic exploration, towering offshore drilling rigs, and the fiery, apocalyptic glow of natural gas flares. Yet, look closer at the geographic veins of Nigeria's oil-producing heartland—along the brackish creeks of Rivers State, the industrial fringes of Warri, and the congested waterways of Port Harcourt—and a different, equally formidable force emerges.

This is the domain of the downstream petroleum sector.

Encompassing everything from refining crude into consumer petroleum products, massive product storage, coastal vessel transportation, retail distribution, to the shadow-economy of artisanal refining, the downstream sector is transforming the delta's ecosystem and socio-economic fabric. While national conversations focus heavily on energy security, macro-economics, and fuel deregulation, the ecological and human toll playing out at the grassroots level tells a story of acute vulnerability.

1. The Anatomy of Downstream Degradation

When petroleum moves from extraction to processing and distribution, the environmental footprint shifts. In the Niger Delta, this footprint is stamped deeply into both formal industrial complexes and informal, localized processing rings.

The Point-Source Pollution of Legacy Refineries

State-owned and modular refineries dotted across the region—such as those in Warri and Port Harcourt—form the backbone of formal downstream activities. However, decades of operational strain, aging infrastructure, and equipment leaks from valves, flanges, and storage tank seals have resulted in continuous fugitive emissions.

According to environmental health assessments, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), sulfur dioxide (\text{SO}_2), and nitrogen oxides (\text{NO}_x) from these industrial points hang heavily in the humid delta atmosphere. When mixed with atmospheric moisture, these emissions act as precursors to localized acid precipitation, corroding corrugated zinc roofs within months and turning rainwater—traditionally a primary source of rural drinking water—into a chemical hazard.

The Shadow Downstream: Artisanal Refining

Compounding formal industrial pressures is the proliferation of artisanal (or "kpofire") refining—a hyper-localized underground downstream sector. Driven by economic exclusion and high unemployment, individuals tap into petroleum transport pipelines or buy stolen feedstock to boil crude in makeshift drum-and-pipe setups.

Imagine a small, illegal oil-cooking camp hidden deep in the mangrove swamps. For years, young men have built makeshift ovens out of old metal drums and rusted pipes, boiling stolen crude oil over open wood fires to make black-market fuel.

While it puts a little money in their pockets, the cost to the land is devastating. Thick, black soot chokes the air, turning villagers' roofs dark and causing chronic coughing fits. The leftover chemical waste and oily sludge are dumped straight into the fishing creeks, killing the fish that families depend on for food and income, and smothering the breathing roots of the mangrove trees until over 90% of them die off. On top of that, it is intensely dangerous—the makeshift drums explode regularly, and security forces hunt down the camps, destroying equipment and leaving environmental ruin behind.

2. Public Health on the Frontlines

Science tells us that pollution is never static; it bioaccumulates, moves with the tides, and enters the human body through inhalation, dermal contact, and the food chain.

In communities adjacent to downstream hubs and artisanal refining camps, respiratory ailments have surged. Particulate matter (\text{PM}_{2.5} and \text{PM}_{10}) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) saturating the air column trigger chronic bronchitis, asthma, and eye irritations among residents.

Furthermore, downstream liquid waste compromises aquatic life. Finfish and crustaceans—the economic lifeblood and primary protein source for indigenous delta populations—absorb petrochemical toxins through their gills. Local fishermen report not only a sharp decline in fish catch volumes but also instances where captured fish carry a distinct, unpalatable kerosene-like odor, rendering them unmarketable and unsafe for consumption.

3. The Field Simulation: A Vision for Modular Cooperative Refineries

Now, picture a different future: a community-owned, licensed mini-refinery.

Instead of hiding in the bushes with dangerous open fires, imagine the community pooling their resources together with the backing of local development funds and engineers to build a clean, modern, factory-made unit. It is about the size of a few shipping containers placed side-by-side, and it can be set up in just over a year (roughly 14 months for a 5,000 Barrels Per Day [bpd] unit backed by a $25 million investment).

