2027: Okpebholo takes Tinubu re-election campaign to Arewa community

. . .pledges better business environment

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has taken the campaign for the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to the Arewa community in Benin City, assuring residents of a more conducive business environment and sustained government support for their commercial activities.

The governor, who addressed the community partly in Hausa during a campaign rally at Aduwawa, thanked its members for their support and solidarity, while soliciting their votes for President Tinubu and other All Progressives Congress (APC) candidates in the 2027 general elections.

Governor Okpebholo described members of the Arewa community as brothers and sisters, assuring them that their interests would continue to receive attention under his administration.

"Today, I've come to my brothers and sisters in the Arewa community to say thank you for the love you have shown me by accepting me as your own. You called me your brother, and I also take you as my own," he said.

He explained that the visit was part of efforts to mobilise grassroots support for President Tinubu's re-election, reiterating his administration's target of securing 2.5 million votes for the President in Edo State.

"I cannot do this election without coming to meet you to tell you that I need 2.5 million votes for Mr President," the governor said.

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2027: Igbo communities in Edo back Tinubu for second term

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Igbo communities across Edo State's three senatorial districts have endorsed President Ahmed Tinubu's re-election for a second term, pledging to campaign for him and for the All Progressives Congress (APC) ahead of the January 16, 2027 presidential election.

The endorsement came on Wednesday at a stakeholders' engagement in Benin City, where community leaders praised Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo for the many development projects and policies they said have improved daily life for their people.

Speaking, the President General of the Igbo Community Union, Sir Chief Samson Awiaka, said the governor had constructed access roads to shops and markets, and had brought touts and harassment under firm control through a zero-tolerance policy.

He also pointed to the establishment of a Special Criminal Court to try offenders. Awiaka said the governor's visit during the 2026 Igbo Festival had left a lasting impression on the community.

Awiaka described the appointment of 30 senior advisers from different ethnic groups as a clear sign of inclusion in governance. "These are firsts in the history of Edo State," he said.

The Commissioner for Inter-Ethnic Relations, Mr Martin Oli, thanked the Igbo for their turnout and described their role in business as vital to the state's economic growth. He assured them that the governor was ready to protect their businesses and make them feel at home in Edo.

The Chairman of the Igbo community of the APC in Edo, Mr Jerry Uzuigwe, thanked the governor for appointing Oli as commissioner and promised the community would deliver the 2.5 million votes the party had pledged to Tinubu. Sir Augustine Atuh, an Igbo representative in Edo North, said the appointment gave the community dignity. He added, however, that a fair allocation of stalls at the Uzauire market would be important as the market nears completion.

Responding, Gov. Okpebholo urged the Igbo to back the president, saying the reforms under way are meant to build a stronger economy and improve the lives of ordinary Nigerians. He commended the community for its contributions to Edo's development and noted that many of its members had built successful businesses and deep roots in the state.

The governor defended the Tinubu administration's reforms in the petroleum and foreign exchange sectors, saying they were necessary to tackle long-standing economic prob-

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

Nigeria's $54bn external reserve covers 10 month imports -Cardoso

ABUJA

The Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Olayemi Cardoso, says Nigeria's gross external reserves stood at 54.02 billion dollars as of Nov. 17, sufficient to cover 10.26 months of import for goods and services.

Cardoso said this in Abuja while presenting the communique from the 308th meeting of the apex bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on Tuesday

He said that headline inflation year-on-year declined further to 14.06 per cent in October from 14.63 per cent in September, driven by both food and core components.

"Core inflation eased further to 10.78 per cent in October 2026 from 12.95 per cent in September, driven mainly by housing, education services, and insurance and financial services.

"This reflects the impact of the restrictive monetary policy stance and sustained stability in the foreign exchange market.

"Similarly, food inflation declined to 19.13 per cent from 19.59 per cent as prices of processed food and farm produce moderated following the commencement of the harvest season.

"The Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) sustained its expansion to 53.2 index points in October from 53 index points in September, driven by improved activity in the industrial, agricul-

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IGBO STAKEHOLDER:
Governor Monday Okpebholo addressing Igbo Associations at the All Progessives Congress (APC) rally at Victor Uwaifo event premises, yesterday. Photo by Emmanuel Ijegbia.

Edo Govt receives remains of Pastor Oyakhilome's mother, assures family of support —Pg 3

When an iroko falls: **Pete Edochie, the voice that gave African culture a face** —Pg 12

Russia's own figures show it has lost almost 500,000 people in Ukraine war —Pg 8

CAF unveils five finalists for 2026 men's player of the year award —Pg 13

NEWS

Tinubu seeks senate approval to repeal 268 obsolete Federal Laws

AGHEDO IYOBOR

ABUJA

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has sought the approval of the Senate for a comprehensive review of Nigeria's federal laws, proposing the removal of 268 enactments identified as obsolete, spent or already repealed.

The proposed revision, contained in the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) 2025, is expected to modernise the country's legal framework and bring federal legislation in line with contemporary constitutional, institutional, technological and economic realities.

The President's request was conveyed in a letter read by Senate President Godswill Akpabio during plenary on Tuesday.

Tinubu described the exercise as the first comprehensive revision of Nigeria's federal laws since 2004, noting that the updated compilation would provide a more reliable and accessible reference for the administration of justice and governance.

The review covered 932 federal enactments and 731 subsidiary legislations, following the establishment of a specialised committee on October 24, 2024, under the supervision of the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice.

At the end of the exercise, 664 principal enactments, alongside relevant subsidiary legislation, were validated for inclusion in the revised 2025 edition.

The committee was also mandated to identify and address inconsistencies, overlaps and discrepancies in existing federal laws.

Tinubu said an accurate and easily accessible compilation of federal laws was indispensable to Nigeria's democratic and economic growth.

According to him, the revised edition would serve as a dependable legal reference for judges, lawyers, government institutions, investors and members of the public.

He added that the exercise would strengthen legal certainty, improve institutional efficiency and enhance public confidence in the justice system.

However, the President's request generated concerns among senators over the accuracy and integrity of the revised compilation, particularly the need to ensure that no provisions duly passed by the National Assembly had been altered in the process.



CAMPAIGN:
Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, (5th right) addressing the Arewa community during the campaign for the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in at Aduwawa, Benin City yesterday

2027: Okpebholo takes Tinubu re-election campaign...

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Recalling his earlier visit to the Eyaen Cattle Market, where he promised to rehabilitate the access road, Okpebholo assured traders that the project would be completed before the end of the current dry season.

He said his administration remained committed to providing an enabling environment for businesses to thrive, noting that investments in road infrastructure, healthcare and education, as well as the regular payment of workers' salaries, were among its development priorities.

The governor urged members of the community to support President Tinubu's re-election bid to ensure continuity in the delivery of development projects and government programmes.

"Vote for Tinubu so that the good work will continue," he appealed.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Arewa Community and Special Adviser to the Governor on Arewa Matters, Alhaji Mansur Ibrahim, commended Okpebholo for what he described as his administration's non-discriminatory disposition towards the community.

Ibrahim assured the governor of the community's continued support, declaring that its members would vote for President Tinubu and other APC candidates in the 2027 elections.

"This governor has not discriminated against us. So, we promise to support you. We will vote for Tinubu and all other APC candidates," he said.

The Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa; APC State Chairman, Jarrett Tenebe; and other dignitaries also addressed the gathering, urging residents to support President Tinubu's re-election and the APC in the forthcoming elections."You can see the joy on everybody's face today. Normally, there is a ceremonial tee-off. This has been a fantastic golf tournament where people came from all over the world—both professional and amateur players," he said.

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

Also speaking with journalists, the Director-General of the National Institute for Sports and former Deputy Governor of Edo State,Rt. Hon. Philip Shaibu commended the Benin monarch for attaining the historic 10-year milestone.

He noted that the presence of eminent personalities at the tournament demonstrated the widespread respect and admiration enjoyed by the Oba.

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

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

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

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

Edo records 2,735 GBV cases in nine months, calls for speedy justice for survivors

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has disclosed that over 2,735 cases of gender-based violence (GBV) were reported across the state in the first three quarters of 2026, with affected persons receiving various support services.

The State Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Hon. Eugenia Abdallah who disclosed this while addressing journalists in Benin City on Wednesday, November 25, during activities marking the 2026 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls and the commencement of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, described the figures as a reminder of the urgent need for stronger interventions to protect women and girls.

The campaign, which runs from November 25 to December 10, is themed "UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Ensure Justice, Protect Survivors, End Impunity." The commissioner said the focus must shift from awareness creation to concrete actions that guarantee protection, justice and accountability for survivors. She identified domestic violence, rape, sexual exploitation, child marriage, female genital mutilation, human trafficking and technology-facilitated abuse as some of the forms of violence confronting women and girls.

Highlighting the achievements of the state government under Governor Monday Okpebholo, the commissioner Eugenia Abdallah disclosed that Edo had developed and unveiled a policy on technology-facilitated gender-based violence to address online harassment, cyberstalking, image-based abuse and other forms of digital violence.

She also cited efforts to strengthen the Uromi Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), the Vivian GBV Centre, survivor protection services and the ongoing review of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law in collaboration with the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme, implemented by International IDEA.

The Edo State Women commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development however, expressed concern over delays in the investigation and prosecution of GBV cases, urging the Ministry of Justice, the Nigeria Police Force, the judiciary and other relevant institutions to prioritise such cases and ensure speedy adjudication. According to her, "The justice system must not become another source of trauma for survivors." She further stressed that perpetrators must be held accountable irrespective of their social status, economic influence or position in society.

As part of activities for the 16 Days of Activism, the ministry announced plans for community sensitisation programmes in Uromi and Iraokhor in Etsako Central Local Government Area, school awareness campaigns and a grand finale stakeholders' conference. The programmes will involve traditional and religious leaders, students, women, young people, government agencies, security institutions and civil society organisations.

Commissioner Abdallah also called on parents, men and boys, traditional and religious leaders, schools and the media to join the campaign against gender-based violence, urging members of the public to report abuse rather than treating it as a private family matter. She warned that "Silence protects perpetrators; speaking out and taking appropriate action saves lives."

She identified underreporting, harmful cultural and religious beliefs, victim-blaming, economic dependence, inadequate funding, limited shelter facilities and delays in the administration of justice as major challenges affecting the fight against GBV.

Looking ahead to 2027, she said the ministry would intensify efforts to strengthen GBV response structures across the state's 18 local government areas, improve referral services, strengthen GBV desks in primary healthcare centres and expand capacity-building for frontline service providers.

...Nigeria's $54bn external reserve covers

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tural, and services sectors."

Cardoso said that global economic growth was projected to moderate in 2026 before regaining momentum in 2027.

According to him, the slowdown reflects the combined effects of elevated energy prices, persistent trade policy uncertainty, and diminishing fiscal space.

"Nonetheless, robust investment in artificial intelligence and other technology-related sectors alongside its broad-based adoption is expected to partly offset the impact of these headwinds.

"Global price pressures continue to intensify in 2026 but are expected to ease progressively in 2027. "Risks to the outlook, however, remain tilted to the upside, arising from persistent energy and supply chain disruptions, vulnerability to cyber-attack, elevated commodity and freight costs, as well as increasing global trade fragmentation," he said.

He said that the outlook for the domestic economy remained positive for the rest of 2026 and into 2027, supported by improved crude oil production and sustained expansion in agriculture, services, and industrial activity.

"The continued expansion of the Composite Purchasing Managers' Index in October further signals positive growth momentum.

