



## A NEW EDO HAS RISEN

### Okpebholo's Inauguration And His 5-Point Governance Mandate: A New Vision For Edo State

By Nekpen Maureen Nwine and Omoruyi Patricia



As the people of Edo State witness the winner of the September 21, 2024 governorship election in Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, taking his oath of office as the fifth Executive Governor of the state alongside his deputy; Hon. Dennis Idahosa, they cannot but wonder, what the rising of a new Edo would birth.

This discourse will therefore be aimed at shedding an expository light on the five-point governance mandate around which this administration would revolve.

The words of a familiar adage remind us that when a contribution is essential, others are ready to continue the work. Just as a state is a continuous entity, so is governance. In this spirit, His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has embraced continuity in the administration of the State, introducing a five-point mandate to guide his leadership toward a better future for the state. The mandate which provides the clear direction needed for effective governance includes Security.

The administration's plan to implement a comprehensive security strategy center on strengthening community policing and providing security forces with advanced tools and training. This approach includes deploying more well-trained officers in local neighborhoods, fostering close relationships between law enforcement and residents, and investing in modern equipment, technology, and resources for the police.

By prioritizing these measures, the goal is to create a safer environment for all Edo residents, enhancing trust and collaboration between communities and security personnel.

Revitalizing the road infrastructure is a central priority for this administration. Plans include the construction of new roads and the comprehensive repair of existing ones to ensure smoother, safer travel across the state. Key upgrades will focus on durable, high-quality materials for longer-lasting roads, improved drainage systems to prevent flooding, and expanded lanes to ease traffic congestion.

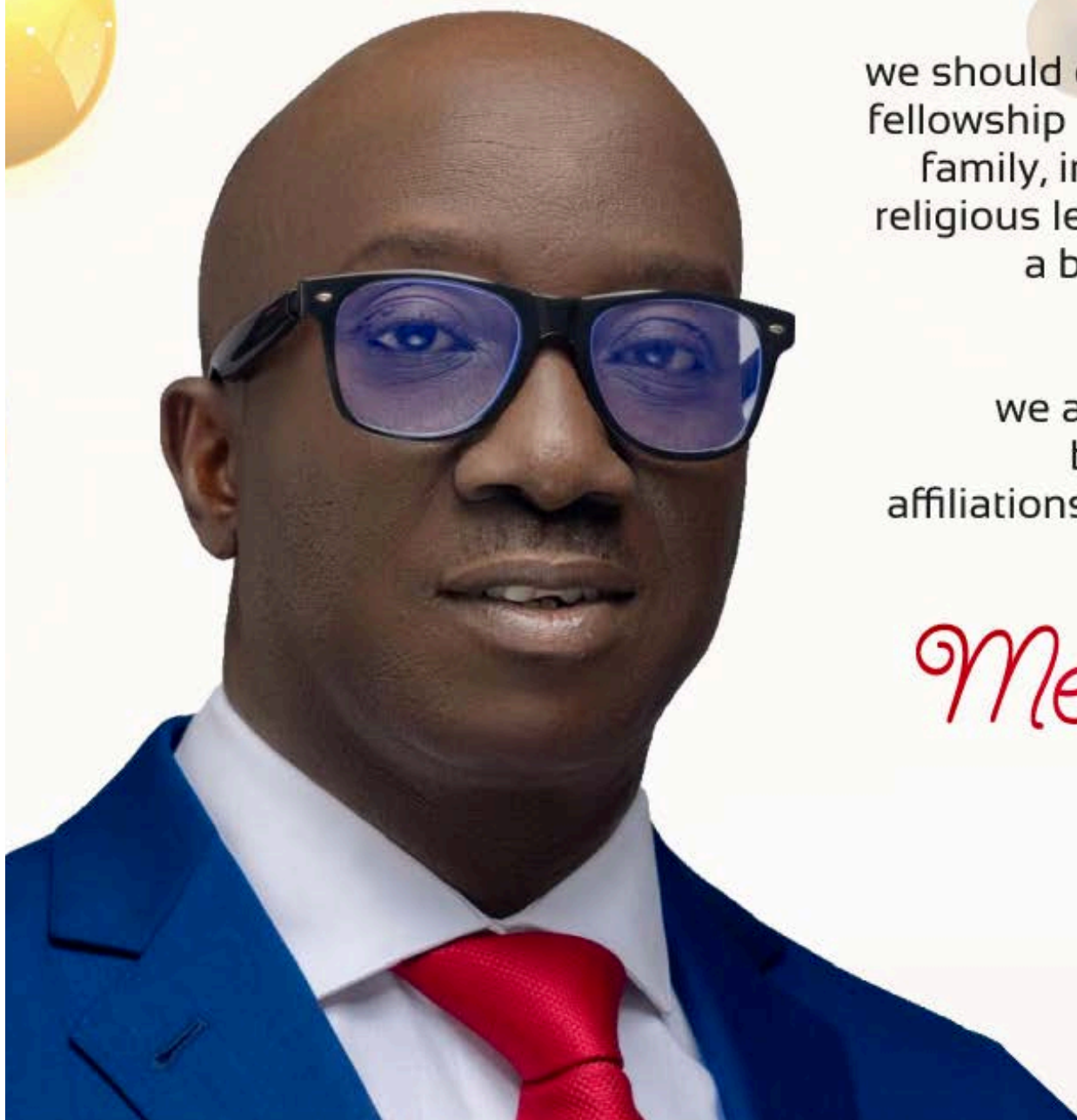
Additionally, efforts are underway to modernize the entire transportation network, integrating efficient public transit options and smart traffic management systems. These enhancements aim to create a more reliable and accessible transportation system that supports economic growth and improves residents' daily commutes.

Another key focus is the development of affordable healthcare, which includes expanding access to essential medical services, upgrading healthcare facilities to modern standards, and implementing initiatives that ensure healthcare services are accessible and affordable for all residents of Edo. This involves increasing the number of healthcare providers, improving infrastructure in hospitals and clinics, and offering subsidy programs to make high-quality healthcare accessible to low-income families and communities.

The Governor understands that food security is essential for a nation's stability and prosperity; without it, communities risk hunger and economic strain. To address this, advancing agriculture and ensuring food security are core priorities of his administration. His comprehensive strategy includes targeted support for local farmers to boost sustainable food production, helping to reduce food scarcity and stimulate the local economy. The aim is to empower farmers to operate more efficiently and sustainably, building a resilient agricultural sector capable of meeting the food needs of Edo's growing population.

Additionally, the administration is committed to ensuring clean water access for all communities, addressing water scarcity, and providing safe drinking water throughout the region. Recognizing that clean water is vital for health, agriculture, and economic growth, the government is rolling out a series of impactful projects to make clean water widely accessible.

Implementing these five key mandates within the Edo State administration by the State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, will not only establish Edo as a region of safety, ongoing development, and well-being but also transform it into a model of self-sustainability. This approach ensures that Edo State thrives as a secure, prosperous, and resilient community capable of sustaining its growth and resources.



As the world celebrates Christmas, the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, on behalf of the Government and people of Edo State, I congratulate all Christians for witnessing yet another yuletide season

As we celebrate, we should continue to extend hands of love and fellowship to our neighbours and live as one big family, irrespective of our social, political, and religious leanings, and continue to trust God for a better tomorrow and a greater country

We must realize that we are first Nigerians before our religious beliefs, political leanings, and cultural affiliations, and as such, we must show respect for one another by living in peace

*Merry Christmas*

HIS EXCELLENCY  
**SEN. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO**  
GOVERNOR OF EDO STATE

## Governor Okpebholo inspects ongoing road construction in Benin

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on Monday, inspected some ongoing road construction and repairs in the State Capital, Benin City. The Governor visited Upper Mission Road Extension by Aduwawa junction, Obadan junction, and Benin-Auchi Express Way to ascertain the level of work done since contractors were mobilised to sites.

Okpebholo noted that the failed portions at Upper Mission Extension have made life unbearable for residents and traders alike in the area. He assured them that his administration is ready to work round the clock to fix the road and make Edo people happy.

He said the mandate of his administration is to transform the State and promised Edo people that he will key into the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu Renewed Hope Agenda and make life better.

““The failed portion at Upper mission extension road was terrible, and last week, I came to look at the rate of damage as vehicles found it difficult to pass the road. Businesses and people around this area are suffering.

My administration is determined to solve the problem and put smiles on the faces of the people.

“The President is not happy the way Edo is, and you can see that we are already working as he will join us to fix Edo State and that we must surely accomplish.”

Describing the Obadan road as very important and strategic to the State, Governor Okpebholo said when the road is fixed, it will boost commerce and industry and open up the State for economic growth and development.

“This road is very important to us. It leads to Agor, Onitsha, and Northern parts of the country.



The road is very strategic to us as a State. It is located in Edo State, and it is important as it will boost the economy of the State.

“Looking at the state of roads, I have to key into Mr. President’s Renewed Hope Agenda, as we are not going to stop. We have already started working. Our mandate is to

transform Edo State and make it a place that we all will be proud of.

“We assumed office about six days ago, and we have hit the ground running and will continue to work as we are flagging off flyovers in Edo State. It is work, work, and more work for my administration,” he noted.

## EWMB: New MD Resumes Office, Inspects Facilities, Charges Staff on dedication to work

*By Edeniye Abraham Osose*

The newly appointed Managing Director (MD) of the Edo State Waste Management Board (EWMB), Mr. Lucky Enehita-Inegbenehi, has officially resumed office today, 18th November, 2024, in Benin City, with a commitment to transforming the State into the cleanest in Nigeria.

During an inspection of the Board’s facilities, The MD assessed the operational capacities and identified areas requiring immediate attention.

In a meeting with the Management Team, he emphasized the importance of dedication, innovation, and teamwork in achieving the State’s waste management goals.

He outlined plans to engage residents in cleanliness campaigns and to introduce measures in enhancing waste management efficiency in the State.

He urged the Team to redouble its efforts, adopt sustainable practices, and collaborate with stakeholders to ensure efficient waste collection, recycling, and disposal. “We have the potential to make Edo State a model for environmental cleanliness and sustainability in Nigeria. Let us work together to make this vision a reality,” he said.