Here is how that transformation changes everything:

Where the oil comes from: Instead of tapping stolen oil from vandalized pipelines, this legal cooperative buys its crude oil directly and legally from small oil fields nearby through official Crude Supply Agreements (CSAs).

How much it makes: Running at an 80% capacity utilization, this clean machine processes 5,000 barrels of oil every single day, turning it into safe, high-quality diesel and petrol that people can actually trust. That steady production generates an estimated $65.7 million in annual gross revenue with a healthy 28% EBITDA operating margin, creating reliable, well-paying legal jobs for the very youth who used to run the illegal camps.

Clean air and zero waste: Instead of thick black smoke and toxic soot (which drops from extreme levels to controlled emissions below 5\text{ mg/Nm}^3), the modern modular unit traps its emissions so cleanly that air pollution is minimized. There is no dumping into the water; it uses a closed-loop system where all waste is safely managed.

Saving the environment: Because toxic chemical discharge is stopped, the mangrove swamps get a second chance to breathe. Instead of dying off (<10% survival in kpofire zones), over 85% of the mangroves survive and recover within protected and monitored zones, allowing fish populations and local fishing livelihoods to bounce back.

4. Pathways to Mitigation: Toward a Sustainable Downstream Horizon

Mitigating the environmental and socio-economic impacts of the Niger Delta's downstream sector requires a multi-pronged approach that bridges technological intervention, regulatory enforcement, and socio-economic inclusion.

I. Technological Upgrades and Strict Environmental Auditing

Formal downstream operators must transition toward green-engineering practices. This includes retrofitting aging storage tanks with vapor recovery units (VRUs) to curb fugitive VOC emissions, upgrading pipeline integrity management systems using real-time fiber-optic leak detection, and enforcing zero-tolerance policies for effluent discharge into waterways.

II. Transitioning and Legalizing Artisanal Frameworks

Cracking down solely through enforcement has historically driven artisanal refiners deeper into remote creeks without halting operations. A progressive science-backed solution involves formalizing and modularizing local refining initiatives. By integrating these operators into modular, environmentally controlled cooperative refineries under strict safety and environmental supervision, the state can capture local economic value while neutralizing toxic open-air burning methods.

III. Ecosystem Restoration and Bioremediation

Transitioning the downstream sector requires cleaning up decades of legacy pollution. Natural attenuation in tropical mangrove swamps is painfully slow due to persistent, heavy polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) that suffocate sediment microbes.

According to environmental biotechnology studies on tropical oil spills (such as Okoro et al., 2020, Journal of Petroleum Environmental Research), remediation can be accelerated threefold through biostimulation and bioaugmentation:

Nutrient Spiking (Biostimulation): Applying oleophilic fertilizers containing nitrogen and phosphorus to contaminated mudflats stimulates indigenous hydrocarbon-degrading bacteria (Pseudomonas, Acinetobacter, and Bacillus strains).

Bioaugmentation: Introducing specialized consortia of oil-eating microbes directly into heavily saturated creeks. Field data shows these bacteria break down long-chain alkanes into harmless carbon dioxide and water within 180 to 240 days, restoring soil oxygen levels and allowing replanted mangrove seedlings (Rhizophora racemosa) to take root.

IV. Diversifying Livelihoods

Ultimately, the survival of the Niger Delta depends on breaking the cycle of single-resource dependency. Investments in clean energy transitions—such as solar micro-grids, modern aquaculture, and agricultural value chains—will provide sustainable alternative livelihoods, drawing youth away from hazardous informal petroleum processing and easing the human pressure on a fragile ecosystem.

Conclusion

"The future of the delta is not written in the black smoke of illegal drums, but in the disciplined hum of engineered modular plants and the slow, green return of mangrove roots breathing through clean water."

The downstream petroleum sector holds the keys to domestic energy distribution and regional commerce, but its current trajectory in the Niger Delta carries an unsustainable ecological price tag. For the region to thrive, a balance must be struck: one where industrial progress and local livelihoods do not come at the expense of clean air, safe water, and a living earth.