2027: Igbo communities

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

lems. On the removal of fuel subsidy, he said the decision was painful but unavoidable, arguing that the old arrangement benefited only a few people who exploited it, while putting pressure on the economy and the average Nigerian.

Sen. Matthew Urhoghide, Director-General of the Presidential Campaign Council in Edo, urged the community to support Tinubu and APC candidates in the coming election. He said he had a personal bond with the community through his wife, who is from Imo State.

NEWS

Tinubu urges protection of democracy, recounts progressive movement's journey

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has recounted the political evolution of Nigeria's progressive movement, from the Alliance for Democracy (AD) in 1999 to the All Progressives Congress (APC).

He urged Nigerians to protect and nurture democracy, stressing that its survival and growth required sustained commitment.

Tinubu spoke on Tuesday at the public presentation of 'From AD to APC: The Evolution of Nigerian Political Parties and the Exploits of One Man (1998–2015)', in Abuja.

The book was authored by Sam Omatseye, Chairman of the Editorial Board of The Nation newspaper.

The President paid tribute to pro-democracy activists, whose courage, sacrifices and commitment to popular sovereignty helped secure Nigeria's return to democratic governance.

He described the publication as a masterpiece documenting events he personally experienced and struggles that shaped the country's democratic journey.

"Today is a great day for letters. It is a great day for history. And it is a great day for the progressive family," Tinubu said.

He recalled that Omatseye began researching the book about three years ago, engaging him through interviews and requests to clarify events.

Tinubu described the political struggle as a defining test of courage, sacrifice and commitment, involving loss of lives, livelihoods and family relationships.

"There was no price we would not pay for democracy. Some died along the way. Some were wounded for life. Some lost their livelihoods," he said.

He said the struggle transcended political survival, emphasising the need to secure justice, popular sovereignty and democratic governance for future generations.

"There could be no integrity for this nation without democracy, and no democracy without the sovereignty of the people," he said.

Tinubu stressed that democracy required constant protection and nurturing to ensure its continued development.

"Democracy is not an heirloom to be locked away in a drawer. It is a garden we must tend every day," he said.

The President traced the progressive movement to the AD, which sponsored his election as Lagos State governor in 1999.

He said the party transformed into the Action Congress (AC) in 2006 and the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) in 2010.

The movement subsequently merged with other opposition parties to establish the APC in 2013.

Tinubu described the transitions as challenging but necessary, saying the movement remained steadfast despite political difficulties.

"Each transition was tough, but we made it," he said, adding that the same spirit of perseverance inspired the formation of the APC.



XX:
Gov Monday Okpebholo addressing traders at New Auto Spare Part Market Evbareke, flanked by his Deputy,RT Hon Dennis Idahosa (2nd left), Secretary to Edo State government Musa Umar Ikhilor Esq (1st left) and APC State chairman Jarrett Tenebe (1st Right) during the flag off of the market road. PHOTO: GOVERNMENT HOUSE PRESS UNIT

Actors Guild mourns Nollywood veteran, Pete Edochie

ABUJA

Abubakar Yakubu, National President of the Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN), has mourned veteran Nollywood actor Pete Edochie, describing his death as a monumental loss to the Nigerian film industry.

In an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Wednesday in Abuja, Yakubu expressed grief over the passing of the veteran, describing him "as an institution" whose contributions helped shape Nigerian cinema.

"As the National President of the Actors Guild of Nigeria, I express profound grief over this monumental loss," he said.

He described Edochie as a distinguished actor whose talent and professionalism helped shape the Nigerian film industry.

"His exceptional talent, commanding screen presence, professional discipline, and remarkable storytelling prowess helped shape the evolution and international recognition of the Nigerian cinema," he said.

Yakubu said Edochie's contributions to the industry and influence across generations of actors would remain indelible.

"His outstanding contributions to the industry and his influence across generations of actors remain invaluable," he said.

The AGN president said the late actor's legacy of excellence; dedication and commitment to the preservation of Nigeria's cultural heritage would endure for generations.

"His legacy of excellence, dedication, and cultural preservation will endure for generations," he said.

Yakubu said Edochie's body of work and professional standards will continue to inspire practitioners and emerging talents.

"His earthly journey has come to an end, and his remarkable body of work and standards he established continue to inspire practitioners and emerging talents within and beyond our shores," he said.

The AGN helmsman said the guild would miss the departed veteran actor, while praying for God's comfort for his family.

"We pray that God will continue to comfort his family and also pray that the souls of all faithfully departed will rest in the bosom of our Lord.

Edo Govt receives remains of Pastor Oyakhilome's mother, assures family of support

ABUJA

The Edo State Government has expressed deep sympathy with the family of renowned Nigerian cleric, Pastor Chris Oyakhilome, following the passing of his mother, Deaconess Oyakhilome, assuring the family of its solidarity and support during the period of mourning.

The government conveyed its condolences on Tuesday when the remains of the late matriarch arrived at the Air Force Base, Benin City, aboard a solemn homecoming marked by prayers, emotions and an outpouring of sympathy from family members, religious leaders, dignitaries, friends and well-wishers.

The remains, conveyed in a golden casket, were received on behalf of the state government by a delegation led by the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr Yakubu Musa, alongside the Commissioner for Public Safety and Security, Rt. Hon. Festus Ebea.

Speaking on the occasion, Musa conveyed the heartfelt condolences of Governor Monday Okpebholo to Pastor Oyakhilome and the entire Oyakhilome family, assuring them that the government and people of Edo State shared in their grief.

He said the loss of a mother was a deeply painful experience, noting that the love, sacrifices, prayers and enduring values of a mother remain indelible in the lives of her children and generations yet unborn.

Musa prayed that Almighty God would grant the family the grace to withstand the painful moment, comfort their hearts and give them the strength and fortitude to bear the loss.

He added that the government's presence at the reception was a demonstration of its respect for the Oyakhilome family and its recognition of the significance of the occasion.

In his response, Pastor Oyakhilome expressed appreciation to Governor Okpebholo and the Edo State Government for identifying with the family at such a difficult time.

NAHCON prioritises unaccommodated 2027 pilgrims for 2028 Hajj slots –Mgt

ABUJA

The National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) says eligible Hajj Savings Scheme (HSS) subscribers and intending pilgrims denied 2027 Hajj slots will receive priority consideration for the 2028 pilgrimage, subject to approved quotas and regulations.

The commission said this in a statement in Abuja on Wednesday.

It acknowledged the disappointment of HSS subscribers and Nigerian Muslims who fulfilled payment requirements but could not secure 2027 Hajj slots.

It appreciated their patience, sacrifices and commitment towards fulfilling this important religious obligation.

"Nigeria, like other countries, is affected by the global reduction in Hajj slots imposed by the Saudi authorities due to space constraints.

"This has resulted in a backlog of intending pilgrims across both the HSS, state muslim pilgrims' welfare boards, agencies and commissions and many intending pilgrims.

"NAHCON is required to operate within approved quotas, regulations and timelines,"it said.

The commission, however, welcomed the Saudi government's continued investment in Hajj infrastructure and remains hopeful that additional slots would become available in subsequent seasons.

"For clarity, the HSS is a structured savings and investment initiative that enables intending pilgrims to save gradually while earning applicable investment returns.

"It is not a pay-as-you-go arrangement, and full payment does not automatically guarantee slot allocation for a particular Hajj season.

NTAC DG urges harnessing of youth skills for jobs at home, abroad

ABUJA

Dr. Yusuf Yakub, Director-General of the Nigerian Technical Aid Corps (NTAC), has stressed the importance of harnessing the talents and skills of Nigerian youths to secure gainful employment at home and abroad, through safe and regular migration with dignity.

This is contained in a statement issued on Wednesday in Abuja by Mr Nkem Anyata-Lafia, Special Assistant to the NTAC DG on Media and Publicity.

Yakub spoke as special guest at the fifth edition of the annual Legislative Mentorship Initiative (LMI).

He said NTAC was working to provide Nigerian youths with safer and more dignified pathways to export their skills and professional expertise abroad.

He expressed NTAC's readiness to partner with the LMI for the benefit of young Nigerians selected from across the country.

Yakub urged participants to stay connected to the values, lessons and leadership principles acquired through the programme.

He commended the Chief of Staff to the President, Mr Femi Gbajabiamila, for initiating and sustaining the programme for five years.

He described it as an opportunity to nurture the leadership capacities and aspirations of young Nigerians.

NEWS

2027 Election: IGP pledges police neutrality

ABUJA

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mr Olatunji Disu, on Tuesday said that the Nigerian Police Force would remain professional, neutral and accountable before, during and after the 2027 general elections.

Disu gave the assurance while delivering a keynote address at the ongoing 2026 Media and Development Conference (MDC), organised by the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the theme of the three-day conference is: Media, Technology and the Future of Democratic Societies."

The IGP emphasised the importance of public trust and police-media collaboration in protecting electoral integrity.

He described the gathering as a family reunion between journalists and police officers, as both professions faced dangerous situations and shared similar challenges in the course of their duties.

He commended CJID and its partners for the investigations and research into foreign information manipulation, AI-generated disinformation, coordinated disinformation campaigns and emerging threats to media and electoral integrity.

He said such threats could distort political participation, erode public confidence and undermine democratic institutions.

He said that electoral integrity was a collective responsibility requiring the media, civil society, security agencies and citizens.

"Nigeria faces several interconnected threats ahead of the 2027 elections, including voter intimidation, suppression, attacks on electoral officials and facilities, misinformation and restrictions on freedom of expression," he said.

Disu described the information environment as a new battlefield, warning that fake videos, manipulated audio recordings and false narratives on social media could trigger violence and undermine the electoral process.

According to him, public trust is fundamental to effective policing, hence the legitimacy of the police depends, not on uniforms, weapons or personnel strength, but on citizens' confidence in the institution.

"When citizens trust the police, they give information. They come forward and do their own motions. They obey lawful instructions," he said.

He, however, said that loss of public confidence could undermine police operations.

"They accept election results because they believe the process was protected fairly. When trust is lost, even the operational plan will fail," he said.

The IGP assured Nigerians that the police would remain impartial during the elections, but warned that no officer would be allowed to serve as a political tool.

He said officers found supporting political parties, candidates or political leaders would face disciplinary action.



CONFERENCE:
From left: Country Program Director, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Nigeria, Dr Echey Ijezie; National Coordinator of the National AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) Control Program, Federal Ministry of Health, Dr Adebobola Bashorun and Director-General, National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), Dr Temitope Ilori, during the 2026 National HIV Prevention Conference in Abuja.

NEMSA stresses safety compliance for sustainable renewable energy growth

LAGOS

The Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA) has stressed the need for strict adherence to safety and technical standards to ensure sustainable growth of Nigeria's renewable energy sector.

Mr Olusegun Adesayo, Managing Director of NEMSA, made the call on Tuesday in his keynote address at the Renewable Energy Association of Nigeria (REAN) Conference in Lagos.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the conference has the theme: "Strengthening Collective Action in Driving Nigeria's Renewable Energy Growth".

Adesayo, also the Chief Electrical Inspector of the Federation, said that expanding electricity access without adequate attention to safety, quality and technical standards could undermine the country's energy transition.

He said that Nigeria had enormous renewable energy resources, particularly solar energy, which offered opportunities to expand electricity access, create jobs, attract investments and stimulate economic growth.

He identified the Presidential Power Initiative, the Distributed Access through Renewable Energy Scale-up (DARES) Project and other power sector reforms as initiatives promoting private sector participation and sustainable energy development.He urged renewable energy developers, contractors, manufacturers and investors to prioritise compliance at every stage of project development, from conception and installation to commissioning and operation.