Responding on behalf of the Team, the Director of Shared Services, Mr. Osagie Odigie Idighe, said the vision of the MD has begun to inspire renewed energy among the Team, saying they would gear up to deliver on the mandate.



The Team reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Mr. Inegbenehi’s leadership and to deliver on the shared goal of a cleaner, greener Edo State.

## Edo State Govt Partners UNICEF to Boost Vaccine Confidence, Uptake

By Ebuaneke Joy



The Edo State Ministry of Communication and Orientation in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), held a one-day review of Non-Polio Supplemental Immunization Activities (NPSIA) on Friday, 15th November 2024, at the Vichigate Hotel and Suites, Benin City.

The event convened media professionals, women-led civil society organizations (CSOs), and other relevant stakeholders to address challenges of vaccine uptake and to develop strategies aimed at improving immunization coverage across the State.

Delivering the keynote address, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Dr. Desmond Agbama, emphasized the Edo State Government's commitment to healthcare, saying it is a top priority under the State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo's administration. He stressed the importance of collaboration in ensuring effective healthcare delivery and achieving full immunization coverage for children in the State.

The welcome address was delivered by the Director of Orientation, Mrs. Rose Imonikhe, who stated that strategic engagements were necessary to address parental apathy toward immunization. She called for robust community mobilization and communication efforts to encourage vaccine acceptance and to build public trust.

The State Immunization Officer, Mrs. Enogie Elfrida Omogun, presented an overview of the State's immunization efforts. She highlighted achievements such as the

introduction of the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV/MAC) Multi-Age Cohort (MAC) vaccine as well as the integrated measles campaigns. She stated that their challenges include healthcare service disparities, government policies, and funding constraints, amongst others.

The State Health Education Officer of the Edo State Primary Health Care Development Agency (EDPHCDA), Mrs. Irene Uabor, represented by the Assistant Health Education Officer, Mr. Aideyan Gabriel, addressed the barriers to vaccine trust. She identified key challenges, such as misinformation, complacency among community gatekeepers, and inadequate social mobilization. She emphasized the need to counter such rumors and build trust with accurate, credible information.

The Measles Consultant with the African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET), Dr. Icomiare Adebudo, underscored the necessity of vaccine uptake to protect public health.

The President of Joint National Association of Persons With Disability (JONAPWD), Edo State Chapter, Madam Ann Ojuigo, shared her personal story of living with the consequences of not receiving the polio vaccine, which according to her, has made her wheelchair-bound. She pledged to advocate for immunization to inspire others to embrace vaccines.

Similarly, the Social and Behavioural Change Specialist from the Lagos Field Office, Mrs. Akinola-Akinwole Aderonke, recommended

the '5S' strategy to combat vaccine misconceptions – Stop misinformation, Source credible data, Spread accurate messages, Share success stories, and Show trust through action.

Goodwill messages and commitments were delivered by various groups, media organizations and participants, including Rev. Mrs. Asemota Eniye of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria Women's Wing (Edo State Chapter), Hajia Audi Userat Esohe of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations (Edo State Chapter), Mrs. Louisa Eikhomun Agbonkheshe of Echoes of Women in Africa (Edo State Chapter), and Hon. Florence Gbinigie of the Forum of Nigerian Women in Politics (FONWIP), represented by Abiodun Taiwo.

Media organizations including the Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS), The Nigerian Observer, Raypower FM, amongst others, made commitments to continuously support vaccine advocacy through their various platforms.

Participants acknowledged challenges to vaccine acceptance, such as socio-cultural barriers, misinformation, poor attitudes among healthcare workers, and limited outreach in rural areas.

Prescribed solutions included involving CSOs in staff training and field monitoring, strengthening media collaborations, sensitizing men to support family immunization decisions, and improving storage facilities and healthcare accessibility in remote areas.

## Press Release: Gov Okpebholo announces six fresh appointments

By Godspower Eguasa

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has approved the appointment of Dr. Emmanuel Paddy Iyamu as the Executive Chairman of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB); Lucky Enehita – Inegbenehi as the Managing Director of the State Waste Management Board; CP Friday Ibadin, Rtd, State Corps Commander, Edo State Security Corps Governance; Stainless M.I. Ijehede as the Managing Director, Edo State Traffic Management Agency, (EDSTMA); Sir (Dr.) Lucky Esegbe, as Managing Director, Edo State Public Building and Maintenance Agency, and Engr. Emmanuel Ehidiemen Okoebor, as Hon. Commissioner for Finance – designate.

The six appointments take effect from November 15, 2024.

The six announcements were contained in a communication notice, signed by the Secretary to State Government, Umar Musa Ikhilor on Friday.

“It is hereby announced for the information of the general public that the Executive Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo has approved the appointment of Dr. Iyamu.

“He holds a Bachelor of Science and a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Benin. He is also a holder of a Doctor of Science in Petroleum Resources from the European American University.

“Dr. Paddy Iyamu is a strategic leader and renowned expert in security, business administration, and human resources. An alumnus of Oxford University, he holds a Professional Doctorate in Leadership and Management from the City University of Paris.

“With over 15 years of experience, Dr. Iyamu has excelled across the banking, oil, and gas sectors, significantly improving corporate security and crisis management operations.

“Until his appointment, Dr. Iyamu was the Chief Executive Officer of Gabbem Integrated Services Ltd, a leading company specializing in marine equipment and services,” the notice signed by the Secretary to State Government, Ikhilor read.

Similarly, the second notice read: “It is hereby announced for the information of the general public that the Executive Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo has approved the appointment of Lucky Enehita – Inegbenehi, with effect from 15th November 2024.

“Inegbenehi obtained his B.Sc. Human Resources and M.Sc. in Strategic Leadership and Governance from the University of Cape Coast respectively.

“Inegbenehi is a dynamic and result-oriented professional, with an extensive experience in leadership and human resource management. He has proven abilities to analyze complex issues, develop effective strategies, and guide teams toward success while fostering professional growth.

“Inegbenehi was the Chief Executive Officer of JEI Visions Iron Metals, JEI Visions Service Apartments as well as JEI Visions Cleaning Services.”

The third notice read: “It is hereby announced for the information of the general public that the Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo has approved the nomination of CP Friday Ibadin. He is a global security icon having worked and



retired from the Nigeria Police after a meritorious 35 years of service. He was one of the 11 officers seconded to the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and was a regional officer in the Headquarters.

“He has attended various security courses in Egypt, France, USA among others. CP Friday Obadin holds a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy and Law, respectively, and was later called to the Nigerian Bar in the year 2007.

“He is a member of the African Centre of Crime Prevention Research Studies, Cairo, Egypt. He is happily married with children.”

The fourth announcement read: “It is hereby announced for the information of the general public that the Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo has approved the appointment of Mr. Stainless Ijehede, with effect from 15th November 2024.

“Mr. Stainless Ijehede holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. He had a successful career in the Petroleum Industry, having worked and held sensitive positions, particularly in the Well Engineering and Safety Department at Shell Petroleum Development Company Nigeria Ltd.

“He retired from the Service of Shell after a meritorious service.”

The fifth announcement read: “It is hereby announced for the information of the General Public that the Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo has approved the appointment of Lucky Esegbe, effective November 15, 2024.

“Lucky Esegbe Esq obtained his LL.B and LL.M at the Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma respectively. Until this appointment, Lucky Esegbe Esq was a Legislative Aide/Legal Adviser/Consultant to notable Honourable Members of the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from the year 2007 to November 2024.”

The sixth announcement read: “It is hereby announced for the information of the general public that the Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo has approved the nomination of Engr. Emmanuel Ehidiemen Okoebor. He was born on October 21, 1972. He had his first degree in Civil Engineering and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Benin, Benin City respectively.

“Engr. Emmanuel Ehidiemen Okoebor, MBA has over 25 years of experience in the Banking Sector, including roles at the Standard Trust and United Bank of Africa (UBA).

“He rose through the ranks in the Banking Industry to the position of Assistant General Manager (AGM) and is currently Regional Manager, at United Bank of Africa (UBA) overseeing fifteen Business Offices.

“Engr. Emmanuel Ehidiemen Okoebor MBA is also a member of the Nigerian Society of Engineers and a registered member of COREN.”

Signed:  
Fred Itua,  
Chief Press Secretary to Edo State Governor

## Traffic Decongestion: Gov Okpebholo flags off first flyover in Edo



Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has flagged off the construction of a flyover bridge at Ramat Park, Benin City, the Edo State Capital, as part of immediate efforts to reduce traffic congestion in the city.

Performing the ground-breaking ceremony, Governor Okpebholo said his administration will also construct two more flyover bridges at Dawson road Junction and Sapele road/Adesuwa road junction, all in Benin City.

According to him, the completion of Ramat Park flyover in Benin City will transform the economy and social fortunes of the capital City and Edo State.

Governor Okpebholo said Ramat Park is a gateway to Benin City and other parts of the country and that the construction of the bridge will provide ease of life for motorists in Benin City and commuters along the two corridors of the Benin-Auchi Express Way and Benin-Asaba Express Way.

He said: "I warmly welcome you to the Ground breaking and flag-off ceremony of the construction of the Ramat Park Flyover here in Benin city. "We have gathered to witness the beginning of a very important project that will transform the

economy and social fortunes of our capital city and indeed Edo state. Ramat Park is a gateway to Benin city and other parts of the country.

"Therefore, Ramat Park Fly-Over will provide a new lease of life for motorists in Benin City and communities along these two corridors; the Benin-Auchi Expressway and the Benin-Asaba Expressway.

"During our campaigns a few months ago, I specifically promised to construct fly-overs to ease transportation and reduce the traffic gridlock in our city. Today, one week into my administration, we are here to fulfil that promise and deliver the dividends of democracy.

"This is the first flyover we are constructing and we are going to construct more. There will be one by Dawson Road junction and another one by Sapele Road/Adesuwa Road junction.

"Benin City was the first capital city of Africa when Europeans first came to the continent in the 14th century. So, we must give the city a befitting facelift to also encourage the development of tourism.