Isaac Eranga
Science and Environmental Journalist

> When petroleum moves from extraction to processing and distribution, the environmental footprint shifts.



FEATURE

...ANNIVERSARY...ANNIVERSARY...ANNIVERSARY

Okpebholo @ 2: **Governance works, not words**

Osemudiamhen O. Faith

Governor Monday Okpebholo's administration is anchored on a simple principle: governance must translate into tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary citizens.

For years, governance in Edo State was often perceived as distant from the everyday realities of the people. Decisions took time, projects suffered delays, workers and contractors faced uncertainties, while many communities waited endlessly for government attention.

Two years into the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo, the emphasis has shifted towards a more practical approach to governance — one defined by visibility, responsiveness, supervision and the delivery of tangible results.

The philosophy is simple: government must not exist merely in policy documents, official pronouncements and political promises. Its impact must be felt in the lives of the people.

This is the defining principle of practical governance.



A GOVERNOR WHO SHOWS UP

Governor Okpebholo has consistently projected a hands-on leadership style, taking governance beyond the confines of Government House to ministries, agencies, local government areas, markets, schools and communities.

His frequent inspections and direct engagements with public officials are intended to strengthen supervision, demand accountability and ensure that government decisions translate into action.

By asking questions, setting deadlines and demanding results, the Governor has sought to reinforce a culture of responsibility within the public service.

The underlying message is unmistakable: public office is a responsibility, and those entrusted with it must deliver.

DISCIPLINE WITH PUBLIC RESOURCES

Responsible management of public resources remains central to effective governance.

The Okpebholo administration has placed emphasis on project execution, financial discipline and accountability, with the expectation that public expenditure must produce measurable value.

The principle is straightforward: government must get value for every naira spent. Contractors must deliver according to specifications, while abandoned or poorly executed projects must not escape scrutiny.

Ultimately, the objective is to ensure that public resources serve public interests and that government investments translate into visible development.

RE-ENERGISING THE CIVIL SERVICE

The effectiveness of any administration depends substantially on the efficiency of its workforce.

Governor Okpebholo's approach recognises the importance of a motivated, disciplined and responsive civil service in delivering the dividends of democracy.

Timely payment of salaries, attention to pension obligations, staff development and improved supervision are important components of building an efficient public service.

Beyond these responsibilities, the administration must continue to strengthen institutional capacity and create an environment in which public servants are encouraged to demonstrate professionalism, commitment and productivity.

A functional civil service is indispensable to sustainable development.

GOVERNANCE BEYOND BENIN CITY

One important measure of responsible leadership is the ability to extend development beyond the state capital.

Edo State is much bigger than Benin City. Its development aspirations encompass Uromi, Auchi, Ekpoma, Igarra, Agenebode and hundreds of other communities across the three senatorial districts.

The Governor's engagement with local government authorities, traditional institutions and community stakeholders reflects the importance of grassroots participation in governance.

After all, development becomes meaningful when communities are recognised, their concerns are heard and their needs receive appropriate attention.

The ultimate expectation is an equitable spread of government presence and development across the state.

GOVERNMENT THAT TOUCHES LIVES

The real test of governance is not the number of official statements issued or ceremonies attended. It is the difference government makes in the everyday lives of its citizens.

For the teacher, it is an improved learning environment. For the market woman, it is a safer and more organised marketplace. For the young graduate, it is access to opportunities, skills acquisition and a pathway to economic independence.

For the ordinary citizen, it is the assurance that government is attentive to their concerns and committed to addressing them.

These are the practical indicators by which any administration should be assessed.

TWO YEARS ON: THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Two years may not be sufficient to address every developmental challenge confronting Edo State, but it provides a reasonable period to assess direction, priorities and the foundations being laid for the future.

Governor Okpebholo has placed practical governance, executive visibility, supervision and accountability at the centre of his administration's philosophy.