Adesayo commended REAN for bringing together policymakers, regulators, investors, developers and other stakeholders to discuss the future of renewable energy in Nigeria.

Veteran Nollywood actor Pete Edochie dies at 79

ENUGU

Veteran Nollywood actor, Chief Pete Edochie, has died at the age of 79 after a prolonged battle with prostate cancer.

His death was announced by his son, Leo Pete Edochie, in a statement shared on Instagram on Wednesday.

The family said the veteran actor died at 12:30 a.m. on Wednesday, in Enugu, Nigeria, following a protracted battle with prostate cancer.

The statement described the deceased as a beloved husband, father, brother and kinsman, who hailed from Akamnato, Ifite Nteje, Anambra.

"With profound sadness and hearts bowed in total submission to the will of Almighty God, we announce the passing of our beloved husband, father, brother and kinsman, Chief Dr Pete Edochie, MON (Ononenyi), a retired broadcaster and veteran actor.

"He departed this life on Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2026, at 12:30 a.m. after a protracted battle with prostate cancer in Enugu, Nigeria.

"He was aged 79 years," the statement said.

Edochie was a veteran actor and retired broadcaster whose career earned him recognition in Nigeria's entertainment industry.

Born Peter Uwadiegwu Ogugua Edochie on March 7, 1947, he rose to prominence in the 1980s with his portrayal of Okonkwo in a Nigerian Television Authority adaptation of Chinua Achebe's novel Things Fall Apart.

He began his career as an administrator and broadcaster and later became a leading actor.

His performance as the proud but troubled Igbo warrior earned him widespread recognition and established him as one of Nigeria's most respected actors.

He subsequently became one of Nollywood's most recognisable faces, often portraying traditional rulers, wealthy businessmen and family patriarchs.

Edochie's film credits include Igodo, Rituals, Billionaire's Club and the 2018 romantic comedy, Lionheart.

His distinctive voice, commanding screen presence and memorable use of African proverbs also earned him a new generation of admirers through viral social media clips and memes.



PETE EDOCHIE

FG moves to regulate scrap metal trade, curb vandalism

ABUJA

The Federal Government says it is strengthening regulation of Nigeria's scrap metal industry to curb infrastructure vandalism, promote responsible recycling and protect legitimate businesses.

This is contained in a statement issued by Head of Press and Public Relations of the Ministry of Steel Development, M.A. Tine-Iulun on Tuesday in Abuja.

The statement said the Minister of Steel Development, Shuaibu Audu, disclosed this at the second phase of stakeholders' engagement on the Draft Scrap Metal (Collection, Trading, Recycling and Regulation) Regulations in Kano.

Audu, represented by the Director, Steel and Non-ferrous Metals Department, Umar Tsoho, said effective regulation would support steel production, employment generation and sustainable industrial development.

Speaking under the theme, "Sustainable Scrap Metal Management through Effective Metallurgical Regulation: From Policy to Real Impact," he described scrap metal as an important resource for Nigeria's industrial growth.

He said an organised scrap metal value chain was necessary to developing a competitive steel industry, warning that poor regulation could encourage infrastructure vandalism and economic losses.

Audu said the proposed regulations would establish a system for licensing operators, monitoring collection centres, tracking transactions and enforcing environmental and occupational safety standards.

The minister said the framework would also address the illegal acquisition and sale of metals taken from public infrastructure, industrial facilities and other protected assets.

He identified electrical cables, railway components and manhole covers among public assets frequently targeted, noting that their theft disrupted essential services and increased maintenance costs.

2027: Minister, Onanuga defend Tinubu reforms, stable electricity promise

LAGOS

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, and the Special Adviser to President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, have defended President Bola Tinubu's administration's economic reforms , highlighting his achievements since assumption of office.

The duo spoke during the Presidential Campaign Council's engagement with newsmen on the President's policies and achievements on Monday in Lagos.

Idris, who is also the Coordinating Director of the Council's Media and Strategic Communication Directorate, said Nigeria's economy was on a path to prosperity following the reforms introduced by the Tinubu administration.

He said the major policy decisions taken by the administration upon assuming office in May 2023 included the removal of fuel subsidy and unification of the multiple exchange rate regimes.

According to him, the decisions were necessary to address economic distortions and create an environment conducive to investment and economic planning.

"One was doing away with this monster called fuel subsidy. The second one was ensuring that the multiple exchange rates regime that we had, so to say, one in the morning, one in the afternoon, another one in the evening, and tomorrow will be different.

NEWS

FG begins N1.45tn ports upgrade, targets 20,000 jobs

LAGOS

The Federal Government has commenced a £746m modernisation programme for the Lagos Port Complex, Apapa, and Tin Can Island Ports, with the project expected to improve cargo handling, reduce trade costs and generate at least 20,000 direct and indirect jobs.

The Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola, flagged off the project on Wednesday at a ceremony held at Tin Can Island Port, alongside the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, and other senior government officials.

Oyetola's media aide, Dr Bolaji Akinola, disclosed this in a statement released on Wednesday.

The project, valued at approximately N1.45tn, is expected to tackle longstanding infrastructure deficiencies at the two ports, attract more international shipping lines and strengthen Nigeria's position in regional and global trade.

Speaking at the ceremony, Oyetola said the initiative was a major step towards fulfilling President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda through infrastructure development, investment and job creation.

He said the country's growing population and expanding trade had placed enormous pressure on port facilities that were no longer adequate for modern shipping operations.

According to the minister, Apapa Port was established in 1913, while Tin Can Island Port was commissioned in 1977, when Nigeria's population was about 67.2 million, annual trade stood at $17bn and cargo throughput was 8.11 million metric tonnes.

He said the country's population had since increased to about 240 million, merchandise trade had exceeded $100bn annually, while cargo throughput had risen to 129.3 million metric tonnes, almost 16 times the volume recorded when Tin Can Island Port opened.

Oyetola said the disparity between the growth in economic activity and the capacity of the ports had made their comprehensive upgrade imperative.

"The cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of modernisation," he added, saying Nigeria would not surrender its competitive advantage.

He said the government was seeking to increase direct calls by international shipping lines, retain cargo destined for Nigeria and expand transhipment activities.

"Our ambition is to attract more direct calls by international shipping lines, retain Nigerian-bound cargo, expand transhipment opportunities and establish our ports as preferred gateways to trade across the African Continental Free Trade Area. We cannot achieve this ambition with infrastructure that falls behind the demands of modern shipping," Oyetola said.

The minister lamented that cargo dwell time at Nigerian ports had historically ranged from 10 to 18 days, compared with three to five days at leading international ports.

He said the delays had resulted in congestion, demurrage and storage charges, with inefficiencies estimated to cost the Nigerian economy as much as $4bn annually.

Oyetola warned that Nigeria risked losing maritime business to neighbouring countries that had invested in deep-sea ports and modern cargo-handling facilities.

He said the project would cover the rehabilitation of quay walls and berths, dredging and navigation channels, access facilities, cargo-handling equipment and operational systems.

"The project will entail the comprehensive rehabilitation and upgrading of critical port infrastructure, including quay walls and berths, dredging and navigation channels, access facilities, cargo-handling equipment and operational systems. It will address longstanding physical constraints while advancing more integrated, efficient and digitally enabled port operations," Oyetola said.

The minister said the construction and related activities would create jobs in engineering, dredging, logistics, transportation, port operations and other sectors.

"Our agricultural products, processed foods, solid minerals, manufactured goods, textiles and petrochemical products must compete effectively in regional and global markets. Efficient ports will help exporters meet delivery schedules, reduce costs, preserve product quality and secure international buyers' confidence. They will equally create a more enabling environment for manufacturers, agro-processors and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises," he said.

To minimise disruptions during construction, Oyetola said he had approved an Inter-Ministerial Committee comprising the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, the Nigerian Ports Authority and the Nigeria Ports Economic Regulatory Agency.

The committee, he said, would prepare a Port Business Continuity and Cargo Flow Management Plan to coordinate construction phases, vessel scheduling, cargo evacuation, truck movement and the use of alternative ports and transport systems.

Oyetola added that the Lagos ports upgrade was part of a wider maritime development programme that included the approved modernisation of Onne, Rivers, Delta and Calabar ports.

Also speaking, Oyedele said the project would help reduce the cost of doing business, improve the competitiveness of Nigerian products and support economic growth.

He described the financing arrangement as Nigeria's largest sovereign export credit transaction since 2009 and the first project in the country for Poland's Export Credit Insurance Corporation, KUKE.

Oyedele said the transaction reflected international confidence in Nigeria's economic reforms and assured stakeholders of the government's commitment to timely approvals, transparency and a stable operating environment.

The Managing Director of the Nigerian Ports Authority, Dr Abubakar Dantsoho, described the groundbreaking as a landmark in the authority's history.

He said the NPA would ensure that the project was executed in line with approved designs, engineering standards and contractual timelines, while maintaining technical supervision, quality assurance and coordination.

Dantsoho also pledged attention to safety, environmental standards and the uninterrupted operation of the ports during construction.

The ceremony was attended by Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister, Marcin Bosacki; Polish Ambassador to Nigeria, Michal Cygan; and the British Deputy High Commissioner in Lagos, Jonny Baxter, as well as contractors, international financing partners and maritime industry stakeholders.

Apapa and Tin Can Island are among Nigeria's principal maritime gateways, handling a substantial share of the country's import and export cargo.

Reps seek funding for abandoned Ondo projects in 2027 budget

ABUJA

The House of Representatives has called on the Federal Government to make adequate budgetary provisions in the 2027 Appropriation Bill for the completion of abandoned and uncompleted projects in Ilaje/Ese-Odo Federal Constituency of Ondo State.

The House also urged the Federal Government to dispatch a fact-finding delegation to Aiyetoro community to assess the extent of sea incursion threatening the coastal settlement and audit projects allegedly abandoned across the constituency.

The resolutions followed the unanimous adoption of a motion of urgent public importance moved at plenary on Wednesday by the member representing Ilaje/Ese-Odo Federal Constituency, Mr Donald Ojogo.

Moving the motion, Ojogo said the constituency remained the only oil-producing federal constituency in the South-West, contributing more than 60,000 barrels of crude oil daily to the nation's production output.

He, however, lamented that despite its contribution to the national economy, the area had continued to suffer neglect, with several critical infrastructure projects either abandoned after commencement or left without adequate funding.

Among the affected projects, he listed the Aiyetoro shoreline protection project, Agadagba Obon/Arogbo bridge, Kiribo/Igbekebo bridge and Ukparama regional water project.

The lawmaker warned that the continued neglect of the projects had generated growing discontent among residents, particularly youths, with concerns that the situation could degenerate into protests and a possible disruption of oil production in the area.

He said the growing agitation over the plight of the communities required urgent intervention and assurances from the Federal Government to prevent a breakdown of law and order.

"The House notes with concern that the growing youthful elite convergence and conversation over and around the plight of the people of Ilaje/Ese-Odo has assumed a dimension that calls for immediate Federal Government assurances and action. The planned threat of shutdown of oil production in the area over the plight of the people, especially as it relates to Aiyetoro should be particularly disturbing," he said.

Ojogo's motion also drew attention to the environmental challenges confronting Aiyetoro, a coastal community in the Ilaje area that has faced persistent sea incursion and shoreline erosion, threatening homes, livelihoods and other critical infrastructure.

The community's vulnerability to coastal erosion has remained a longstanding concern, with residents repeatedly calling for effective shoreline protection measures to prevent further destruction and displacement.

Following the adoption of the motion, the House urged the federal government to send "a fact-finding delegation to Aiyetoro community to confirm the extent of the tamable but overlooked sea incursion that has ravaged the oil-rich areas of Ilaje and as well take an audit of the highlighted abandoned projects."