"Let me use this opportunity to appreciate the Speaker and other honourable members of the House of Assembly for their cooperation.

To the contractor, CCECC Nigeria Limited, we look forward to seeing you work day and night to meet the 18-month completion period.

"Let me assure Edo people that in the execution of this project, my administration will abide by all relevant laws.

"To our motorists here, please bear with us, as you also make some sacrifices by being patient with the contractors throughout the next 18 months."

Daughter of a former Governor of Edo State, Amen Ogbemudia who is resident in the area, thanked the Governor for his visionary leadership which she said is fast bringing hope to Edo people. She said Governor Okpebholo will perform well as the steps he has taken have shown that he means well for Edo people.

A youth of Oregbeni Community, the host Community, Emmanuel Aigbogun, appreciated the governor for this bold steps, adding that he has written his name in gold through the construction of the bridge.

"You made a promise, and you are here to fulfill that promise today by doing the ground-breaking and flag off of the Ramat Park flyover. We are behind you and will continue to support your administration," he said.

## Jubilation, Excitement as Okpebholo Approves “13th Month” Salary for Edo Workers, Automatic Employment for First-Class Graduates

It was a moment of jubilation for civil and public servants in the State, as the State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo approved the payment of 13th-month salary to Edo workers, while further affirming the policy of automatic employment for First Class graduates of Edo origin from any university within the country and beyond, rekindling hopes among Edo youths, and creating the enabling environment for them to shine in the public space.

This was made known via the press statement released by the Chief Press Secretary to the Edo State Governor, Fred Itua, on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> of November, 2024, in Government House Benin City.

In his release, the intentions of the Governor were brought to light through the Head of Service (HOS), Dr. Anthony Okungbowa, who made known the unwavering commitment of the Governor to improving workers' welfare in the State, while also noting the Governor's unfeigned determination to extract the best brains into the State's workforce, positioning Edo on top spots amongst sub-nationals.

Okungbowa said: “Mr. Governor has approved the Graduate Development Programme (GDP) that brings together First Class graduates and high-grade degrees into the service to develop and ensure quality manpower in the system.

“Mr. Governor has approved it. He approved the policy of bringing in First Class graduates into the Edo State Civil and Public Service. He believes that the policy will help the State bring in top quality talents into the system.

“It is not just bringing them in but also retaining them because retaining them is one of the major challenges facing the programme.

“Mr. Governor is intentional about bringing them in and retaining these top-level talents in the service.



The Governor is using this medium to urge all First- Class graduates of Edo origin across all universities in Nigeria and abroad to come over as they will have automatic employment.

We are looking at the younger graduates from 2020, but Mr. Governor may extend that”.

According to Okungbowa: “We are happy about this and appreciate the Governor because, through this, the service will have quality talents in the system.

“For everyone in that programme, they are moved around various Ministries,

Departments, and Agencies and plans are also on to move them to the private sector to gather more experiences after which they will bring such experiences to bear, to improve the system, to contribute to the development of the State”.

Okungbowa added: “Sustainability depends on you and me since the political will is there and I am happy because it is the direction of government. We are partnering with Edo Innovate to ensure improvement in the programme”.

## CHRISTMAS: Year 2025 Will Be Better For Edo People - Governor Okpebholo

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has assured that his administration will make 2025 a better year for the people, through practical and good governance.

Okpebholo gave the assurance while delivering his goodwill message at the hallowed chamber of the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA), venue of the 2024 Nine Lessons and Carol, organized by the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku for Honourable Members and Staff of the Assembly.

The Governor who joined the 24 Honourable Members and Staff of EDHA in a melodious tune, thanked God for his blessings upon the State and prayed for love, oneness and unity of the State as it progresses into 2025.

“God has been good to us in the State. As the year is coming to an end, we will not end with the year, but see the end of it and together we shall all enter 2025, praying for more blessings,” he stated.



The high point of the Carol was the rendition of different melodious tunes by the EDHA choir and EL-Excess Choral choir to the delight of everyone, even as Santa Claus entertained the audience.

## Gov Okpebholo Swears in Ihensekhien as Permanent Secretary

By Igbavboa, Samuel Omokheoa

The Edo State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, has sworn in Mrs. Joy Irenose Ihensekhien as the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development and Gender Issues.

During the swearing-in ceremony which held at the New Festival Hall, Government House, Benin City, the Governor congratulated Mrs. Ihensekhien on her appointment. He charged her to bring her expertise to bear in driving the Ministry's mandate of reducing issues of social vices to its barest minimum and bringing succor to victims of such circumstances among residents in the State.

Mrs. Ihensekhien, in her response, thanked the Governor for the opportunity to serve and promised to work tirelessly in promoting social development and gender equality in the State.

The ceremony was attended by key officials of the State Government, including the Deputy Governor, His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Dennis O. Idahosa; the Secretary to the State Government, Barr. Umar Musa Ikhilor; family members, well-wishers of the appointee, amongst others.

Until her appointment, Mrs. Ihensekhien served as the Director of the Department of Gender Issues in the Ministry. With her wealth of experience and expertise in gender issues and social development, she is expected to harness such resources in driving the Ministry's mandate for the benefit of residents in Edo State.



## Gov Okpebholo swears in 3 Judges in fulfillment of Inaugural promise

...Decries favouritisms By Erharuyi A. Joe

The Edo State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, has sworn in three State High Court judges in fulfilling his promise to the Bench during his swearing-in ceremony of 12th November 2024.

Sen. Okpebholo, who supervised the swearing-in of the three Judges into the Bench of Edo State High Court at the Festival Hall in Government House, stated that in his inaugural speech, he had promised to look into the case of the yet-to-be-sworn-in judges despite their due recommendations by the National Judicial Council (NJC). He described the event as an opportunity to right the wrong.

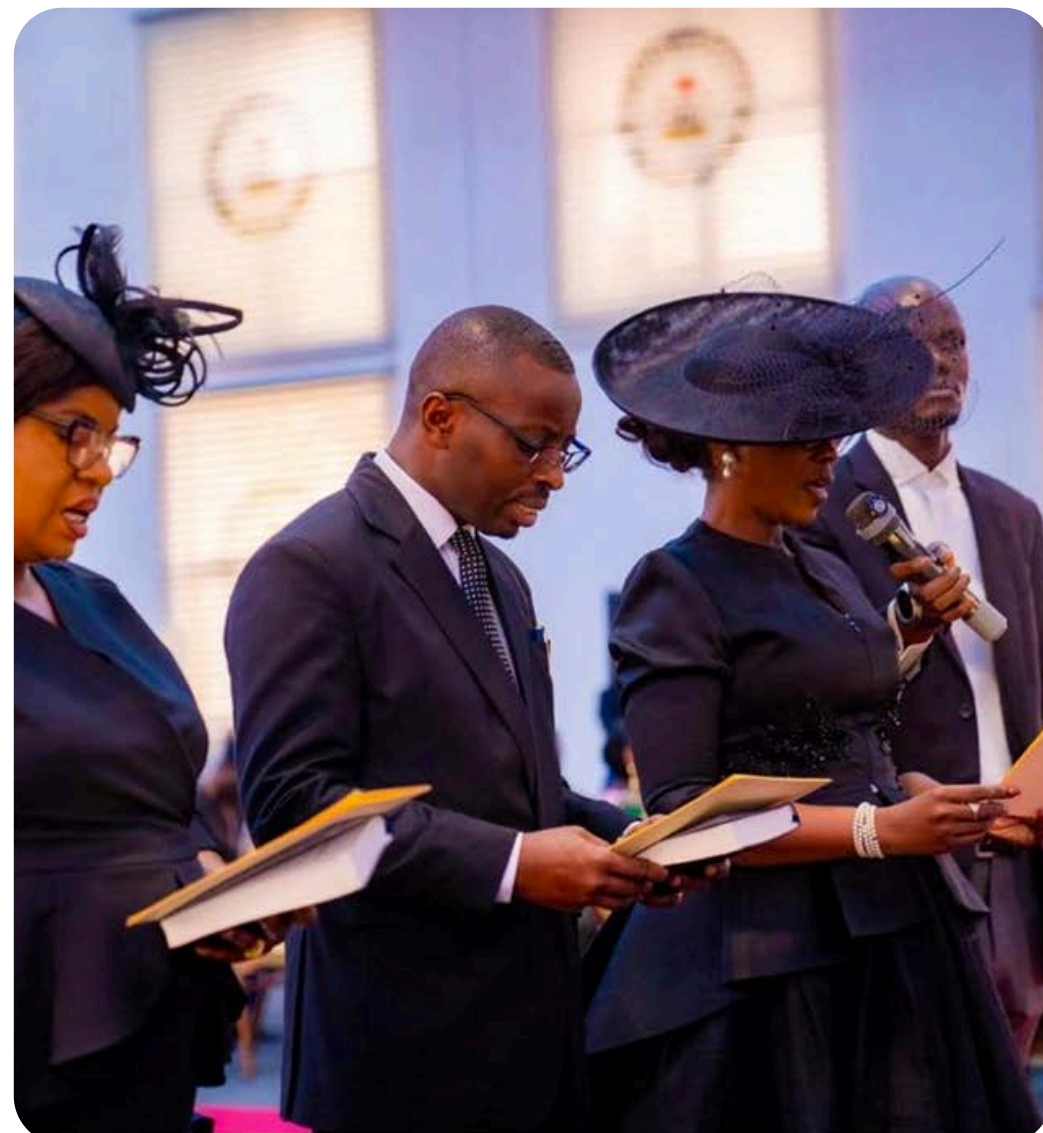
It could be recalled that the NJC in June 2023, had recommended eight persons for appointment as Judges of the Edo State High Court. The immediate past administration in the State swore in five out of the eight designated judges in May 2024. The Governor frowned at the development and recommended that people should not be discriminated against, marginalized or hated for personal reasons, or on account of not having a godfather.

The Governor sued the new judges of the state High Court to uphold high standards of conduct, ensure fair dispute resolution, uphold the rights of citizens, and bring culprits to justice, in the discharge of their duties.