The greater challenge now is to consolidate these principles, sustain the momentum and ensure that the benefits of government policies and projects reach more people.

Ultimately, governance is not measured by promises made but by commitments fulfilled; not by the frequency of announcements but by the durability of results.

For Edo State, the message of the Okpebholo administration at two is clear: government must show up, public resources must deliver value, institutions must work and the people must remain at the centre of governance.

That is the difference between governing by words and governing by work.

”

Timely payment of salaries, attention to pension obligations, staff development and improved supervision are important components of building an efficient public service.

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10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
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Sports

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From left to right, Dr. Adrian Ogun, Consultant TMT Africa, Floyd Mayweather of Mayweather Promotions and Keane Anis, CEO TMT Africa

Nigeria boxing fans can win $5,000 in Mayweather vs. Floyd promo bout

Kehinde Osagiede

Nigerian boxing fans have a chance to win $5,000 in a cash prize draw tied to the upcoming bout between American boxing great Floyd "Money" Mayweather and Australian light heavyweight Matt "The Jedi" Floyd.

The fight is scheduled for December 19, 2026, in Bangkok, Thailand.

According to Keane Anis in a statement, to qualify for the draw,Boxing fans must buy Pay-Per-View (PPV) access to the event through the promoter's website, theorderpromotions.com/ng, subject to the promotion's terms and eligibility requirements. The promotional link closes on Monday, November 16, 2026.

The Chief Executive Officer of Front Row Fight Series, Keane Anis, is in Nigeria with representatives of TMT Africa and Floyd Mayweather Promotions to promote the event.

The visit reflects growing efforts to bring major international boxing events to Nigerian audiences and to engage fans ahead of the December contest.

The entry window closes tomorrow(Monday, November 16,2026).

2028 Los Angeles Olympics: Nigeria U23 fall in DR Congo

Nigeria U23 will now have to overturn a 2-0 loss in DR Congo to advance in the qualifying series for the 2027 U23 AFCON, which also serves as a qualifying tournament for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Nigeria let in two goals in the first half in Lubumbashi today.

The first goal was recorded as an own goal by captain and goalkeeper Samuel James.

Hosts DR Congo then doubled their advantage just before the break courtesy of a well-taken free kick.

In between the goals, the visitors suffered a massive setback when Brighton youngster Zadok Yohanna was forced out by injury.

Nigeria did well not to concede another goal in the second goal and they will now have to stage a comeback in Ikenne Tuesday to proceed to the final playoff to the U23 AFCON to be staged by Egypt

Super Eagles coach Eric Chelle: We have to win again

Super Eagles coach Eric Chelle has said his team will have to beat Tanzania again on Tuesday after a 3-1 home win in the first leg of this 2027 AFCON qualifying double-header.

After Friday's home win, the Super Eagles are now a point behind Group L leaders Guinea Bissau after three rounds of matches with only the group winners guaranteed a place in next year's tournament in East Africa.

"The most important thing now is the next game," Eric Chelle said in his post-match media briefing.

"It was a good game, but we lost concentration for 30 seconds in the first half, we made a little mistake and we took a goal.

"We have another game in a few days, we have to go to Tanzania and win this game.

"This victory is good and we hope to continue to win."

The Super Eagles coach explained that two-goal hero Tolu Arokodare started from the bench because he wanted the team to start with high pressing, which Venezia striker Jerome Akor is better at.

He also disclosed that Ademola Lookman suffered a shock on his left knee and so was forced out of the match in the first half



ERIC CHELLE

Benjamin Fredrick impressive as Super Eagles defeat Tanzania 3-1 in AFCON qualifiers game



BENJAMIN FREDRICK

Nigeria's young centre-back Benjamin Fredrick delivered an impressive defensive performance as the Super Eagles defeated Tanzania 3-1 in their 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying encounter at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo on Friday.

The Brentford defender, who returned to the starting lineup, partnered Calvin Bassey in central defence, demonstrating composure, confidence and maturity against the Taifa Stars.