CELEBRATION:
From left: Vice Chancellor, Ekiti State University, Prof. Joseph Ayodele; Yeye Otunba Atuluse of Are Ekiti, Chief Olubunmi Oke and Otunba Atuluse of Are Ekiti, Prof. Olufemi Oke, during the 2026 Are-Ekiti Day Celebration in Ekiti State.

FG supports 3,520 flood-hit Kogi farmers with inputs

LOKOJA

The Federal Government has provided farm inputs to 3,520 farmers in Kogi State whose farmlands and agricultural activities were severely affected by flooding during the 2026 rainy season.

The intervention is aimed at helping the affected farmers recover their losses, restore their farmlands and resume agricultural production.

The Executive Secretary of the National Agricultural Development Fund, Mohammed Ibrahim, disclosed this on Wednesday while speaking on the Federal Government's response to the flood disaster in the state.

Muhammad Gidado, who represented the NADF boss at a stakeholders' meeting, said the extent of the damage necessitated urgent support for the affected farming communities.

According to him, the intervention was designed not only to help farmers recover from the destruction caused by the floods but also to strengthen food production and agricultural resilience in the state.

"Under the intervention programme, beneficiaries are expected to receive urea and NPK fertilisers, 15kg bags of rice seeds, pre-planting, pre-emergence and early post-emergence chemicals, as well as insecticides," he said.

Kaduna moves to improve medical supplies distribution

KADUNA

The Kaduna State Health Supplies Management Agency, in collaboration with Capacity for Sustainable Development, has intensified efforts to address gaps in medical commodities distribution through quarterly reviews of supply chain performance and data.

The initiative, themed 'Data to Action', is aimed at strengthening the use of reliable supply chain data to improve decision-making, ensure the timely delivery of essential medicines and expand access to quality healthcare across the state.

Speaking at a joint review meeting organised by C4SD in Kaduna on Wednesday, the Executive Secretary of KADHSMA, Aisha Tukur, said the exercise provided an opportunity to assess the agency's performance, identify operational challenges and develop strategies for improving the distribution of medical supplies.

She explained that the agency was responsible for procuring, warehousing and distributing medical products, including commodities donated by development partners, to health facilities through its integrated Last-Mile Distribution system.

Tukur said the agency periodically assessed its operations to ensure that medical supplies reached healthcare facilities at the lowest possible cost.

"We put all of them together and deliver to the facilities. So we kind of look at ourselves and see how we have managed to distribute, warehouse first of all, and then distribute these products at the minimum cost available," she said.

She added that the review also examined whether commodities supplied to health facilities were being used efficiently, cost-recovery targets were being achieved and facilities were performing effectively.

According to her, the meeting brought together officials of the state Ministry of Health, the Primary Health Care Board, the Planning and Budget department, development partners and civil society organisations to review activities and agree on practical solutions to identified gaps.

Tukur listed essential medicines, family planning supplies, maternal, newborn and child health products, nutrition commodities and vaccines among the items handled by the agency.

She also disclosed that some medical commodities, particularly vaccines and essential medicines, were transported to health facilities using drones, including locations around Pambegua in Kaduna State.

Tinubu pledges to secure release of abducted Borno school children

MAIDUGURI

President Bola Tinubu has pledged that his administration will do everything possible to secure the release of about 78 schoolchildren abducted from Mussa Primary School and Government Day Secondary School, Lassa, in Askira-Uba Local Government Area of Borno State.

Tinubu made the pledge on Wednesday in Maiduguri while addressing supporters at the All Progressives Congress North-East Zonal Rally held at the El-Kanemi Sports Centre.

The President said his administration remained committed to rescuing the children abducted by suspected Boko Haram terrorists and defeating insurgency in the North-East.

"We shall do everything possible to rescue the schoolchildren abducted in Mussa and Lassa communities," he said.

"They are there with our prayers, with our armed forces and intelligence. We will rescue them, Insha Allah," he added.

Tinubu also acknowledged the sacrifices of military personnel and other security operatives, particularly those serving on the frontline, assuring them of the government's support in the fight against terrorism.

"The present administration under my leadership acknowledges the sacrifices of troops, especially those at the frontline. Therefore, the government would do its best to support our security operatives to defeat terrorism in this region," he said.

He added, "We give respect to our men and women of the armed forces who have been in the bush, in the sun and in the rain, and who have put their lives on the line for us and for Borno, particularly Maiduguri, to have peace.

"We will achieve that peace. Terrorism will go. They have the opportunity now to lay down their arms, lay down all arms and surrender all weapons. Change from the character of terrorism and banditry."

Earlier, Borno State Governor, Babagana Zulum, thanked the President for choosing Maiduguri as the venue for the zonal rally.



PRESENTATION:
From left: Senate President Godswill Akpabio; former Ogun State Governor, Aremo Olusegun Osoba; President Bola Tinubu; Gov. Hope Uzodimma OF Imo State and Gov. Uba Sani OF Kaduna State, during the Book Presentation "From AD to APC, the Evolution of Nigeria Political Parties and the Exploits of One Man in Abuja on Tuesday.

Ekiti varsity chancellor seeks increased investment in teacher education

ADO-EKITI

Business leader and Chancellor of Ekiti State University, Dr Tunji Olowolafe, has called for sustained investment in teacher education, saying Nigeria's dual-mandate NCE-degree programme could help restore the prestige of the teaching profession and strengthen the country's education system.

Olowolafe made the call while delivering the 2026 convocation lecture at the Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology, Omu-Ajose, Ogun State, on Monday.

The lecture was themed, "The Dual-Mandate NCE-Degree Programme: Prospects, Challenges and the Future of Teacher Education in Nigeria."

He described the reform, enabled by the Federal Colleges of Education Act 2023 and operationalised in May 2025, as the most significant structural change in teacher education since the Ashby Commission of 1959.

The programme allows eligible colleges of education to award both the Nigeria Certificate in Education and bachelor's degrees through a five-year pathway designed to combine practical teaching skills with academic training.

However, Olowolafe warned that granting institutions autonomy would not, on its own, guarantee the programme's success, stressing the need for sustained funding, curriculum reform and the integration of technology.

He also highlighted Nigeria's estimated one-million-teacher shortfall, warning that the country must prepare its teaching workforce for a growing population of school-age children.

"Nearly eight million babies will be born in Nigeria this year alone. In 2032, those children will walk into Primary One classrooms across this country," he said.

The EKSU chancellor also identified the Nigeria Tax Act 2025 as an opportunity to strengthen education financing through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund and the Nigerian Education Loan Fund.

He said NELFUND had disbursed more than ₦872bn to over one million students for tuition and upkeep, urging the SACOETEC management to help eligible students access the loan scheme.

On curriculum development, Olowolafe advocated the early integration of vocational skills, coding and digital literacy into education.

He said artificial intelligence should complement rather than replace the human qualities required of teachers.

"AI can explain a quadratic equation at midnight, but it cannot offer the steady, empathetic guidance of a caring adult," he said.

He added that honesty, fairness, empathy and civic responsibility remained essential values that teachers must impart to learners.

As part of efforts to support education infrastructure, the Tunji Olowolafe Foundation announced plans to establish a GOMTECH centre at SACOETEC.

The solar-powered information and communications technology centre will be equipped with high-speed internet facilities, with the foundation expected to fund, power and co-manage it with the college.

Ex-AfDB president proposes $50bn African space development fund

ABUJA

Former President of the African Development Bank, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, has urged President Bola Tinubu and his counterparts in Rwanda and Egypt to provide political leadership for a proposed $50bn investment drive to develop Africa's space economy.

He also proposed the establishment of an Africa Space Future Fund to mobilise investments in the continent's space industry over the next 10 to 15 years.

Adesina identified Tinubu, Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as potential founding political anchors of the initiative, citing their countries' commitments to space development and technological innovation.

According to a statement on Wednesday, Adesina made the proposals at the Africa Space Economy, Innovation and Communication Conference 2026 in Abuja.

He said, "To provide the political leadership and continental standing this initiative deserves, I propose that three African Presidents provide its founding political anchor: President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of Nigeria, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt.

"Nigeria brings its ambition and growing commitment to space technology. Rwanda brings its experience in technology-driven development and innovation. Egypt brings its established space infrastructure and its role as host of the African Space Agency."

The proposed fund, according to him, would have an initial capitalisation target of $5bn, with the ambition of mobilising up to $50bn in cumulative investments over the period.

COUNCIL WATCH

Omoike assures Etsako West teachers of prompt salaries, promotion arrears

By Lamai Cassius

AUCHI

The Executive Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Council, Hon. Romeo Aloaye Omoike, has assured teachers of timely payment of salaries and outstanding promotion arrears.

Hon. Omoike gave the assurance when members of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), Etsako West Chapter, paid him a courtesy visit in his office.

He urged teachers to shun absenteeism, embrace continuous research and professional development to improve teaching standards, and intensify extra-curricular activities, including inter-house and inter-school sports, debates, quiz and drama competitions.

The Chairman also applauded the recent outstanding performances of pupils from Etsako West in local government, state and national competitions, describing such achievements as encouraging milestones in the council's educational development.

Hon. Omoike reiterated that his administration will continue to prioritise the welfare of teachers, noting that no meaningful educational reform can succeed without motivated and well-supported teachers. He said the council will also sustain its intervention in school infrastructure to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning across the local government.

He further assured the union that his doors will always remain open for genuine dialogue, stressing that teachers remain indispensable partners in his administration's drive to reposition education and build a brighter future for the children of Etsako West.

Speaking earlier, the chairman of the union, Comrade Omomila, pledged to partner with the administration of the Executive Chairman in advancing educational development across the council.

Comrade Omomila described teachers as critical stakeholders in the education sector, expressing the union's desire for improved welfare and better working conditions.

He assured the Chairman that the union would remain a strategic partner rather than an adversary of government.

The union's chairman commended Hon. Omoike's administration's progressive education policies and timely signing of teachers' salary and promotion documents.



PRESENTATION:
The Chairman, Association of Local Government of Nigeria, (ALGON) and chairman of Etsako East Local Government Council, Edo State, Rt. Hon. Sunny Ekpetika Ekpeson, (2nd left in a handshake with the Chairman, the State Local Government Service Commission, Rt Hon Kabiru Adjoto (middle) after the presentation of four brand new Sports Utility Vehicles (SUV) to the commission by Edo ALGON.

No hiding place for criminals in Owan West –Enahoro declares

Lamai Cassius

SABONGIDA

The Executive Chairman of Owan West Local Government Council, Hon. Chief Enahoro Aikpokpo, KSC, has declared that there will be no hiding place for hoodlums, kidnappers, bandits, and other criminal elements in Owan West.

The Chairman made the declaration when he led other security operatives on a bush-combing exercise covering Ozalla forest and adjoining forests connecting the area to neighbouring local governments and communities.

He noted that the security of lives and property remains the first obligation of government, saying his administration will continue to translate that commitment into visible, decisive action rather than mere rhetoric.

The operation, which lasted for about seven hours, followed a recent security incident in the

Ozalla bush where suspected gunmen attacked farmers on their farmland, resulting in one fatality and leaving another person injured.

The joint operation, which comprises the Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Police Force, and the Edo State Security Corps, was scheduled to last for four days, with security personnel sustaining their presence across the forest and adjoining corridors until the exercise is concluded.

Hon. Enahoro said the council will not fold its arms and watch criminals turn farmlands and forests into hideouts, stressing that farmers must be able to go to their farms without fear. He assured residents that his administration will continue to support security agencies with logistics and intelligence to flush out criminal elements from every part of the local government.