The three Judges sworn in are justices Ojo Maureen Osa, Okundamiya Godwin Jeff, and Edoghogho Eboigbe, who were among the eight designated judges recommended by the NJC in June 2023.

Justice Ojo Maureen Osa, who responded on behalf of her contemporaries, appreciated the Governor for upholding the recommendations of the NJC concerning them and the opportunity given them to serve as judges in the State.

She prayed that the Governor's tenure will be marked with success and advancement of justice for all and assured him that they will dispense justice without fear or favour.



## Gov Okpebholo meets with Permanent Secretaries, Prescribes Higher Standards

*Igbavboa, Samuel Omokheoa*

The Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo in the early hours of Thursday, 14th November 2024, met with Permanent Secretaries (PSs) in the State and charged them to cooperate with the newly appointed officers of his Cabinet to ensure smooth and effective governance.

Governor Okpebholo in his address, appreciated the Permanent Secretaries for holding forth government processes, saying that being the accounting officers of government, they endure more than politicians, who have limited tenure in office.

The Governor urged that there should be synergy among the Perm. Secs and the newly appointed key officers as well as those who would come later, for accelerated growth of the State. He informed the Perm. Secs of his plans to meet with them individually to see how the prospects of the respective

ministries would contribute to the State's overall development.

He assured them of his resolve to develop the State and reiterated that Edo State belongs to all and not an individual.

He further recommended that all must work collectively to realize the Edo of his dreams; a state which would be compared to the likes of Lagos, Port Harcourt, Akwa Ibom, amongst others.

The Head of Service, Barr. Anthony Okungbowa PhD, who led the delegation of PSs, extolled the doggedness and dexterity of Governor Okpebholo, saying hours after his inauguration has started to fulfill the promises he made.

He stated, "Governor Okpebholo has made commitments even before his inaugural speech, that he will do something to ensure that the Civil and



Public service becomes strong enough to power the initiatives of the government.

"We are very grateful to you and what you intend to do for Civil servants. I have advised my colleagues, from the first few steps that you took a few hours after your inauguration; inspecting

and commissioning projects that you are 'a doing governor' and as a people, we must emulate you,".

## Gov Okpebholo signs revised N486bn Appropriation Bill into law



Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has officially signed the revised Appropriation Bill of N485.63 billion into law. This marks a significant move by the new administration to ensure rapid implementation of developmental projects.

As approved by the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA), the budget is divided into N202.65 billion for recurrent expenditures and N282.99 billion for capital projects.

In his remarks, Governor Okpebholo commended lawmakers for their swift action in passing the Bill, which he believes will set the tone for transformative governance.

He stated: "I want to thank you for your cooperation and the speedy passage of this bill. With this momentum, Edo State is set to experience remarkable development. I see a team of dedicated individuals ready to work for the betterment of our state."

Speaker of the EDHA, Honorable Blessing Agbebaku, alongside other lawmakers, attended the signing ceremony held at the Executive Council Chamber.

Agbebaku emphasised the legislature's commitment to supporting the administration's vision and ensuring continuity in government.

He noted: "The 8th Assembly expedited the passage of this appropriation law to allow the new administration to commence its projects without delay. Government is a continuum, and we are committed to fostering development for the people of Edo State."

The Bill, initially presented on November 13, 2024, underwent accelerated deliberations, underscoring the collaboration between the executive and legislative arms of government.

## Dr Oshiomhole Pledges Edo State Govt's commitment to Quality Healthcare

By Esther Edebor



The Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomhole, has assured officials of Edo State University, Uzairue and its Teaching Hospital, of the State Government's commitment to improving healthcare services in the State.

Dr. Oshiomhole gave the assurance during a courtesy visit by the officials to his office at the Ministry of Health in Benin City. He told his guests that the State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo is passionate about healthcare and the quality of medical services accessible to the people in the State.

The Commissioner disclosed that plans are already underway to extend the retirement age for doctors, from 60 to 70 years, a policy aimed at retaining experienced medical personnel in the State, to address the challenges lack of medical professionals at the Teaching Hospital.

The delegation, led by Dr. Atoe Kenneth and Dr. Moses Imologomhe, sought support for the Hospital's development, highlighting its critical roles in training medical students and its status as one of the most accessible healthcare facilities in Edo North Senatorial District. They emphasized the need to enhance its capacity to serve the host communities effectively.

According to the Team, Key challenges facing the hospital include poor funding, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate staff, amongst others. The Chief Medical Director, Dr. Moses Imologomhe, appealed for legislative support to establish the Teaching Hospital officially through a bill at the Edo State House of Assembly. The Chairman of the Medical Advisory Committee, Dr. Tijani Oseni, expressed confidence in Governor Okpebholo's ability to facilitate improvements in the healthcare sector.





## Gov Okpebholo sets to revive moribund Water Fountain at King's Square

By Esther Edebor



The Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomhole, has assured officials of Edo State University, Uzairue and its Teaching Hospital, of the State Government's commitment to improving healthcare services in the State.

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The Commissioner disclosed that plans are already underway to extend the retirement age for doctors, from 60 to 70 years, a policy aimed at retaining experienced medical personnel in the State, to address the challenges lack of medical professionals at the Teaching Hospital.

The delegation, led by Dr. Atoe Kenneth and Dr. Moses Imologomhe, sought support for the Hospital's development, highlighting its critical roles in training medical students and its status as one of the most accessible healthcare facilities in Edo North Senatorial District. They emphasized the need to enhance its capacity to serve the host communities effectively.

According to the Team, Key challenges facing the hospital include poor funding, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate staff, amongst others. The Chief Medical Director, Dr Moses Imologomhe, appealed for legislative support to establish the Teaching Hospital officially through a bill at the Edo State House of Assembly. The Chairman of the Medical Advisory Committee, Dr. Tijani Oseni, expressed confidence in Governor Okpebholo's ability to facilitate improvements in the healthcare sector.

## Edo State Government suspends consultancy services

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has approved the immediate suspension of all consultancy services and related providers in the State's public service.

In a communication notice issued by the Secretary to the State Government, Umar Musa Ikhlor, "all financial transactions and related services with affected consultants and service providers are to be put on hold immediately, pending when the Review Committee, established by the Governor, submits its report.

"All Accounting Officers, Heads of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies are expected to take note and comply strictly with this directive."



## Edo FRILIA Technical Committee Commits to meet SABER DLI 1.2 Objectives

By Abdul-Kadir Abdullah and Osaigbovo Frank Okundia

The Edo State Framework for Responsible and Inclusive Land-Intensive Agricultural Investments (FRILIA) Technical Committee has expressed its readiness to achieve the remaining Disbursement Link Indicator (DLI) Verification Protocol targets for the year under consideration.

The Committee's resolve was disclosed by the Secretary of the FRILIA Technical committee and Head of Agric Services and Extension Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Mr. David Ogunbor, after a stakeholders' meeting at the Agric Hub in Benin City, which was to finalize strategies towards achieving its objectives.

According to Mr. Ogunbor, the focus of the meeting was to review progress and come up with actionable strategies in meeting the December, 2024 deadline.

He disclosed that the implementation of FRILIA is DLI linked and a World Bank assisted State Action on Business Enabling Reforms (SABER) programme.

Mr. Ogunbor stated, "We need to ensure that we meet the deadline of 31st December 2024. The Grievance Redress Mechanism Committee (GRM) needs to be activated and a meeting of committee members conveyed as soon as possible to work on and complete the domestication of the toolkit for submission.

"A meeting with key actors like the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Sustainability, who is the Secretary to the GRM and the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice is apt.

A key focus is to get the GRM to attend to the toolkits accordingly



which is meant to address concerns arising from envisaged disputes from land acquisition and land use for agricultural purposes".

By successfully meeting the DLIs' targets under the FRILIA SABER programme, Edo State aims to solidify its position as a leading state in land investment, thereby spurring agricultural development and sustainability in the State and Nigeria at large.

## Governor Okpebholo declares war on cultism in Edo

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on Monday night, ordered heads of various security agencies in the State to make the Heartbeat unsafe for criminal elements.

The Governor gave the charge while briefing newsmen at the end of an inaugural security meeting, held behind closed doors in Government House, Benin City, Edo State.

Governor Okpebholo said his administration places a priority on security and revealed that his government is doing everything to ensure that the State is safe for every resident.

He noted that the issue of cultism dominated the security discussion, and his administration will not fold its arms, while cult-related killings go on in the State.

He urged security agencies to collaborate and ensure that they put a stop to the killings in the State, especially in Benin City.

"During my campaign, I placed security above all. It is a priority for my administration because it is important. The issue of cultism dominated the discussion. The rate of cultism is not acceptable by my administration.

"The issue of cultism is not acceptable in Edo State. We do not want to lose anybody, and we will be firm about this. We have ordered security agencies to collaborate and ensure that Edo is safe for all, but not safe for criminals.

"We charged them to smoke criminals out of the State wherever they are hiding and ensure that the State is safe for all," Governor Okpebholo told newsmen.

Edo State Commissioner of Police, Umoru Peter Ozigi, while reacting, said various security agencies during the security council meeting, discussed areas of concerns and the efforts made so far.



He noted that the Governor has assured them of the support of his administration in ensuring that Edo is safe for all.

He said: "We just finished the first security council meeting with the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo. We have discussed areas of concerns and our efforts so far.

"The Governor has assured us that he will give us the needed support and ensure that Edo State is a place for all to live and do business peacefully."

## Edo State Govt to Commence Interest-free Loans for Edo Traders, January

... anticipates massive mechanized farming in early January



Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has revealed plans to give out interest-free loans to traders across the three Senatorial Districts to help boost their businesses.

Governor Okpebholo disclosed this at the New Festival Hall of Government House, Benin City where he addressed members of the Edo State Association of Commodity Market Women and Men (ESACM), who were in Government House on a congratulatory visit.

Governor Okpebholo emphasized his administration's commitment to enhancing the livelihood of Edo citizens and ensuring sustainable economic growth through empowerment of traders, businessmen, and women who play major roles in the economic development of the State.