Despite Tanzania finding the equaliser in the first half, Fredrick maintained his concentration and defensive discipline, contributing to Nigeria's improved performance as the hosts took control of proceedings after the break.

His confidence in possession was another highlight of his performance. The youngster completed 68 of his 73 attempted passes, recording an impressive 93 per cent passing accuracy and providing a reliable outlet in Nigeria's build-up play.

Fredrick's assured display further underlined his growing potential and ability to compete at the highest level, particularly as he continues to establish himself within the Super Eagles setup.

Nigeria eventually secured a comfortable 3-1 victory, with Alhassan Yusuf opening the scoring before Tolu Arokodare came off the bench to register a second-half brace.

With his composure, ball-playing ability and defensive awareness, Fredrick continues to offer Nigeria an exciting prospect for the future as the Super Eagles intensify their quest for a place at AFCON 2027.

Normalisation Committee: Amokachi picked ahead of Oliseh

It has been a straight fight between two former Super Eagles stars, Sunday Oliseh and Daniel Amokachi, for the membership of the NFF Normalisation Committee that will soon be announced.

Both Oliseh and Amokachi were important members of Nigeria's Golden Generation of the 90s having won the 1994 AFCON, qualified Nigeria to a first-ever World Cup same year and made history when Nigerian won Olympic soccer gold in 1996.

"The choice for an ex-international (to be on the committee) was between Oliseh and Amokachi and in the end, Daniel (Amokachi) got the nod," a top source revealed.

The five-man Normalisation Committee is expected to reform Nigeria football after the resignation of the NFF executive committee led by Ibrahim Gusau in September. The committee's tenure is until May 31, 2027.

Sports



NIGERIA'S FLAMIGOES WITH MTN OFFICIAL

Aka urges Tinubu to reward Nigeria's African Scrabble Champions, says wordsmiths deserve national honour

Former President of the Nigeria Scrabble Federation (NSF), Engineer Toke Aka, has appealed to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Federal Government to recognise and reward members of Team Nigeria following their outstanding performance at the 16th African Scrabble Championship in Monrovia, Liberia.

Aka believes the achievements of Nigerian Scrabble players have reached a point where commendations alone are no longer sufficient, insisting that the athletes deserve tangible rewards, national recognition and a celebration befitting their contributions to the country's sporting reputation.

Nigeria's 20-man contingent delivered an impressive performance at the continental championship, dominating the individual standings, winning the Best Country award and recording remarkable success in the women's category.



AFRICAN SCRABBLE CHAMPIONS

Kogi State-born Abdulmumin Jimoh, who represents Ogun State, emerged individual champion after recording 23 victories and a cumulative spread of 1,760 points. His compatriot George Ezinore from Edo State finished second, while Emmanuel Umujose of Delta State completed an all-Nigerian podium.

In the women's category, 15-year-old Nigerian sensation Sophia Ekeruche finished second with 18 victories, behind Ghana's Betty Kyeremateng, who claimed the Best Female Player award. Nigeria also secured the Best Country title ahead of Kenya and hosts Liberia.

The latest triumph for Aka a former President of the Pan African Scrabble Association (PANASA) is another chapter in a remarkable success story that has continued to put Nigeria on the global Scrabble map without the corresponding level of government recognition and reward.

"These players deserve more than applause. They have worked extremely hard, sacrificed their time and resources, and competed against the best on the continent to bring honour and glory to Nigeria.

"The Federal Government should see these achievements as a national asset. When our athletes go out there and conquer Africa and the world, the country must be ready to celebrate them, reward them and make them feel that their sacrifices are appreciated," Aka said.

Edo Sports Commission Rewards Six Outstanding Staff for Excellent Performance

Kehinde Osagiede

The Edo State Sports Commission, under the leadership of its Executive Chairman, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, has recognised and rewarded six members of staff for their outstanding commitment, dedication and excellence in service delivery.

The award recipients, who distinguished themselves between February and July 2026, include Weightlifting Head Coach, Ikponmwosa Williams Omoroghomwan, who emerged as the Best Staff Member for February, having earlier won the January edition of the award.