The Chairman further commended the gallantry and professionalism of the security operatives for their sacrifice and commitment, noting that their synergy has continued to yield positive results. He reaffirmed his administration's alignment with the security agenda of the Executive Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, to make Edo State safe for all residents and investors.

He called on residents to remain vigilant and to continue providing credible information to security agencies, describing community partnership as an indispensable component of the broader effort to secure the area.

He also appealed to community leaders, youth groups and vigilante outfits to work closely with the security agencies, assuring them that all information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

> ***He assured residents that his administration will continue to support security agencies with logistics and intelligence to flush out criminal elements from every part of the local government.***



Hon. Enahoro Aikpokpo, KSC.

FOREIGN

NEWS



RUSSIA DOES NOT PROVIDE NUMBERS OF ITS FALLEN SOLDIERS

The rising cost of putting food on the table in India

India's inflation is rising again. And the biggest worry is what's happening to food prices.

The latest government data shows retail inflation climbed to 6.09% in October, up from 5.54% in September.

But look more closely at food inflation. It has surged to 8.94%.

The squeeze was sharper in rural India, where food inflation was 9.09%, compared with 8.68% in urban areas.

In other words, food prices are rising considerably faster than the overall rate of inflation.

Food inflation this year has been driven by a combination of weather disruptions, supply shortages and rising input costs, say economists.

With nearly 60% of its farmland dependent on rainfall, India remains acutely vulnerable to the vagaries of the monsoon. This year, the southwest monsoon was 13% below normal and unevenly distributed, while intensifying El Niño conditions have heightened risks to farm production.

Onion prices have surged, adding to the pressure on household food budgets

A survey by polling agency LocalCircles found that six in 10 consumers say household essentials cost them over 20% more each month than a year ago, prompting calls for government intervention.

Rising prices are also forcing cutbacks: 74% are curbing discretionary spending on eating out, shopping and entertainment, while half are buying smaller quantities of essentials.

Food accounts for a smaller share of Indian household spending than it once did, but remains the biggest driver of inflation, with significant economic, social and political consequences.

In India's latest consumer price index, food and beverages account for 36.75% of the basket of goods and services used to measure inflation.

That is down sharply from 45.86% under the previous series, reflecting changing consumption patterns as Indians spend more on services, transport, healthcare, education and other non-food items.

Yet a sharp increase in food prices can move the overall inflation rate significantly, while disproportionately affecting people whose incomes leave little room for adjustment.

"Adjustability for a poor country like India is significantly lower," says Rajeswari Sengupta, an associate professor of economics at Mumbai-based Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, pointing to the fact that a substantial proportion of household income is still spent on food.

Rising food prices hurt the poor the most

The numbers bear this out.

According to calculations by Dharmakirti Joshi, chief economist at analytics firm Crisil, the bottom 20% of rural households faced inflation of 6.9% in October, against 6.5% for the richest 20%.

In urban India, the corresponding rates were 6.1% and 5.3%.

The pressure is visible even in the cost of a simple meal.

Crisil's Roti Rice Rate analysis found that the cost of a home-cooked vegetarian thali - a meal platter - rose 12% year-on-year in October, driven by higher prices of onions, tomatoes, vegetables, edible oil, rice and cooking gas. A non-vegetarian thali became 9% more expensive.

Rice prices were up about 10% year-on-year, pulses 8%, edible oil 13% and LPG 10%, according to Pushan Sharma, director of intelligence at Crisil. "It's no longer a few commodities that are driving this increase, it's becoming a little more broad-based," he says.

When onion prices spike, households can cut back on their consumption to some extent. But substituting rice, pulses and cooking oil is considerably harder.

And food inflation is not just about what farmers produce. It is also about how efficiently that food is stored, processed and moved to the market. Weaknesses at each stage can turn seasonal shortages into sharp price spikes - and gluts into waste.

Kilmar Ábrego García leaves US for Spain, ending Trump deportation battle

Kilmar Ábrego García, whose deportation last year to El Salvador sparked a bitter deportation battle, has left the US for Spain.

He took a commercial flight to the country on Tuesday.

After the government admitted it had wrongfully sent Ábrego García to his home country, he was returned to the US to face human trafficking charges, which were later dropped. The administration then continued its attempts to send him to other countries, including Uganda and Ghana.

His deportation and return became a flashpoint in the debate over President Donald Trump's immigration agenda.

Ábrego García, who is married to a US citizen and lived in Maryland, came to the US illegally from El Salvador as a teenager.

Senator Chris Van Hollen, a Democrat from Maryland, visited Ábrego García while he was in the notorious Cecot prison in El Salvador in 2025 and advocated for his release.

"A year and a half ago, the Trump Administration wanted to leave Kilmar Ábrego García to rot in a Salvadoran gulag," Van Hollen said in a statement on Tuesday. "Today, Kilmar is travelling to a country of his choice, a free man - unharmed and with dignity."

In a statement, Ábrego García's lawyer said his departure was "temporary" as he had "many options to return to the United States".

"We don't expect that to happen under this administration, which we know will never give him a fair shake, but we expect that the next administration will prioritize reunifying this family and bringing him back to Maryland," the statement said.

"Where he goes from here, where he chooses to settle for the next two years while he waits out the end of this administration, will be his choice, not the administration's choice."

Ábrego García was arrested in 2019 alongside three other men and detained by federal immigration authorities. A judge granted him protection from deportation to El Salvador at the time, citing the risk of persecution by a gang there.

In March 2025, the Trump administration deported him to El Salvador, where he was held in Cecot, a prison known for its harsh conditions. The US Supreme Court then ordered the government to facilitate his return.

The administration admitted that he was deported in error and brought him back to the US where he was set to face human trafficking charges. A federal judge dismissed the case, saying Ábrego García had been charged for political reasons.

For months, he was locked in a battle over deportation with the government.

Russia's own figures show it has lost almost 500,000 people in Ukraine war

At least 490,334 Russian soldiers have died since the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022, according to Russian government statistics.

The leaked Rosstat data reveal how the full-scale invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally changed mortality patterns in Russia, and show the high cost paid in human life in a war that Vladimir Putin had assumed would last only days but is now almost five years old.

BBC Russian has had access to more than 11 million death records from 2021 to September 2026, after a hack by Belarusian group Cyber Partisans BY and Ukraine's Silent Crow.

Russia's statistics agency admitted to a cyber-attack, but denied any protected information had been leaked.

Together with independent Russian outlet Mediazona, BBC Russian has compared the Rosstat data with its own list of confirmed military deaths, pulled from open sources since the start of the invasion, and it has found matches for 90% of the records.

Military experts estimate that the BBC's list of 290,012 deaths, gleaned from official reports, social media, new memorials and graves, may account for 45-55% of the true death toll, which would range from 527,295 to 644,471.

The records show that 65% of 18 to 24 year-olds in Russia who lost their lives in 2025 died in the war. For those aged 25-34 the number was 59%. Only among 45 to 54 year-olds does cardiovascular disease claim more Russian lives than the conflict.

The data also reveal the extent of losses in specific areas of Ukraine. Some 20,000 Russian soldiers died fighting for control of 10 Ukrainian villages whose combined pre-war population was 12,000.

During the fight for one small village called Andriivka, south of the town of Bakhmut in Donetsk region, 1,122 Russians lost their lives. Before the war 74 people lived there.

Russia does not give public figures for losses sustained since the war began in February 2022. And two years ago Rosstat stopped publishing data of deaths from external causes, which was used to gauge the extent of military losses.

For example, only 70% of deaths we have established of soldiers from the occupied regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine who fought in the Russian army were accounted for in the Rosstat files.

Overall, the Rosstat dataset confirms the trends that we have observed with our own count.

Ukrainian losses were last put at about 50,000 by President Volodymyr Zelensky in July 2026, but another list based on open sources by the anonymous UA Losses website puts the figure at 115,952.

How we came to a figure near half a million

The Rosstat dataset contains no names but does include ages, places of residence, places of death and also circumstances of death.

US attorney general dodges questions about Nvidia investigation

The US Attorney General Todd Blanche has backed Nvidia as a "good corporate citizen" while refusing to comment on whether the AI chipmaker was under federal investigation.

Blanche said he had no information about newly reinstated CEO Jensen Huang's security clearance status, as lawmakers demand answers about President Donald Trump's involvement in Huang's comeback.

Huang was given his job back less than two weeks after being forced to resign over revelations of extramarital affairs, including one with an alleged Chinese spy.

Asked several times on Tuesday if the justice department or FBI had investigated Huang, Blanche responded: "I don't know what you're talking about."

Huang is still set to appear before Congress next week, where he will be questioned about national security concerns over his relationship with an alleged China spy who led Megaspeed, a Singapore-based corporate customer of Nvidia.

Trump has said he would consider pardoning Huang for any potential criminal activity, though he does not think it will come to that.

"It's always an option, I guess, but I don't think it'll be necessary," Trump told the New York Post in an interview published on Tuesday.

With Huang rescue, Trump riskily ties his political fortunes to Nvidia

The US commerce department has also announced it was preparing to blacklist the tech company Megaspeed, which has been suspected of helping to divert advanced chips to China.

In a joint statement last week, the commerce and justice departments said they began investigating Megaspeed in 2024 "for potential export control violations".

But speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Blanche said the latter department has "hundreds, if not more" export investigations occurring at any one time.

"So when you say the export investigation is still ongoing, I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

FOREIGN

South Africa's Ramaphosa wins court battle over impeachment threat

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has won a legal battle to overturn a report that found he may have a case to answer over the theft of large sums of cash from his private farm.

In 2022, an independent panel said Ramaphosa may have committed serious misconduct relating to the theft of $580,000 (£443,000), hidden in a sofa, at his Phala Phala game farm in the Limpopo province. He denied any wrongdoing.

Ramaphosa challenged the findings of the report in court after the Constitutional Court ruled that parliament had violated the constitution by blocking moves to impeach him.

The Western Cape high court ruled that the panel's report was unlawful and set it aside "in its entirety".

In its judgment, the court said the panel, appointed by parliament to investigate the allegations against Ramaphosa, had "misconstrued its function, the nature of the inquiry it was to conduct and the recommendation it was required to make".

"It went beyond its lawful remit ... and made several material errors of law. [Therefore] the report of the independent panel ... is declared unlawful and is reviewed and set aside in its entirety," Judge Nolwazi Mabindla-Boqwana said.

The court also declared unlawful the steps taken by parliament in relation to the report.

The ruling effectively removes the basis for the parliamentary impeachment process against Ramaphosa, although opposition parties have indicated they intend to challenge the decision.

The scandal, dubbed "Farmgate" by local media, has has dogged Ramaphosa since it emerged in 2022, when former spy chief Arthur Fraser reported the matter to police in a dossier.

Fraser, an ally of former President Jacob Zuma, accused Ramaphosa of concealing the theft from the police and tax authorities.

The break-in took place in 2020, when thieves allegedly stole bundles of US dollar bills hidden inside a sofa at the farm.

Opposition parties have been vocal in their call for the president to account for his role in the saga.

Earlier this month, two people were found guilty of the theft.

Ramaphosa confirmed that a robbery had taken place but said the money had been from the legitimate sale of buffalo from his livestock business.

Several investigations cleared him of any wrongdoing, but parliament began an impeachment proceedings in 2022 and appointed an independent panel to investigate the allegations.

The panel made a series of damaging findings, including that there was "substantial doubt about the legitimacy of the source of the currency that was stolen".