He noted that the free-loan initiative is aimed at providing much-needed financial support to Edo traders, ensuring that they have the resources to expand their businesses without the burden of daunting interest rates.

"Early in January 2025, we shall begin to provide interest-free loans to Edo traders. Our traders are the backbone of our economy, and we must support them with the needed capital to help boost their businesses and improve the State's economy."

"The interest-free loans that we are starting next year in January will help empower our traders, enhance growth, development, stability, and improve the livelihoods of the people," Governor Okpebholo stated.

Governor Okpebholo also outlined plans by his administration to revolutionize the agricultural sector through mechanized farming.

Governor Okpebholo said: "In the same January 2025, we are going to start massive mechanized farming in Edo State. We are poised to ensure that food is available to all, even in these challenging times."

"Agriculture is vital to our State's economy. Investing in mechanized farming will boost food production, create jobs, and ensure food security for our people."

Responding, President of the Association, Mrs. Josephine Ebhaguejeze expressed gratitude for the Governor's initiative, noting that it will be a game-changer for traders and farmers in the State and pledged the Association's support and loyalty to the administration.

She said the Association will continue to work with the Government of Senator Monday Okpebholo in driving economic reforms in the State.

"With this initiative, Edo State is on track to becoming a model for economic revitalization in Nigeria, paving the way for a prosperous future for all its residents. As the new programmes take shape, the State looks forward to reaping the benefits of enhanced productivity and financial independence for its traders and farmers alike."

The mechanized farming initiative is expected to attract investments and partnerships with agricultural companies, as it would further enhance the State's capacity for large-scale farming and repositioning the economy.

## Governor Okpebholo swears – in Commissioner for Health

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has sworn in the new Commissioner for Health, Dr Cyril Adams Oshiomhole with a charge to take the sector to the next level.

The event which held at the Executive Chambers of the Government House was attended by the Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, Secretary to the State Government, Alhaji Musa Ikhilor, Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr. Gani Audu, Edo State Head of Service, Anthony Okungbowa, Permanent Secretaries among others.

In his charge to the new Commissioner, Governor Okpebholo highlighted the many challenges facing the State's health sector, and directed him to hit the ground running, assuring him of his administration's support in ensuring that he succeeds in his assignment.

"You need to know that there are challenges ahead and we need to face the challenges head on and ensure a vibrant, efficient and effective healthcare sector in the State.

"We need to work hard, face the challenges and move the Ministry of Health forward. This is a challenge we must face and ensure our people receive quality healthcare. With hard work, commitment and dedication we will deliver the dividends of democracy to Edo people," the Governor stated.

In his response, Dr Oshiomole thanked the Governor for the privilege to serve the people of Edo State.

"I will do my best, put in my experiences and knowledge towards ensuring that Edo people enjoy quality healthcare services. I promise to do my best and work according to law," he said.



## Gov Okpebholo suspends Market Unions, Associations in Edo

*Orders Police, security agents to arrest defaulters*

Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State has suspended all Market Unions and Associations in Edo State with immediate effect. The Governor has also ordered the Police and other security agencies in the State to arrest defaulting leaders of the various suspended Unions and Associations without any delay.

The decision of the Governor was contained in a communication notice issued by the Secretary to State Government, Umar Musa Ikhilor, and dated 19th November 2024.

The Governor said the decision was informed by the disturbing activities of market Unions in the State.

He said reports abound that the Executives of the Unions and Associations either out rightly prevent farmers from disposing off their wares directly to consumers at the markets or arbitrarily fix prices of staple food at the detriment of the low income earners in the State.

The statement read: "The attention of the State Government has been drawn to the disturbing activities of market Unions in the State. Reports abound that the Executives of these Unions either out rightly prevent farmers from disposing off their wares directly to consumers at the markets or arbitrarily fix prices of these staple food at the detriment of the low income earners and generally, the citizens of the State.

"Their actions have ultimately led to an astronomical rise in the prices of staple food in the State, thereby making life unbearable for the common Edo man.

"Edo State Government views this action with serious concern and considers it extortionist in nature which should not be allowed to thrive.

"While Edo State Government appreciates the role of market traders and their contribution to the economy of our dear State, it will not however serve as justification to allow a few



individuals under the guise of Market Unions Executives and for their selfish reasons, continue to hold the entire State to ransom through their selfish and extortionist activities.

"Following from the foregoing, the Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo has approved the suspension of the activities of all Market Unions in Edo State with immediate effect.

"Security Agents have been put on alert, and any person or group who decides to flout this directive would be held accountable."

## Beacon Of Hope In Edo *By Fred Itua*



As nations continue to compete in technological, scientific and academic breakthroughs through various incentives, stakeholders in Nigeria have been worried that the nation has not paid much attention to this area as many deserving graduates are often left uncelebrated.

The social media space had in recent times been flooded with reports of best graduating students of universities being rewarded with as low as N1,000 cash, while many of our first class graduates roam the streets in endless search for job opportunities.

This, which clearly contrasts the reality in other sectors like the entertainment world, where the winners of reality TV shows, beauty pageant and other events that add no quantifiable value to the society are rewarded with hundreds of millions of naira, had led to a culture where many young men have now popularized the saying, “school na scam”.

This discouraging paradox has seen a great relapse in the reading culture among the young ones. Students would rather spend time on social media, creating contents, pressing their laptops and engaging in other activities than devote time to their studies as those who had excelled in this line in time past have nothing or little to show for their academic rigor and excellence.

This story however is changing in the Heartbeat of the Nation, as Edo State under the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo is giving the much needed attention to not only celebrating students who have excelled in their academic pursuit, but also rewarding them handsomely, financially and giving them opportunities to excel and grow in their chosen academic career. This move aimed at changing the narrative, “school na scam” and re-directing the attention of the younger ones to the joys of academic exploits, research rigor and

raising the standard of education in Nigeria is yielding result already as many are now beginning to see, that excelling in academics could be a sure way of not only achieving financial freedom, but also nationwide recognition.

It is in line with this initiative of the Governor, that the member representing Akoko-Edo 2 Constituency in Edo State House of Assembly, Hon. Donald Okogbe recently presented a generous donation of N1.5 million to James Ojo Allen, UNIBEN’s best graduating student in the 2023/2024 academic session.

With an outstanding CGPA of 4.98, Mr Allen Ojo sets a new record of the highest ever recorded academic feat in the University’s 54 years history.

Earlier in the week, the Chairman, Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Dr Pally Iyamu gifted the young academic genius, N1 million Naira and decorated him as an Ambassador of SUBEB.

These recognitions and financial rewards are instrumental and vital in changing the mindset of the average Nigerian youth towards education and its relevance in the 21st century world. By giving priority to educational excellence, the administration of Senator Monday Okpebholo has shown that he is poised to make Edo, an educational vibrant State and regaining its long history of producing the brightest minds in the country.

In the wake of this significant boost, and the massive investment being planned for the educational sector by Governor Monday Okpebholo as evident in his recent disbursement of N500 million subvention to Ambrose Alli University, AAU, and the significant percentage earmarked for education in Edo 2025 budget, it is

clear that Edo State is set to experience a healthy competition among young scholars, as they jostle to outshine one another in academic feat and scholarly excellence; a move that could spiral innovation, inventions, among others.

This has awakened the hope in many observers, that many more privileged individuals, corporate organizations, political actors and NGOs would be inspired and encouraged to embark on similar actions in support of education and youth development. The ripple effect of such initiatives can inspire a culture of excellence and aspiration among young people, enabling them to dream big and achieve their goals

As our own young scholar and record setter, James Ojo Allen embarks on the next phase of his academic career, he carries with him the hope of his community, the support of his benefactor and the Edo State Government and an unwavering commitment to excellence. His story is a testament to the power of hard work, and the immense impact of government and political leader’s support in igniting a fire of determination, will and doggedness in youths, reminding us that with the right support, the average Nigerian youth not only have the sky as his limit, but as the starting point to the endless possibilities of the “can do” fire that burns in the veins of every Edo son and daughter.

In an era where education remains a crucial pillar for advancement, stories like that of Allen, Okogbe, Iyamu and Okpebholo’s investment in education blend to inspire generations, reaffirming that together, we can create a formidable future.

Fred Itua is the Chief Press Secretary to Edo State Governor.

# Edo State Govt partners Aviation Company on mechanics' skills for Edo Youth

By Erharuyi A. Joe



The Edo State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo has revealed his administration's plans to collaborate with an Aviation Company in training Edo people on aviation assembling, piloting, mechanics, among other related skill sets.

Governor Okpebholo disclosed the plans when he led key members of his Cabinet to the Benin Airport to witness the collaboration. He described the event as new development for Edo people, saying it is in fulfilment of his electioneering promises and assured that more developments are on the way.

The Governor who lauded the collaboration, stated that it will reduce unemployment, improve vocational skills in schools, and create wealth in the State, as the presence of the Company would engender social and economic multiplier effects across the three Senatorial districts of the State.

While pledging the State Government support for the project, the Governor disclosed that the Aviation Company will build an assembly plant where trainings will be done. He qualified the investment to be huge and asserted that it would greatly benefit youth in the State.

The visibly elated Governor said he is fulfilled that such development is happening during his administration. He promised that his administration's support for the project will include incurring the bills for the training of Edo Youth. He added that the support for the Aviation Company is in line with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu in the Country.

The CEO of the Aviation Company, Ehis Odia, said the partnership became necessary because Governor Okpebholo has demonstrated vision, foresight and forward movement for Edo State in the area of aviation. He stated, "We have a rich

history of aviation in Edo State and we have been working for many years to reactivate aviation in Edo State.

"The company will start assembling light aircrafts here in Benin City, Edo State. We will build a factory here in this Airport and start assemblage. We will begin to work with secondary and technical school students to train aircraft mechanics. We have been dealing with university students, but nobody is investing in primary schools as general aviation starts here in primary schools.

"Edo State will be the first State in Nigeria where aircraft will be assembled. Training will include

that of pilots and also encourage aero-clubs in schools. We want to rewrite the narrative and remove the thoughts that aviation is for the rich; but rather it is a means of transportation and we want to make it more effective in Edo State."