Other recipients are Coach Theophilus Adolphus Ibodeme, who won the March award; Mr Osawe Osagie, April; Mrs Liliet Oyebade, May; Mr Simon Umasabor, June; and Mr Ighodaro Aigbe, who emerged as the Best Worker for July.

Coach Ibodeme, a Cricket High Performance Coach, was recognised for his contributions to the development of cricket in Edo State, as well as his accomplishments at the international level with Nigeria's Under-20 national team.

Mr Osagie, Head of the Open Registry Unit of the Commission, received the April award in recognition of his diligence, steadfastness and exceptional commitment to excellence in the discharge of his duties.

Mrs Oyebade, an Assistant Director of Sports, was honoured for her contributions to the coordination of athletes across various sports associations, particularly in preparation for National Sports Festivals and other major sporting competitions.

The June award went to Mr Umasabor, a groundsman with the Commission, whose contributions have been instrumental to the successful hosting of Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) matches at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium.

He was recognised for ensuring that the stadium pitch is consistently maintained and ready for league matches, as well as his commitment to mentoring and transferring practical knowledge to younger members of his unit.

AFCON 2027 Race: In Zanzibar, Eagles aim for another three points at Taifa Stars' expense



SUPER EAGLES VS TAIFA STARS

The Super Eagles of Nigeria will be aiming to consolidate their position in the race for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations when they take on Tanzania's Taifa Stars in the return leg of their Group L qualifying encounter at the Amaan Stadium in Zanzibar on Tuesday.

Nigeria's contingent arrived in Zanzibar on Sunday night aboard a chartered ValueJet Airline aircraft, with renewed confidence following their convincing 3–1 victory over the East Africans in the first leg at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo, two days earlier.

However, three-time African champions Nigeria are much aware that a different challenge awaits them on Tanzanian soil, where the hosts will be eager to make a statement in front of their supporters. For Tanzania, Tuesday's encounter presents an opportunity to respond in front of home fans after the defeat in Uyo.

Although the Taifa Stars have already secured their place at the 2027 AFCON finals as co-hosts alongside Kenya and Uganda, they will be determined to demonstrate their competitiveness against one of Africa's football heavyweights. Under head coach Miguel Ángel Gamondi, Tanzania will hope to capitalise on home advantage, maintain defensive discipline and exploit any opportunities that come their way.

LA 2028 Olympics Race: Nigeria seek big comeback against DR Congo in Ikenne

Nigeria's U23 national team, the Olympic Eagles, face a crucial test on Tuesday when they host their counterparts from the Democratic Republic of Congo in the second leg of their 2027 CAF U23 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying tie at the Remo Stars Stadium in Ikenne-Remo.

The Nigerian side will be desperate to secure a victory and keep its hopes of reaching the continental tournament alive. The Olympic Eagles must overturn a two-goal deficit following their 2-0 defeat in last Friday's first-leg encounter at the TP Mazembe Stadium in Lubumbashi.

DR Congo netted twice in the first half to establish a commanding advantage ahead of the return fixture, leaving Nigeria with a difficult task on home soil. The Congolese side arrived in Ikenne on Sunday with high hopes of protecting its advantage and secure qualification for the next round.

However, Nigeria will be counting on home support and an improved performance to turn the tie around. For Nigeria to progress without a penalty shootout, the Olympic Eagles must win by at least three goals. A two-goal victory would level the aggregate score at 2-2, with the outcome then decided by a penalty shootout.



NIGERIA VS DR CONGO MATCH

Peculiar delivers Warri City stadium ahead of Infantino's Commissioning November 21

The reconstructed Warri City Stadium is set for commissioning on Saturday, November 21, 2026, with FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, expected to perform the ceremony.

The stadium project, executed by Peculiar Ultimate Concerns Limited, under the management of Engr. Lanre Adeleke, was undertaken by the Delta State Government led by Governor Sheriff Francis Oborevwori.