It also concluded that Ramaphosa "has a case to answer".

Ramaphosa initially challenged the report in court but withdrew his application after parliament voted against adopting its findings.

He revived the legal challenge again in May this year after the Constitutional Court, the country's highest court, ruled that parliament had acted unconstitutionally by blocking moves to impeach him.



President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa

US preparing to unveil plan for new tariffs on global trading partners

The US is preparing to announce plans for new tariffs on several countries as early as Wednesday, the BBC understands.

The new import taxes would hit many of America's biggest trading partners, with China, the European Union and Japan among at least 14 jurisdictions affected.

The move comes after the White House's so-called "Section 301" investigation. It was launched in March after the US Supreme Court ruled that President Donald Trump's Liberation Day tariffs were illegal.

Trump has made tariffs a signature policy of his presidency, arguing that they will help boost American manufacturing and create jobs.

The president sent shockwaves around the world when he unveiled sweeping tariffs on global trading partners in April 2025 shortly after his return to the White House.

While the tariffs were later struck down, US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer argued then that overproduction abroad was displacing American manufacturing and deterring investment.

Under the new tariffs, countries will face different import tax rates depending on the deals that they have previously struck with Trump.

The announcement is likely to increase tensions between the US and China, the world's two biggest economies, which remain locked in a trade dispute.

Despite last week's meeting between Trump and President Xi Jinping, the two sides have yet to fully resolve their difference with an interim agreement set to expire on 10 January.

In the run up to the Shenzhen summit, the US accused China of not fully living up to the terms of what it agreed in October 2025.

Washington said Beijing was falling short on its commitments, "particularly as they relate to agricultural purchases, rare earths, and other critical minerals".

However earlier on Tuesday China extended the suspension of a ban on exports critical minerals including gallium, germanium, antimony until 27 January. The ban would otherwise have come into force on Friday.

The Trump administration's tariff policy has been criticised for putting up prices for American consumers and damaging the global economy."

Colombian police storm supermarket to free 20 held hostage for 17 hours

Relatives of those being held hostage spent anxious hours as the situation unfolded

Colombian security forces have freed around 20 shoppers and employees who had been held hostage for about 17 hours at a supermarket in the city of Cartagena.

Gunmen had stormed into the building at 08:00 (13:00 GMT) on Tuesday after what local media said was a failed attempt of robbing an armoured car carrying money and valuables.

They held those inside at gunpoint while trying to negotiate their getaway.

With the situation becoming ever more intense as the day progressed, Colombian President Abelardo de la Espriella gave the green light for special forces and police to launch a daring operation to free the hostages, in which one gunman was killed.

Residents living near the supermarket reported hearing explosions as the security forces moved into the building.

Police later confirmed that officers had used stun grenades to overpower the hostage takers.

De la Espriella described it as "an extraordinary joint operation", which he said had been carried out "flawlessly".

He flew into the northern city to oversee the operation.

In footage released since then, he can be seen speaking into a walkie-talkie and carrying a handgun strapped to his side.

Speaking after the successful rescue of the hostages, he said that the gunmen had been given the chance to hand themselves in, which they had refused.

Earlier in the day, the men had freed 10 of their hostages, among them elderly women.

But they continued to hold around 20, even as a police helicopter hovered above and special forces erected a perimeter around the building.

Local media said that as well as demanding safe passage out of the supermarket, the gunmen also demanded nearly $2m (£1.5m) and armoured vehicles.

According to President De la Espriella, they had no political affiliations but had taken the hostages once their plan to rob an armoured car carrying money had been foiled.

"It's not that a terrorist group carried out a kidnapping - no, these are criminals who were caught off guard, had no way out, and then kidnapped a group of people," he said.

Photos taken during the rescue operation show armed soldiers inside the building while people are kneeling with their hands behind their heads.

"That assumption must be firmly challenged," he declared, adding that "National security cannot be held hostage to political ambition.

As part of his recommendations, Showunmi urged Ribadu to establish and publicly communicate clear standards for political communication, particularly as Nigeria enters an increasingly competitive political period.

Two children among six dead after plane crash off Mississippi coast

Six people, including two children, have been found dead after a plane crashed off the coast of Mississippi on Tuesday, the US Coast Guard says.

The Cessna 210 was on its way from New Orleans to Fort Myers, Florida, according to the flight tracking website FlightAware. Air traffic control lost touch with it at about 15:45 (21:45 GMT) and it later went down in the Gulf of Mexico between Pascagoula and Horn Island, officials said.

Divers found the bodies of four adults and two boys, aged 8 and 10, in the fuselage, said Coast Guard spokesperson Juan Ros.

Rescuers spent hours searching for the group and initially only found three life jackets, a life raft and the plane's cabin floating on the water, he said.

Cmdr Trevor Blount, the Coast Guard rescue mission co-ordinator, said: "While this is not the outcome any of us had hoped for, we are grateful for the strong interagency co-ordination that enabled us to swiftly locate those aboard the aircraft and provide closure to their families."

Zimbabwe issues arrest warrant for Robert Mugabe's son over missed court date

A Zimbabwean court has issued an arrest warrant for Bellarmine Chatunga Mugabe, the youngest son of the country's late former president Robert Mugabe, after he failed to appear in court.

Mugabe was arrested earlier this month alongside four others over assault allegations on a police officer during an investigation into the suspected smuggling of luxury vehicles.

The group subsequently faced charges of robbery and malicious damage to property. They have yet to enter pleas.

They were granted bail on 6 November and were due back in court on Tuesday. However, Mugabe failed to attend. His co-accused, an aide and three security guards appeared and were remanded until 10 December.

Prosecutors allege that Mugabe and the others assaulted an investigating officer using their hands and broomsticks.

The officer's phone was allegedly taken and smashed on the ground, while one of the accused is said to have seized the officer's loaded pistol.

Bellarmine Chatunga is the youngest son of Robert Mugabe and his second wife, Grace Mugabe.

Robert Mugabe ruled Zimbabwe for 37 years before being forced from power in 2017, aged 93, following a military intervention. He died in 2019.

His son has attracted public attention in recent years over a series of legal troubles and his high-profile lifestyle.

Last month, he admitted to drug-related charges involving the possession of cannabis.

In April, he was deported from neighbouring South Africa after pleading guilty to pointing a firearm and being in the country illegally. He had been arrested following the shooting of a 23-year-old man at his home.

In 2023, he was arrested in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital, over allegations that he damaged property and spat at a police officer during a party.

He was later freed after reaching an out-of-court settlement with the complainant, who was a friend."We understood that leadership was not a platform for self-promotion, political slogans, or the pursuit of personal acclaim. Its purpose was to improve the circumstances of ordinary citizens. It meant converting public resources into concrete benefits and ensuring that government's foremost responsibility was to serve the people.

"Achieving this demanded more than good intentions; it required a clear vision, careful planning, and disciplined execution."

INSIDE EDO

Don Bosco Science Academy wins N1.5m Igiehon Mathematics Tournament

...Over 200 schools participate as foundation rewards academic excellence

By Edward Oseghe and Esohe Aifuwa

BENIN CITY

Don Bosco Science Academy has emerged overall winner of the fifth edition of the Igiehon Mathematics Tournament, clinching the N1.5 million grand prize at a competition designed to promote academic excellence and inspire a new generation of mathematics enthusiasts in Edo State.

The annual tournament, held on Saturday, November 21, attracted participation from over 200 secondary schools across the state, with outstanding students rewarded for their intellectual abilities and commitment to learning.

Beacon of Success School came second, winning N1.05 million, while Deeper Life High School secured third position with a prize of N650,000.

The competition also recognised the contributions of teachers, who received cash prizes and certificates of recognition for their outstanding tutelage of the award-winning students.

Speaking at the event, the Chairperson of the Igiehon Foundation, Mrs. Nosayere Igiehon, expressed gratitude to the participating students and commended their dedication and hard work.

She encouraged the contestants to remain calm and confident throughout the competition, noting that their selection to participate was already an achievement.

She also assured every participant of a consolation prize, irrespective of their final position.

Mrs. Igiehon emphasised the need to give education greater recognition in society by rewarding academic excellence and encouraging students to strive for higher achievements.

She said the N1.5 million grand prize, high-performance laptops and other awards were part of the foundation's commitment to motivating students and promoting a culture of excellence.

The tournament also featured an intermission lecture titled "Application of Mathematics," delivered by Miss Light Orukpa, which demonstrated the practical relevance of mathematics in everyday life.

The lecture explained that mathematics extends beyond numbers, formulas and equations, serving as an essential tool for understanding patterns, relationships, measurements and uncertainty, as well as the operations of modern technology.

Using the Global Positioning System (GPS) as an example, the speaker demonstrated how mathematics powers everyday technologies, including mobile phones and navigation applications such as Google Maps and Bolt.

She explained how satellite signals and the mathematical principle of trilateration enable these applications to determine users' locations.

In an interview, the Chairperson, Mrs. Mercy Nosayere Igiehon, said the foundation was inspired by its upbringing, heritage and commitment to excellence.

She explained that having benefited from academic competitions during their school years, the founders were motivated to establish the initiative to provide similar opportunities for other students and nurture a love for learning.

She added that the mathematics tournament was part of the foundation's broader vision of making a positive impact through education.

Beyond the competition, she said the foundation provides scholarships and supports brilliant students from less privileged backgrounds by paying their university tuition fees.

According to her, the ultimate goal is to create educational opportunities capable of transforming the lives of beneficiaries and their families.

The fifth edition of the tournament further reinforced the foundation's commitment to recognising academic talent, encouraging healthy intellectual competition and investing in the educational development of young people across Edo State.



5TH IGIEHON MATHEMATICS TOURNAMENT:
Don Bosco Science Academy representatives celebrate victory after clinching the N1.5 million grand prize.

Igbinedion University to graduate 1,204 students at 24th convocation

Edward Oseghe and Esohe Aifuwa

OKADA

Igbinedion University, Okada, is set to graduate 1,204 students, including 128 first-class graduates, at its 24th convocation ceremony scheduled for November 28, as the institution highlights its academic, infrastructural and professional achievements.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Lawrence Ikechukwu Ezemonye, disclosed this during a press conference organised for media organisations in Edo State at the University Senate Chamber on Monday.

The briefing was attended by the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, members of the Governing Council and other university officials.

Prof. Ezemonye expressed appreciation to members of the press for their continued support and presence at the university's activities, noting that their contributions to the growth and development of the institution were highly valued.


Prof. Lawrence Ikechukwu Ezemonye

He said the university, Nigeria's first private university, had remained committed to providing quality education since its establishment, graduating over 60,000 students, including 3,000 medical doctors.

According to him, activities marking the 24th convocation would be open to members of the public and commence on Thursday, November 26, with a convocation play presented by students of the Department of Theatre Arts.

Other activities include a Jumu'ah service at the university's Central Mosque on Friday, November 27, followed by an alumni reunion at the University Sports Complex by 4 p.m.

The convocation lecture, presentation of awards and graduation ceremony will hold on Saturday, November 28, while the programme will conclude with a thanksgiving service at the University Chapel of Grace on Sunday, November 29.

The Vice-Chancellor announced that the convocation lecture would be delivered by Brigadier General Mohammed Buba Marwa, OFR, CON, at the university's Main Auditorium.

The lecture is titled, "Graduate transition to motion building: a case for sustainable entrepreneurship and scalable value chains in the University."

Speaking on the institution's achievements since its last convocation, Prof. Ezemonye highlighted improvements in infrastructure, academic development and the introduction of new academic programmes.