Highpoint of the engagement was a test flight aboard with the Governor, his Chief of Staff, Gani Audu, amongst others, piloted by Donovan Lombard, who stated that they have been flying aircraft from South Africa into Nigeria, where there is no big industry for the aviation sector, and assured that the collaboration will bring about more effective transportation.



## Emblem Launch: Collective Resolve towards 2025 Armed Forces Remembrance Day

By Orumwense Sarah O.

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has launched the Emblem of the Armed Forces Remembrance Day 2024 and pledged ten million naira to support the cause.

Representing the governor, Secretary to the State Government, Umar Musa Ikhlor, expressed gratitude and solidarity to the Nigerian Legion and members of the armed forces.

Ikhlor emphasized that the emblem launch is not just a tradition, but a symbol of collective resolve to remember the sacrifices of gallant men and women who paid the ultimate price for the nation's peace and security. He also urged citizens to honor veterans who have continued to inspire others with their dedication and resilience.

The Functioning Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Humanitarian Affairs, Aiyegbeni Balogun, noted that the occasion offers a unique opportunity to reflect on the selfless service and unwavering dedication of armed forces personnel.

Similarly, Chairman, Nigeria Legion, Edo State, A.C.G. Ignatius Enabulele, emphasized the importance of appreciating the sacrifices of fallen heroes and veterans. He also called for peaceful coexistence, celebrating diversity, and seeing differences as a source of strength.

The high point of the occasion was the decoration of His Excellency and distinguished guests with the Emblem.

The event was attended by wives of Fallen Heroes, Corps Members, Ex-Service Men, and Staff.



## CHRISTMAS: GOV OKPEBHOLO URGES CHRISTIANS TO EMULATE CHRIST'S VIRTUES

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has urged Christians in the State to rekindle their love for Christ by renewing the virtues of peace, love, and sacrifice, which Jesus Christ epitomized in his earthly teachings.

In his Christmas message to Nigerians, especially Edo people, and signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Fred Itua, Governor Okpebholo emphasized the significance of Christmas as a celebration marking the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ. He called on Christians to strive to emulate wholly the virtues of Christ.

"As the world celebrates Christmas, the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, on behalf of the Government and people of Edo State, I congratulate all Christians for witnessing yet another yuletide season," the Governor said.

Governor Okpebholo advised Christian faithful to use the festive period for sober reflection and total spiritual renewal and devotion towards living in peace and harmony with adherents of other religions.

"As we celebrate, we should continue to extend hands of love and fellowship to our neighbors and live as one big family, irrespective of our social, political, and religious leanings, and continue to trust God for a better tomorrow and a greater country," he added.

The Governor urged Christians in the State to use the yuletide season to be Christ-like by sharing love and giving joy to neighbours, in line with the injunctions of Jesus Christ.

"Whether in business, politics, religion, or ethnic considerations, we must show love to one another as humans, as no religion encourages violence or preaches evil against humanity," Governor Okpebholo emphasized.

He further stressed the need for Christians to discourage violent conflicts and remember the love, peace, and sacrifice that Jesus Christ epitomized



We must realize that we are first Nigerians before our religious beliefs, political leanings, and cultural affiliations, and as such, we must show respect for one another by living in peace," the Governor said.

Governor Okpebholo noted that if Christians love one another as Christ taught, the issues of communal and religious clashes, armed robbery, kidnapping, militancy, armed banditry, terrorism, and other vices will not arise.

## Governor Okpebholo Set to Fulfill Campaign Promise with Road Project in Benin City

By Ebuaneke Joy



In a significant move to enhance infrastructure in Benin City, the Edo State Government has announced plans to commence construction on the road leading to the prayer ground of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Nigeria (CCRN) at Upper Ekenwan. This initiative aligns with Governor Monday Okpebholo's campaign promise to improve the community's access roads.

The Governor disclosed this development during a courtesy visit to the Government House by a delegation from the CCRN, led by its Coordinator, Mr. Otakhor Thaddeus Iredia. Governor Okpebholo expressed gratitude to the group for recognizing his developmental efforts within his first month in office.

He revealed that surveyors had already mapped out the road and assured the delegation that construction would begin soon, emphasizing the urgency of completing the project before the rainy season.

"I thank you for your visit and prayers. When I came to your church, I made a commitment to build the road leading to your prayer ground, and it remains a priority for me," Governor Okpebholo stated. "The house of God is a place of prayer, and I believe your prayers will bring peace to Edo State and the nation."

In addition, the Governor responded positively to the delegation's request to reinstate weekly masses in the Government House. He urged the CCRN to consult the Bishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Benin, Archbishop Austin Akubueze, to select a suitable day for the masses to commence.

Governor Okpebholo also called for continued prayers for the state and for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, seeking divine guidance in leadership.

Speaking on behalf of the CCRN, Mr. Iredia congratulated the Governor on his electoral

victory, praising his swift actions in office. "We are over 28,000 members strong, and we are praying for your success as Governor," he said. "We also appreciate your efforts in sending surveyors to map the road to our prayer ground. Your commitment to fulfilling this promise within your first 100 days is deeply appreciated."

The Chaplain of CCRN, Rev. Fr. Daniel Iyangbe, also appealed for the return of weekly masses in the Government House, a tradition previously halted due to political issues unrelated to the church.

The Governor's announcement has been met with optimism, marking a significant step in his administration's commitment to community development and religious inclusivity.

## Governor Okpebholo Allocates ₦166.5 Billion to Roads, Agriculture in 2025 Budget. *By Omoruyi Patricia Osayomore*



A well-structured financial budget is often regarded as a critical factor in achieving success for any developmental agenda. Reflecting this principle, the Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has dedicated ₦166.5 billion to roads and agriculture in the recently unveiled Edo State 2025 Appropriation Budget.

The budget, aptly titled “Renewed Hope for a Rising Edo,” demonstrates the administration’s focus on key sectors critical to the state’s growth. Of the allocated sum, ₦162 billion is earmarked for road construction and maintenance. This substantial investment aims to address the state’s infrastructural challenges

by ensuring improved road networks, facilitating easier transportation, boosting economic activities, and reducing travel time for residents and businesses alike.

Meanwhile, ₦4.5 billion has been set aside for the agriculture sector, emphasizing the governor’s commitment to food security and agricultural development. The allocation is expected to support initiatives such as modern farming techniques, mechanized agriculture and programs to empower farmers, thereby enhancing productivity and contributing to the state’s self-sufficiency in food production.

These allocations are in line with the governor’s five-point agenda, which he outlined during his inaugural speech. Central to this vision is the transformation of Edo State into a hub of sustainable development, where infrastructural excellence and agricultural prosperity drive economic growth.

By prioritizing roads and agriculture, among other key areas, the administration seeks to create a state where citizens can thrive, with reliable infrastructure and abundance of food resources.

This focused approach is expected to contribute significantly to realizing the envisioned “Rising Edo,” fostering a more prosperous and resilient state for all its residents.

## Gov Okpebholo assures peace in collaboration with Edo Traditional Rulers *By Erharuyi A. Joe*

The Edo State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, has assured traditional rulers in the State of his commitment to work closely with them in tackling insecurity and other challenges at the grassroots.

Sen. Okpebholo gave the assurance when he received traditional rulers from Edo North Senatorial District. He appreciated his guests and asserted that their collaboration will be a veritable instrument for maintaining internal security at the local community level. He stated, “History has shown that they were the first security officers of every community. This is how it ought to be because they know visitors and indigenes of their communities. My agenda is to work closely with you”.

The Governor maintained that his administration has high regard for traditional institutions, citing how he restored the statutory rights of the Oba of Benin, some days before. He said, “We have started righting the wrongs of the immediate-past administration and if you listen to the news recently, we have restored the statutory rights of the Oba of Benin Kingdom”.

The Governor concluded that he will maintain close relationship with the traditional rulers and vowed to restore their rights and privileges fully to them, not minding who must have infringed upon such rights.

Leader of the delegation and Olokpe of Okpe, HRH Oba Idogu III, said the last administration, led by Governor Godwin Obaseki, caused more harm than good. He asserted, “The last administration had done too much harm to the traditional institutions especially in Akoko-Edo in Edo North, where a village head would just be given staff of office in the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy affairs without due process”.



## Gov Okpebholo Commits N66B to Edo People's Health in 2025 Budget

By Eseosa Okhemuokho

The Health of a State and wellbeing of its people is proportional to its productivity. For any state to thrive, the health and welfare of its citizens is crucial. After all, the adage, "Health is wealth" could not be more fitting.

In his budget presentation for year 2025, dubbed "Budget of Renewed Hope for a Rising Edo," the Edo State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, reaffirmed his commitment to the wellbeing of Edo people. The breakdown has a sum of N63.9b (sixty-three billion, nine hundred thousand Naira) for Health, and N1.8b (one billion, eight hundred thousand Naira) for the Health Insurance Scheme, out of a total budget estimate of N605b (six hundred and five billion Naira).

According to the Governor, "The 2025 Proposed Budget is designed to achieve the goals of my five-point agenda which include, Security, Infrastructural Development, Healthcare, Food sufficiency, and Education. We have also aligned this Budget with the Renewed Hope Agenda of the Federal Government, considering its programmes

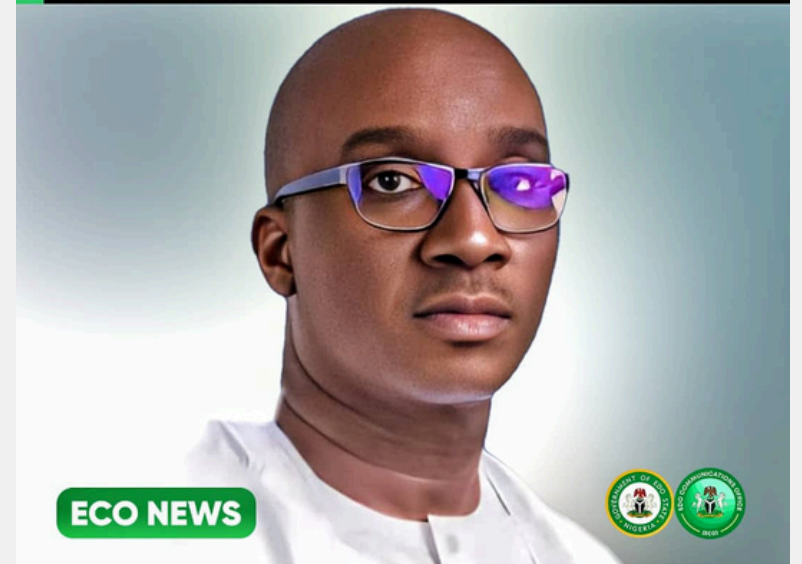
into the State Development Plan, which will guide my administration in 2025.