The upgraded facility now boasts modern sporting infrastructure designed to meet international standards, with a seating capacity of between 17,000 and 20,000 spectators.

Managing Director of Peculiar Ultimate Concerns Limited, Engr. Lanre Adeleke, said the project introduced several improved facilities aimed at repositioning the stadium for major sporting competitions and other events.

Among the key features are a hybrid-grass football pitch, a nine-lane athletics track, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, an indoor sports hall and a dedicated training pitch.

The facility also has modern changing rooms, a trophy room, hospitality facilities, upgraded roofing and cladding, as well as advanced surveillance and security systems.

Adeleke said the reconstruction had addressed two longstanding challenges associated with the stadium: flooding and poor playing surfaces. He noted that flooding had been a peculiar problem at the Warri facility, while pitch maintenance and turf quality remained wider challenges in Nigerian football.



WARRI CITY STADIUM

SPORTS

The Nigerian OBSERVER
That The People May Know

Sanwo-Olu welcomes Floyd Mayweather to Lagos, signals interest in hosting major boxing events



FLOYD MAYWEATHER AND GOV. BABAJIDE SANWO-OLU

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has welcomed American boxing legend Floyd Mayweather Jr. to Lagos, expressing the state government's readiness to explore opportunities for grassroots boxing development and international sporting events.

Sanwo-Olu received the undefeated former world champion at Lagos House, Marina, where discussions centred on Mayweather's vision of inspiring young boxing talents across Africa, beginning with Nigeria, and bringing international boxing events to Lagos.

Describing the visit as a pleasure, the governor highlighted the potential benefits of the proposed initiatives for young people and the wider sports industry.

"It was a pleasure to receive American professional boxing champion Floyd Mayweather Jr. at Lagos House, Marina. His vision of inspiring grassroots boxing talent across Africa, starting here in Nigeria, and bringing international boxing events to Lagos presents opportunities for our young people and the sports industry," Sanwo-Olu said.

The governor reaffirmed Lagos State's ambition to attract major sporting events, pointing to ongoing investments in sports infrastructure and efforts to create an enabling environment for athletes and sporting businesses to thrive.

"Lagos is ready to welcome major sporting events. We have continued to invest in sports infrastructure, and we are focused on creating an environment where talent can grow and succeed," he stated.

Sanwo-Olu added that the state looks forward to exploring the opportunities arising from Mayweather's visit and strengthening Lagos's position as a destination for sports and entertainment in Africa.

Sanwo-Olu Hosts Flamingos at Lagos House, Celebrates Young Stars' Achievement

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has hosted members of Nigeria's U-17 women's national team, the Flamingos, at Lagos House, Marina, celebrating their achievements and recognising the dedication behind their success.

The Governor described the reception as a proud moment, commending the young players for demonstrating the value of hard work, discipline and determination.

"Celebrating our Flamingos at Lagos House, Marina was a proud moment for us all. These young ladies have shown what hard work, discipline and determination can achieve," Sanwo-Olu said.

He reminded the players that beyond the trophies and medals celebrated by supporters, their success reflects the effort, sacrifices and resilience invested throughout their football journey.

The governor encouraged the team to remain focused, continue developing their abilities and maintain the confidence to pursue greater opportunities in their careers.

Sanwo-Olu also highlighted Lagos State's contribution to the team, noting that several players are products of Team Lagos, while others emerged through FC Robo, a club he described as close to the state's heart and one it has supported over the years.

According to him, the presence of these players reflects the depth of football talent across Lagos communities and the importance of providing young people with opportunities to develop and succeed.

"From Ajegunle and Mushin to the world stage, these girls have shown that talent knows no boundaries. They have made Lagos proud and they have given the entire country every reason to celebrate," he said.

The governor reaffirmed his pride in every member of the team, adding: "We are proud of every one of them."

The reception offered an opportunity to celebrate the Flamingos' efforts while recognising the role of grassroots football structures and development pathways in nurturing young talent.