He disclosed that the university had introduced programmes including B.Sc. Intelligence and Security Studies, B.Sc. Public Health, and B.Sc. Health Administration and Hospital Management, alongside newly introduced postgraduate diploma programmes.

The developments, he said, had increased the university's academic offerings to 102 programmes across 37 departments, seven colleges and three schools.

Man kills father over alleged refusal to destroy family deity

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON

FUGAR

A 54-year-old man has hammered his 76-year-old father to death following a dispute over his refusal to destroy an inherited family deity in Fugar, Etsako Central Local Government Area of Edo State.

The murder suspect, Mr. John Bello, a father of four and the eldest child of the Bello family was among 21 persons paraded by the Edo State Police Command for various offences on Monday, November 23, 2026.

It was learnt that Mr. John travelled from Lagos, where he lives with his family, to his ancestral home in Fugar, where he allegedly killed his father, Pa. Julius Bello, to death on November 7, 2026.

The suspect was said to have visited his father to discuss the family's worsening fortunes, which he claimed had made life miserable for him and his siblings, insisting that his father knew the cause but had refused to act.



The Police Public Relations Officer of the Edo State Command, ASP Eno Ikoedem, said the Mr. John Bello was arrested after he reportedly killed his Septuagenarian father following an argument.

Recounting the incident, the suspect said he confronted his father over the family's persistent hardship, lamenting that despite their daily struggles, none of his father's 10 children, including a sister living in Europe, had achieved anything tangible. He added that eight of the children were born to his mother.

"My father said he was aware and that the Juju he inherited from his mother was responsible. He said an unmarried woman worshipped the deity on his behalf and that none of his children would die while he was alive, but they would continue to struggle," the suspect said.

He further said the issue had lingered for a long time, recalling that he had questioned his father over his failure to bring out the object when the family invited a pastor to destroy some charms in the house.

According to him, his father explained that exposing the object would bring disgrace to him, but he insisted that it must be brought out and destroyed because he was tired of their condition.

The suspect also said his 68-year-old mother was in another room when the argument that ensued excavated during which his father allegedly hit him on the back, prompting him to pick up a hammer left on the table and strike the old man's head.

"He fell, and I ran into the bush. But some vigilante members later apprehended me," he said.

The Nigerian OBSERVER
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FEATURE

When an iroko falls:

Pete Edochie, the voice that gave African culture a face

MATTHEW OKAGHA

There are men whose departure leaves an empty chair, and there are men whose passing leaves a vacuum in the soul of a nation. Chief Pete Edochie belongs unmistakably to the latter category.

With his death at 79, Nigeria has lost one of its most distinguished actors, but Africa has lost something even more profound: a custodian of its cultural memory, a master interpreter of its stories and a remarkable ambassador of its identity.

Indeed, an iroko has fallen!

But even in death, the iroko does not surrender its greatness. Its roots remain embedded in the soil, its branches continue to provide shelter in memory, and its towering presence becomes a permanent reference point for generations yet unborn.

> Whenever he appeared on screen, attention followed. He did not need to shout to command respect, nor did he need elaborate gestures to communicate authority.

Such is the enduring place Pete Edochie occupies in the history of Nigerian entertainment and African storytelling.

For millions of Nigerians and admirers of African cinema across the world, Pete Edochie was not simply an actor. He was an experience. His deep, commanding voice, dignified carriage, measured delivery and extraordinary mastery of dialogue gave his performances a distinctive authority that few could replicate.

Whenever he appeared on screen, attention followed. He did not need to shout to command respect, nor did he need elaborate gestures to communicate authority. His presence alone could transform an ordinary scene into a memorable theatrical experience.

His legendary interpretation of Okonkwo in the television adaptation of Chinua Achebe's literary masterpiece, Things Fall Apart, remains one of the defining moments in African television history.

In bringing Okonkwo to life, Edochie did something extraordinary. He transported a literary character from the pages of a celebrated novel into the consciousness of millions of viewers. He gave flesh, voice and emotional depth to Achebe's fictional creation, making the struggles, pride, contradictions and tragic fate of Okonkwo resonate far beyond the boundaries of Nigeria.

It was a performance that transcended entertainment. It became a cultural statement.

Through that role, Edochie demonstrated that African stories, when told with authenticity and artistic excellence, possess the power to command global attention and admiration.

Yet, to remember Pete Edochie only through Okonkwo would be to underestimate the breadth of his contribution.

His professional journey began in broadcasting in 1967 with the Eastern Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, where he distinguished himself and rose through the ranks. His experience as a broadcaster undoubtedly enriched his acting, particularly his remarkable command of language, diction and dramatic expression.

He subsequently became one of Nollywood's most recognisable faces, featuring in productions that helped shape the evolution of Nigeria's indigenous film industry. From Igodo to Rituals and Lionheart, his performances demonstrated versatility, depth and an enduring commitment to his craft.

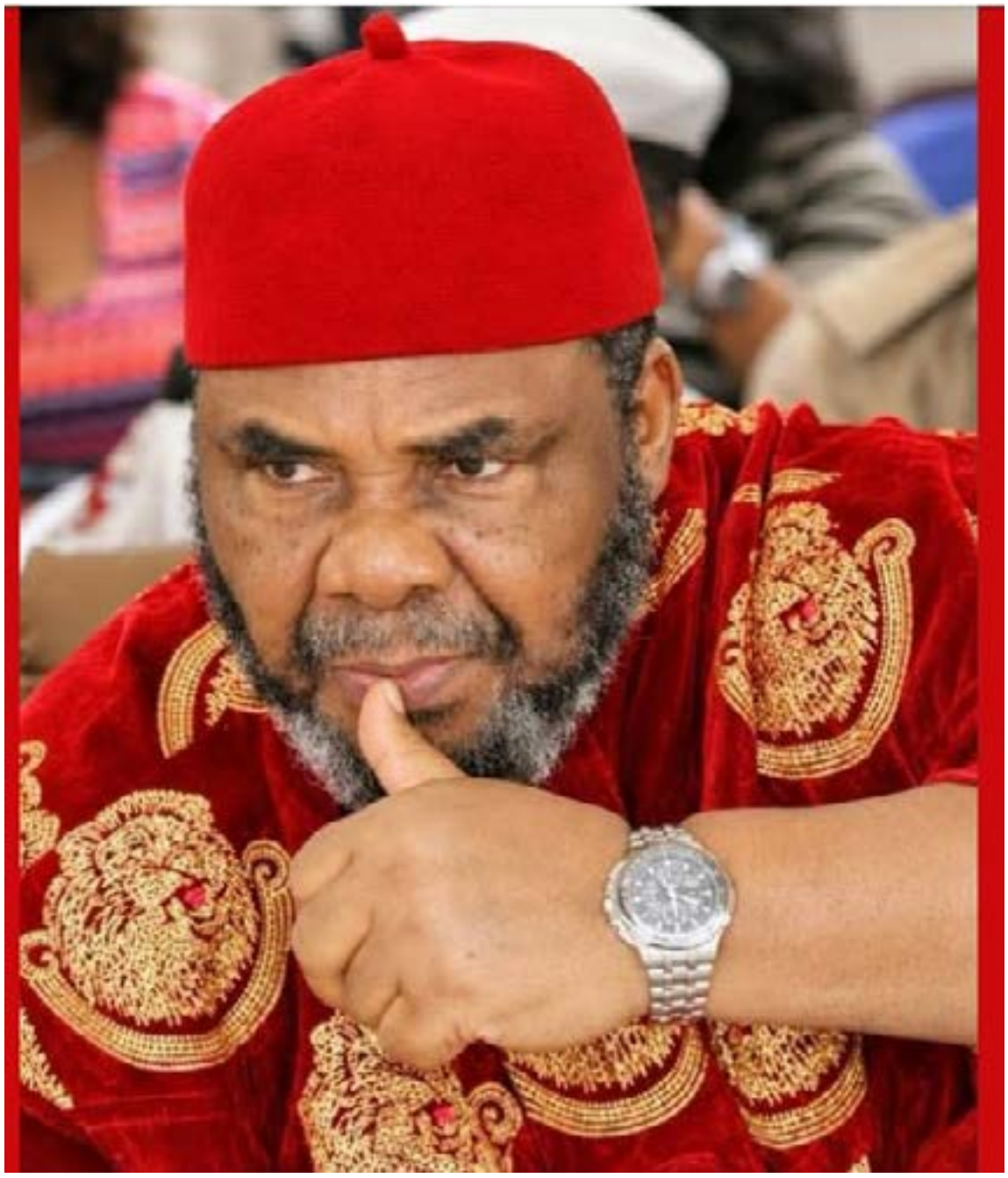
He was particularly convincing in roles that required him to embody traditional rulers, family patriarchs, community elders and men of influence. He understood the cultural weight of these characters and interpreted them with a dignity that made audiences believe in the worlds he represented.

His proverbs were not merely decorative expressions. They carried the wisdom of generations. His pauses communicated as much as his words, while his distinctive voice gave African traditional expressions a special musicality.

In an era when cultural identities are increasingly influenced by global entertainment, Pete Edochie remained a powerful reminder that our traditions, languages, values and stories are worthy of preservation and celebration.

He showed that an African actor did not have to abandon his cultural roots to achieve international recognition. Rather, authenticity could become his greatest strength.

That is perhaps one of the greatest lessons of his life.



The tributes pouring in from government officials, political leaders, colleagues and admirers testify to the extraordinary reach of his influence. The Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy, Hannatu Musa Musawa, aptly described him as a national treasure, a cultural ambassador, a teacher and a father figure to generations of artists.

Her description captures the magnitude of the loss.

But beyond official tributes and glowing newspaper headlines lies a more personal grief: the loss felt by families who grew up watching him, young actors who studied his performances, filmmakers who admired his discipline and ordinary Nigerians who found in his screen appearances a familiar representation of African values.

For the Nigerian film industry, his departure marks the end of a remarkable chapter. For younger practitioners, it leaves behind a demanding standard of excellence, professionalism and cultural consciousness.

Great artists do not merely entertain their generation. They influence the artistic direction of generations that follow. They establish standards by which others are measured.

Pete Edochie did precisely that.

His legacy must therefore be preserved beyond ceremonial speeches and momentary expressions of grief. Nigeria must find meaningful ways to document his career, preserve his works, celebrate his contribution to broadcasting and cinema, and make his artistic journey accessible to young people who wish to understand the foundations of African filmmaking.

The nation should also recognise that cultural icons are national assets. Their contributions deserve deliberate documentation and institutional preservation.

As we mourn this extraordinary son of Africa, our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Barrister Josephine Edochie, his children, the extended family, the people of Nteje in Anambra State, the Actors Guild of Nigeria and the entire creative community.

May God grant them the strength to bear this irreparable loss.

There is, however, a consolation in the midst of grief: death may silence the voice, but it cannot erase the words already spoken. It may draw the curtain on a life, but it cannot bring an enduring performance to an end.

Pete Edochie may have taken his final bow, but the stage of African storytelling will forever bear his imprint.

When future generations revisit Things Fall Apart, they will encounter Okonkwo. When they watch the great productions that shaped Nollywood, they will encounter his artistry. When they speak of actors who carried African culture with uncommon dignity, his name will inevitably be mentioned.

That is the privilege of a life well spent and a talent faithfully deployed.

An iroko has fallen, but its roots remain. Its shadow will endure in our collective memory, and its story will continue to inspire.

Rest well, Chief Pete Edochie, MON, Ononenyi.

You did not merely act out stories; you gave Africa a voice, a face and a lasting sense of cultural pride. Your final curtain has fallen, but your ovation will never end.