"For healthcare, N63.9b (sixty-three billion, nine hundred thousand Naira) has been allocated for 2025, with plans to enhance accessibility and affordability. We are reviewing the Health Sector initiatives to increase access to quality healthcare. A total of N1.8b (one billion, eight hundred thousand Naira) has been set aside for Health Insurance to achieve this goal".

In an earlier event and swearing in of the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomole, Governor Okpebholo charged him on working hard, and staying committed to improving the State's Health Sector when he said that the Health Commissioner needs to know that there are challenges ahead and that they need to face head on and ensure a vibrant, efficient and effective Healthcare Sector in the State.

As the title of the 2025 Budget suggests, there is optimism that the Okpebholo

### Gov Okpebholo Commits N66B to Edo People's Health in 2025 Budget



administration will deliver quality healthcare for Edo residents. This will ensure that an average person can conveniently access affordable healthcare, which will foster a healthier and wealthier Edo for all.

## 2025 Appropriation Bill and Budget Estimate Passes Second Reading in Edo State House of Assembly

By Ivy Adodo-Ebojele

The budget proposal and appropriation bill for 2025 in Edo State has passed its second reading in the Edo State House of Assembly.

In introducing the bill, the minority leader of the House, Hon. Eric Okaka, who represents Owan East Constituency, highlighted that the bill has received public acclaim for addressing the deplorable condition of several roads in Edo State. He stated, "The budget aims to remedy many deficiencies in our road infrastructure in Edo State." To this end, the proactive Governor has allocated a total of One Hundred and Sixty-Two Billion Naira (N162,000,000,000) for road infrastructure development in the state for 2025.

Hon. Emmakhu Isibor Adeh, representing Esan North East 1 Constituency, also supported the minority leader, noting that the commendable "Renewed Hope" budget includes a significant increase in the monthly subvention for the highly prestigious Ambrose Ali University, raising it from Forty-One Million Naira (N41,000,000) to Five Hundred Million Naira (N500,000,000).

Other members who expressed their strong support for the bill included Hon. Sunday Aghedo (Ovia South West Constituency), Hon. Kingsley Ugabi (Etsako East Constituency), Hon. Richard Edosa (Oredo West Constituency), and Hon. Jonathan Ibhama (Esan West Constituency).

Also at plenary, the House received three letters from the Executive Governor of Edo State, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, requesting the consideration and confirmation of:

1. Four members of the Edo State Sports Commission.
2. Four members of the Edo State Board of Internal Revenue Service.
3. Four members of the Edo State Local Government Commission.

The Speaker Rt Hon. Blessing Agbebaku referred the confirmation of members for these three commissions to the Committee on Rules and Business for consideration.

### 2025 Appropriation Bill and Budget Estimate Passes Second Reading in Edo State House of Assembly



The House also received and commenced deliberations on a report presented by the House Standing Committee on Public Petitions regarding the continuous denial of access to Johannes Owen Martins, the biological son of Mrs. Sandra Bama Agho Martins. The consideration of this petition was thereafter postponed to a later date for the Executive Section of Members.

The House later adjourned plenary to Monday, December 16, 2024, at 10:00 AM.

## 16 Days of Activism: Edo State Govt renews commitments to ending GBV

By Osemwegie Peace Temisan



The Edo State Government, represented by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Barr. Umar-Musa Ikhilor, has reiterated the State Government's commitments to collaborating with the Federal Government and international organizations in combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Barr. Ikhilor gave the assurance at the grand finale of the year 2024 "16 Days of Activism" against GBV, which held at the New Festival Hall, Government House in Benin City.

To achieve a GBV free society, the SSG said the Edo State Government seeks collaboration with state and non-state actors, including traditional and religious institutions to raise awareness in condemning GBV and harmful cultural practices. He noted that in year 2023, 85,000 women and girls globally, lost their lives to GBV, with Africa leading the statistics.

Barr. Ikhilo highlighted the institutional frameworks, such as the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law and a shelter for sexually assaulted victims, which the State Government has put in place as commitments towards combating GBV in the State.

He said, "Change is a process and that is why we will continue to promote awareness until it gets to the grassroots and people are drawn into the awareness and begin to act appropriately".

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Development and Gender Issues, Mrs. Joy Ihensenkien, emphasized the need for collective action to end GBV in the State. She charged policy makers to prioritize protective frameworks for the vulnerable and punishment for perpetrators; community leaders to dismantle harmful

traditions and champion safe spaces; non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and activists, to amplify silenced voices and sustain advocacy efforts.

Mrs. Ihensenkien concluded that ending GBV is a personal responsibility, which requires individual choices, actions, and words to uphold dignity in the society.

In a goodwill message, the Edo State Coordinator of the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC), Mr. Omokhodion Imonitien, noted that the Conference served as a call to action, urging stakeholders, including the Government, to prioritize State Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) prevention and response. He said, "With the new administration in place, RoLAC seeks an opportunity to renew efforts and realign priorities".

Hartland Alliance Ltd. in a good will message by the Senior State Programme Manager, Dr. Eddichukwu Roderick, commended the Edo State Ministry of Social Development and Gender Issues for its leadership roles in combating GBV, stating that the 16 Days of Activism campaign amplified voices and inspired action; laying the groundwork for transformative change. He pledged solidarity to strengthen partnerships, advocate for survivors, and invest in sustainable solutions.

The State Coordinator, International Organization for Migration (IOM), represented by Aigbeze Uhimwen, reassured of its Organisation's commitment to supporting meaningful projects that ensures the dream of a GBV-free society is actualized.

The Keynote Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Maria

Edeko, virtually gave a brief rundown of GBV interventions in Edo State, its achievements, sustainability and its future plans. According to her, the plans include the creation of more shelters for victims of GBV and pleaded with various stakeholders to step up their response system, which will encourage more persons to will be willing to speak up.

A five-man panel was organized for deliberation on how to achieve the "Edo of Our Dreams: Renewing the Commitments to End Violence Against Women and Girls". The Panel consisted of a representative of key stakeholders such as the Nigeria Police, Traditional Institution, the Ministry of Justice, the Edo State Manager of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) and the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria.

In the course of the deliberation, the Edo State Commissioner of Police, C. P. Iwo Remi, represented by the Officer in Charge of Gender Issues, Priscilla Ndudi, sought for synergy among stakeholders and urged victims to ensure that prompt reports are made to avoid contamination of evidence which is needed for prosecution and justice.

Highpoint of the event was the presentation of awards by the Functioning First Lady, Mrs. Edesili Anani, to outstanding individuals and organisations, who have made remarkable differences in the crusade against GBV in the State. Receivers of the awards were the Deputy Speaker, Rt. Hon. (Mrs.) Maria Edeko; Echoes of Women in Africa, International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Josemari Escriva Foundation, Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) Foundation, and Society for the Empowerment of Women and Children (SOTHAWACA).

## Edo State Govt has Zero Tolerance for GBV – Dr. Oshiomhole

By Edebor Esther

The Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Oshiomhole, has reiterated that the State Government abhors and will prosecute all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) in the State.

Dr. Oshiomhole, represented by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Dr. Stanley Ehiarimwian, reaffirmed the State Government's commitment to addressing GBV in all its forms, while speaking at the Conference marking the conclusion of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, organized by the Ministry of Social Development and Gender Issues.

The event which held at the Festival Hall of the Edo State Government House in Benin City, highlighted the importance of raising awareness about GBV. Dr. Oshiomhole remarked, "The 16 Days of Activism is an annual initiative aimed at sensitizing the public about GBV.

At the Edo State Ministry of Health, we are intolerant of all forms of abuse against women, girls, boys, and men. Women play crucial roles in our society, and this is why we are putting measures in place to protect them".

He linked GBV to broader health and welfare concerns, noting, "You cannot discuss the welfare of an individual without addressing their health. As we climax the 16 Days of Activism, we renew our commitments to ending violence against women and girls. The Government takes GBV seriously, as evidenced by the successful conviction of several offenders, with others currently facing trial".

The Health Commissioner highlighted the roles of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Edo State, which provides comprehensive care for survivors of sexual assault. "We have dedicated doctors and other



health personnel; ensuring victims receive proper care. However, stigma remains a significant challenge, preventing many victims from speaking out. The more we address stigma, the more empowered victims will feel to come forward," he explained.

He called on victims to speak up and assured them of the State Government's support. "We urge victims to come forward, and we will ensure they receive the necessary help while ensuring perpetrators face justice," he concluded. ssioner highlighted the roles of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Edo State, which provides comprehensive care for survivors of sexual assault. "We have dedicated doctors and other

## GOV OKPEBHOLO FLAGS OFF 4.7km NEW ROAD IN BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has flagged off the 4.7km Utteh Palace road, in fulfilment of his electioneering promise to the people of the area.

The Governor flagged off the construction of the road on Monday evening. The new project is located in Benin City, Edo South Senatorial District of the State.

Governor Okpebholo said he has keyed into the renewed hope agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to construct more roads in the State, as well as touch other sectors.

During the ceremonial flag-off, Governor Okpebholo said when completed, the road will connect Ikpoba-Okha to Uhunmwonde Local Government areas of the State.

The Governor recalled that he was in the area about three months ago, during his campaigns and had promised to fix the road.

Governor Okpebholo, said he was back to the area in fulfilment of his electioneering promise to address the challenges posed by the road to businesses and residents in the area.