2025 AFCON: Super Eagles receive $17,500 bronze medal bonus ahead of Tanzania clash

The Super Eagles have finally received their outstanding bonuses for finishing third at the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), bringing an end to a prolonged disagreement between the players and the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

The payment, reportedly amounting to $17,500 per player, is expected to provide a significant morale boost for the Nigerian team ahead of their 2027 AFCON qualifying encounter against Tanzania in Zanzibar on Tuesday.

The bonus dispute emerged after Nigeria defeated Egypt in a penalty shootout to secure the bronze medal at the 2025 AFCON in February.

While the players maintained that they were entitled to bonuses for securing third place, the NFF reportedly disputed the claim, arguing that the encounter had ended in a draw before Nigeria eventually prevailed in the penalty shootout.

The disagreement triggered prolonged discussions between the federation and the players, delaying the payment of the outstanding bonuses.

However, the issue has now been resolved, with the NFF reportedly settling the payments to both players and officials ahead of Tuesday's crucial qualifying fixture.

The development comes at an important time for the Super Eagles, who will be looking to build on their previous 3-1 victory over Tanzania on Nigerian soil.



TOLU AROKODARE AND ALEX IWOBI



OYINLOMO QUADRE

Tennis: Abua, Quadre are top seeds as Da-Silva open main draw serves off in Lagos

The main draw of the Da-Silva Open gets underway in Lagos with several exciting matchups lined up, as Nigeria's top-ranked players and emerging talents prepare to compete for honours.

Nigeria's Davis Cup regular Abua, one of the country's most consistent players, is among the leading attractions and will begin his campaign against Rasheed Mahmud in the opening match on centre court.

The encounter will be followed by the appearance of women's top seed Oyinlomo Quadre, who received a wild card into the championship. Quadre is currently the only Nigerian with an ITF women's singles ranking and will be looking to make a strong start to her campaign.

Former Nigerian number one Daniel Adeleye is also set for action, with a meeting against Saidu Sani-Inabo scheduled elsewhere on the courts.

Another fixture to watch will see Khadijat Mohammed take on Prosper Ohimai, who earned her place in the main draw through the qualifying rounds. The contest offers Ohimai an opportunity to build on her progress from the preliminary stage.

On Court 5, David Edwards will face Seyi Ogunsakin in a rematch carrying added significance. Edwards will be seeking to avenge his defeat to Ogunsakin in the J30 Boys' Singles final when the pair meet again.

Toluwalashe Agunbiade is also scheduled to take on Bright Emmanuel, the 2025 CBN Open finalist, in another notable matchup.

With the main draw now underway, attention will be on the seeded players, established Nigerian names and rising talents as they begin their respective campaigns at the Da-Silva Open in Lagos.

CAF Women's Champions League: Lekié FF clinch historic third-place finish

Cameroonian side Lekié FF have secured a podium finish in their maiden CAF Women's Champions League campaign after thrashing Uganda's Kawempe Muslim Ladies 5-0 in the third-place playoff.

Lekié produced an impressive performance to claim third place in the continental competition, capping off a memorable debut appearance.

Raïssa Nnanga led the scoring with a brace, while Makoma, Alexandra Takounda and Njoya Ajara also found the back of the net to complete the emphatic victory.

The five-goal triumph marks a remarkable achievement for Lekié FF, who have announced themselves on the continental stage with a third-place finish in their first-ever appearance in the CAF Women's Champions League.

Printed and Published by **Bendel Newspaper Corporation**, 24, Airport Road, P.M.B. 1334 Benin City, Edo State.
Editor: Andy Asemota - 08035872075, 09076673265. **Advert Manager:** 08051177163.
Lagos Office: 25A, Alli Street, Off Tinubu Square, Lagos Island. **Abuja Office:** 1st Floor, Edo House, 75 Ralph Shodehinde Street, Central Business District, Abuja.
All correspondence to Bendel Newspaper Corporation, Benin City. Email: nigerianobservernews1@gmail.com - **ISSN 0331-2674**