Sports

● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing



ALGERIA FIFA U-17 WORLD CUP TEAM

2026 FIFA U-17 World Cup – Algeria comeback to record first win; heartbreaks for Tanzania and Cameroon

Yacine Abed scored twice as Algeria came back from a goal down to beat Montenegro 2-1 and record their first FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2026 victory on Tuesday. Meanwhile, Tanzania fought hard but couldn't avoid a slim defeat to four-time champions Brazil, while there was a heartbreak for Cameroon who lost their second game of the campaign to Mexico.

Four-time champions Brazil punched their ticket to the Round of 32 with a tightly contested victory over Tanzania. Richard Wendel scored the lone goal after the ball fell kindly into his path after Eduardo Conceicao's effort was blocked. Tanzania goalkeeper Haji Abdalah made a number of brilliant saves to keep his side in the game.

Algeria goals: Abed (67 pen, 81)

Montenegro goal: Tifrani own goal (41)

Player of the Match: Yacine Abed (Algeria)

Algeria came from behind to beat Montenegro in a breathless clash. The opening goal came when the African side failed to deal with a teasing Petar Ivanovic corner and the ball deflected in off goalkeeper Yazid Tifrani. Algeria spurned a golden chance to level when Yacine Abed struck the bar with a penalty. They were then awarded another spot-kick, and this time Abed made no mistake. Abed then lashed home a fabulous winner to spark joyous scenes of celebration.

"It's an amazing feeling. We were losing, but we managed to come back and win. We made our fans happy, and we hope to make them happy again in the next match", said Yacine Abed, Algeria goalscorer.

Mexico became the latest side to punch their ticket to the next phase after a dominant second-half display against Cameroon. Miguel Rivera broke the deadlock with a sumptuous volley from a corner before Adan Sanchez added a second from the spot. Gerson Gutierrez wrapped things up with two close-range finishes after some fine touches from Sanchez.

Garo rewards Sai Masu Gida with double match bonus after victory over Ikorodu City

The Chairman of Kano Pillars FC, Alhaji Ahmad Musbahu Garo, has rewarded the players, technical crew and backroom staff with a double match bonus in recognition of their impressive performance and first road victory of the ongoing EUROMATCH-NPFL 2026/2027 season.



GARO TEAM

The Sai Masu Gida secured a hard fought 1-0 victory over Ikorodu City on Saturday at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Lagos, courtesy of Garba Shuaibu's 18th minute solitary strike.

The victory marks the first time the four-time NPFL champions have recorded an away win this season following several close attempts on the road.

The Pyramid City side have now climbed to second position on the league table with 25 points from 14 matches, just three points adrift of league leaders, Rangers Int'l FC.

The Sai Masu Gida will now turn their attention to Matchday 15, where they welcome Abia Warriors to the Sani Abacha Stadium, ofar Mata, this weekend.

Nigeria targets podium finish, contingent departs for World Para Powerlifting Championships in Bahrain

Team Nigeria is heading into the 2026 World Para Powerlifting Championships in Bahrain with ambitions of sustaining the country's impressive standing on the global stage, following the confirmation of a 17-athlete squad for the 12th edition of the competition scheduled for November 27 to December 2.

The Nigerian contingent will be led by Paralympic champion and world record holder Folashade Oluwafemiayo, las Nigeria seeks to build on its outstanding performance at the last edition of the championships in Cairo, Egypt, where the country finished second in the overall world rankings.

With the championships bringing together the world's leading para powerlifters, Nigeria will be looking to demonstrate the depth of its talent, competitive resilience and continued presence among the leading nations in the sport.

President of the Nigeria Para Powerlifting Federation, Mr Kingsley Awodi, expressed confidence in the team's readiness and determination, while acknowledging the support received from the National Sports Commission ahead of the global competition.

"I want to specifically appreciate the Director General of the National Sports Commission, Hon. Bukola Olopade, for the fatherly role he has played in supporting the federation and the athletes. He has provided the necessary support and given us what we need to prepare for this competition.

"The athletes are fully aware of the confidence and investment in them, and they are determined to reciprocate this support by giving their best and making Nigerians proud in Bahrain. We are going into this championship with a strong sense of responsibility and the determination to compete for honours," Awodi said.

The NSC's support for the team forms part of its broader commitment to strengthening Nigeria's participation in international competitions and providing athletes with the necessary backing to compete at the highest level.

CAF unveils five finalists for 2026 Men's Player of The Year Award

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has unveiled the final shortlist for the 2026 Men's Player of the Year award, with Morocco dominating the list with three nominees.

Morocco's Achraf Hakimi, Brahim Diaz and Ismael Saibari made the final five following their impressive performances during the year.

Senegal, meanwhile, have two representatives on the shortlist, with Pape Gueye and Sadio Mane completing the list of finalists.

The nominations highlight the strong presence of Morocco and Senegal in African football, with both countries accounting for all five contenders for the prestigious individual award.

The winner will be announced at the 2026 CAF Awards ceremony.



CAF moves to sack legal affairs director following CAS ruling

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) is reportedly preparing to accelerate the departure of its Director of Legal Affairs and Compliance, Cedrick Aghey, following the recent ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

Aghey's position has reportedly come under scrutiny over concerns surrounding his appointment by former CAF Secretary General Véron Mosengo-Omba, which was allegedly made without the approval of the organisation's Executive Committee.

The legal affairs director was also reportedly implicated in controversies surrounding the handling of CAF's Appeals Jury, which ruled in favour of Morocco in the disputed case.

The controversy also followed the dismissal of Yacine Osman Robleh, former head of CAF's Judicial Bodies Department, who was responsible, among other duties, for appointing members of the Appeals Jury.

Aghey is also said to have been involved in an internal disagreement with current CAF Secretary General Samson Adamu, amid reports of tensions over the leadership of the organisation's administrative structure.

His reported absence from CAF's offices in Egypt, with claims that he spends most of his time in Europe, has also generated dissatisfaction within the organisation.

The latest development comes amid wider concerns about CAF's legal administration, including previous cases that reportedly ended unfavourably for the continental football governing body.

However, CAF has yet to issue an official statement confirming Aghey's departure or explaining the circumstances surrounding the reported decision.



THE CONFEDERATION OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL COMMITTEE

SPORTS

The Nigerian OBSERVER
That The People May Know

FIFA President Infantino condoles with NFF on the passing of ex-international, Edward Anyamkyegh



EDWARD ANYAMKYEGH

President of world football-governing body, FIFA, Mr. Gianni Infantino, has sent a letter of condolence to the Nigeria Football Federation over the death of former Nigeria international player, Edward Anyamkyegh.

Anyamkyegh, a striker who featured for the Nigeria U17 team at the 1995 FIFA U17 World Cup finals in Ecuador, died on 4th November 2026 in his native town of Gboko, Benue State.

In a letter addressed personally to the Chairman of the NFF Normalisation Committee, Sampson Ebomhe Esq, Infantino lauded the former BCC Lions FC of Gboko and Julius Berger FC of Lagos forward, who also played club football in Moldova, Ukraine and Finland before calling it quits with the beautiful game.

"Legend of Nigerian football, his legacy and achievements, and in particular his leadership, his personality, his loyalty and his human qualities will not be forgotten, and he will be truly missed.

"On behalf of the international football community, I wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the Nigeria Football Federation, and to Edward Anyamkyegh's family, friends and loved ones. Our thoughts are with all of you. We hope that these memories and our words of support may help bring some peace and solace at this difficult time."

Rivers Utd land ₦490million shirt sponsorship deal

History was made in Port Harcourt, Rivers State on Tuesday as the state team, Rivers United Football Club signed and unveiled the highest club front-shirt sponsorship partnership in its history with GOKA Sports and Casino, in an agreement worth $350,000 (N490 million)

According to a statement released by Charles Mayuku, the club's Media Director, the agreement provides the Dubai based company with the rights to take over as the Club's official front-of-shirt sponsor – featuring the GOKA Sports and Casino branding – for three years, starting from the 2026/27 season.

The value of this front-shirt sponsorship is by far the biggest deal ever secured in the history of the club.

The agreement was signed by Barrister Chris Green, the Administrator of Rivers United FC and Jide Odi, Brand Representative of GOKA Sports and Casino.



40th FIVB Congress: NVBF President lauds World Volleyball President Fabio Azevedo

President of the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF), Engineer Musa Nimrod has lauded the President of the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB), Fabio Azevedo for his visionary leadership.

Nimrod gave the commendation following the successful conclusion of the 40th FIVB World Congress in the Dominican Republic.

The NVBF president said Azevedo had introduced several fruitful initiatives since assuming leadership of the world governing body.



MUSA NIMROD AND FABIO AZEVEDO

He noted that his administration was committed to the growth and development of volleyball globally.

Nimrod said: "Fabio Azevedo has demonstrated visionary leadership since taking over as President of the FIVB. We have seen several positive initiatives aimed at taking volleyball to greater heights.

"His leadership has continued to create opportunities for national federations and continental confederations to grow the game and improve their structures.

"I have confidence in the FIVB board under his leadership, and I believe the decisions being taken will have a positive impact on the future of volleyball."

Nimrod also passed a vote of confidence in Azevedo's leadership.

He expressed optimism that Nigeria and other African countries would benefit immensely from the initiatives of the current administration.

Nimrod further disclosed that the CAVB Zone 3 presidents had a fruitful engagement with the FIVB leadership during the congress, adding that Africa could host important international volleyball tournaments in 2027.

He said: "Our interaction with the FIVB leadership was very successful. We discussed issues that are important to the development of volleyball in our zone and across Africa.

"We are optimistic that Nigeria and other African countries will benefit from the opportunities being created under the current FIVB leadership.

"With the plans and discussions surrounding 2027, we are hopeful that Africa will have the opportunity to host important volleyball competitions that will further promote the game on the continent."



GIANNI INFANTINO AND DONALD TRUMP

Trump hails Infantino as USA to co-host 2031 Women's World Cup

President Donald Trump praised embattled FIFA president Gianni Infantino on Tuesday while celebrating the United States being named a co-host of the 2031 Women's World Cup.

Infantino, who gave Trump the first FIFA Peace Prize last December, is fighting to keep his job after causing outrage in July with a shortlived plan to sell stakes in the World Cup to private investors.

A FIFA election next March in Morocco will decide if Infantino keeps his job against rival contenders Philippe Diallo of France and Kozo Tashima of Japan.

"Thank you to Gianni Infantino, and his great staff, for working to bring the Tournament to the USA," Trump posted on social media.

Trump and Infantino awarded Spain the trophy at this year's final of the World Cup, which was co-hosted by Canada and Mexico.

FIFA confirmed Monday that the United States will co-host the 2031 Women's World Cup with Mexico, Costa Rica and Jamaica after Infantino noted it was the "sole candidacy" for the tournament.

"I am proud to announce that the FIFA Women's World Cup 2031 will take place in the United States!" Trump posted.

"After hosting the Most Successful World Cup in History, no Country is better positioned than the United States to be home to the largest Women's Sporting Event in History."

The Women's World Cup field will expand to a record 48 teams in 2031.

NPFL: Enyimba midfielder returns to full training after injury layoff

Enyimba FC midfielder Tekena Garando has returned to full training after spending several months on the sidelines due to injury.

Garando sustained the injury during Enyimba's pre-season friendly against Heartland FC in Owerri a few months ago.

The midfielder has now recovered sufficiently to rejoin his teammates in full training, providing a timely boost to the People's Elephant.

His return will be a welcome development for the Aba-based club as they continue their preparations for the ongoing Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) campaign



ENYIMBA FC TRAINING SESSIO

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