"I was here about three months ago during my campaigns. When we came, the situation of the road was very bad, but I promised the community that when we come into government, we will fix the road and make it motorable for our people. We said we were coming to work on the road and ensure it is motorable and today we are here.

"We are here to keep to our promises to flag off this road and make it a road that our people can ply and will be happy with. We are walking in the steps of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. This is all about the renewed hope agenda. We are the President's children and we do not want him to ask me what I



am doing for the people. It is better we do the work for him to see, even as we work on more roads in the State," Governor Okpebholo noted.

The contractor handling the project, Risen Fan, said his company will work with the State Government and the host community to ensure its timely completion.

"We will deliver a good job with high standards and in time too. We will work with the Government to bring more innovations and investments to the State in different areas namely Agriculture, ICT, Education, Healthcare among others," he said.

Secretary of the community, Mr Lucky Asemota, thanked the Governor for remembering the people of Utteh and for keeping to his campaign promise by flagging off the construction of the road, which he said has made residents of the area happy.

## **Edo State Waste Management Board embarks on waste evacuation in markets** ... Unveils Plan for 24hrs waste evacuation **By Edeniye Abraham Osose**



Towards making Edo State one of the cleanest in Nigeria, the Edo State Waste Management Board, led by its Managing Director, Mr. Lucky Enehita-Inegbenehi, has launched a comprehensive waste evacuation exercise across major markets in the State.

The operation which included free logistics for waste removal, is in fulfillment of the promise made by Mr. Enehita-Inegbenehi during a recent inspection tour of some markets in Edo South Senatorial District, including Egor, and Uwelu Spare Parts.

Speaking to journalists at the site of the evacuation, Mr. Enehita-Inegbenehi reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring cleanliness across the State in harmony with the vision of the Governor Okpembolo-led administration. "This morning, we decided to come here to evacuate the waste in the market free of charge. His Excellency wants to make the State the cleanest in Nigeria. We have all the plans in place, and as time goes on, you will see it," he said.

Mr. Enehita-Inegbenehi also revealed the introduction of a 24-hour evacuation programme set to begin in January, 2025. According to him, the initiative aims to carry out waste removal during the evenings, ensuring that markets remain clean and tidy when traders and customers arrive in the morning. He appealed to traders and residents to adopt a culture of cleanliness, emphasizing its importance in achieving the State Government administration's goal.

In a response, Comrade Collins Osa, a trader at Uwelu Market, commended the efforts of the State Government and the Waste Management Board. "We appreciate and thank the amiable Governor for this wonderful programme. If everywhere is dirty, we cannot attract customers to do business with us, and it could lead to the spread of diseases. This initiative is a welcome development, and we, the traders, will support the State Government to achieve this goal," he said.

The exercise, which saw waste piles being evacuated, has been hailed as a practical demonstration of the State Government's commitment to environmental sustainability and public health. The initiative is expected to bolster the State Government administration's efforts to make Edo State a model of cleanliness and efficiency in Nigeria.



## Edo Waste Management Board inspects Facility of Global Vision International

By Edeniye Abraham Osose

The Edo State Waste Management Board, led by its Managing Director, Mr. Lucky Enehita-Inegbenehi, has carried out an inspection of the Global Vision International (GVI) facility, located at 56, Ewa Road, Ikpoba Slope, Benin City.

Mr. Enehita-Inegbenehi disclosed that the purpose of the visit was to assess the Company's waste management system and classify the facility under the supervision of the Board's Commercial Department, headed by Mr. Martin Akhigbe.

During the inspection, Mr. Enehita-Inegbenehi praised GVI for its commitment to maintaining a clean environment and adhering to the Edo State Waste Disposal Regulations. He emphasized the importance of sustainable waste management by corporate organizations in achieving the State's vision for a cleaner and healthier society.

He stated, "We are here to ensure that your waste management practices meet the State standards. This evaluation will also determine the appropriate category for your facility to receive effective waste collection and supervision services".

Mr. Akhigbe, outlined the criteria for categorizing facilities to include analyzing the type and volume of waste generated. He assured the GVI Team of the Board's full support in maintaining compliance and fostering efficiency in waste management practices.

The CEO of GVI, Prince Dr. Omon Ebosele, welcomed the initiative and expressed appreciation for the Board's proactive engagement. He reaffirmed the Company's commitment to collaborating with the State in promoting environmentally friendly practices.



Mr. Akhigbe guided that the inspection forms part of the Edo State Waste Management Board's ongoing drive to enhance waste management practices across corporate and industrial sectors, in conformity with the State's broader environmental sustainability goals.

## Okpebholo Launches Emblem Fund for 2025 Armed Forces Remembrance Day Celebration

By Nosakhare Agbonigiarhuoyi

Edo State governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on Friday, December 13, 2024, launched the emblem appeal fund for the 2025 Armed Forces Remembrance Day Celebration, at the State's government house, Benin City.

The governor, who was represented by the Secretary to the State government, Barr. Umar Musa Ikhilor, eulogized the Armed Forces for their resilience, dedication and sacrifices towards nation building.

He said: "Armed forces remembrance day is a time to reflect on the sacrifices made by our galant servicemen and women, who through courage stood as defensive wall of our national unity. It is also a moment to honour our veterans who continue to inspire us with their dedication and resilience.

"In nation building, all of us give something to people in our country but there are men who give everything and these men are part of Nigerian Armed forces; and that is why it is imperative that we remember their sacrifices."

Furthermore, the governor reaffirmed the State's commitment towards building a society where peace, security and unity prevail, and urged all citizens to support the Armed Forces Remembrance Day's activities.

"Let us take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to building a society where peace, security and unity prevail; a society worthy of the sacrifice made by our Armed Forces. It is in this light that I wish to reemphasize the need for us to work as a nation together in unity; beyond diversity, beyond differences of tribes and tongues and religion, to come together and build a sense of nationalism, loyalty and brotherhood; and there is no better body presently in Nigeria that symbolizes this brotherhood than the Nigerian Armed forces.



"As we embark on this year remembrance activities, I urge all citizens to support this noble course wholeheartedly. Your contributions, be it financial, moral or symbolic, goes a long way in providing care, rehabilitation and empowerment for those who have served and for the families of the fallen."

He added: "The Edo State Government is launching this year's emblem with the sum of 10 million naira. His Excellency, the Executive Governor, is urging all of us to donate generously, and wear the emblem with pride and participate actively in the remaining activities coming up on the 15th of January, 2025."

## Edo State HOS Advocates Synergy Through Feedbacks For Productivity

By Grace Oakhiena

IN SERVICE CORNER

The Head of Service (HOS), Edo State, Dr. Anthony Okungbowa, has sued staff of the Ministry of Mining and Energy to freely share information and express their thoughts towards enhancing productivity within the Service and the Ministry's workplace.

Dr. Okungbowa gave the charge on Wednesday, 18th December, 2024, during his official visit to the Ministry in Benin City. He expressed his delight at being among civil and public servants and encouraged staff to optimise opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness at work place.

According to the HOS, his primary objective was to create a platform where employees can freely share ideas and give feedbacks, which would result in optimum productivity in the State. He also conveyed the State Governor's intentions for the State, saying his desire is to create an environment where civil servants

can thrive in all aspects.

"The Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, is working out policies and programmes to ensure that you are able to grow and develop within the State. The Governor told me, civil servants thought they had enjoyed before, but they have not seen enjoyment," He stated.

In his remarks, the HOS commended the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Mrs. Ese Martina Omoruyi, for her outstanding leadership and transformative initiatives. He praised her efforts in changing the general outlook of the Ministry by expanding its reach, and significantly increasing productivity.

The visit was seen as a morale booster for staff, and the HOS' commendations of the Permanent Secretary's achievements is a testament to the Ministry's progressive initiatives and potentials for future growth in the State.



## Edo State Govt Holds Closing Ceremony for Graduate Development Programme Cohort 2

The Directorate of Corporate Change Communication and Performance Management (Transformation Office), under the aegis of the Office of the Edo State Head of Service, has concluded the Graduate Development Programme Innovative Project Presentation and Closing Ceremony for Cohort '2'.

Speaking at the event, which held at the John Odigie Oyegun Public Service Academy (JOOPSA), in Benin City, the Permanent Secretary of Transformation Office, Dr. Mrs. Joy Akhigbe, described the programme as a strategic initiative aimed at retaining top talents in the Edo State Civil and Public Service. She maintained that the initiative targets first-class graduates of Edo State origin from universities across Nigeria, offering them immediate employment in the public sector.

Dr. Akhigbe explained that the programme involves a one-year rotational engagement across various ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). She said that the approach

provides participants with a broad understanding of the Civil Service operations, which equips them to excel in any MDA to which they will be posted

, and that at the end of the programme, participants are expected to present innovative projects which the government can implement.

In his remarks, the Permanent Secretary of the Hospital Management Agency, Dr. Efosa Aisien, commended the programme for its focus on developing innovation and resourcefulness among participants. He described the initiative as strategic, enabling young graduates to influence the system positively. He expressed confidence in the trainees, noting their potential to contribute significantly to Edo State's development.

Agoni Clinton and Timothy Maryjane were recognized as the overall best trainees. Both expressed gratitude to the Edo State Government for the opportunity to gain professional and leadership exposure, which they credited for enhancing their skills and confidence.

The programme underscores the commitment of the Edo State Government to nurturing and retaining exceptional talents in the Public Service, aimed at bolstering innovation and driving sustainable development in the State.



## Edo State HOS sues MDAs synergy in fostering sustainable development, accountability *By Eghosa Emily*

### IN SERVICE CORNER



The Edo State Head of Service (HOS), Dr. Anthony Okungbowa Esq., has assured that collaboration among ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) would optimally accelerate the development of the State with guaranteed prosperous future among the comity of states in the Country.

Dr. Okungbowa, represented by the erstwhile Permanent Secretary, Human Resources, Mr. George Igberease, gave the assurance during a two-day Thematic Pillars' Engagement, organised by the Directorate of Corporate Change, Communication and Performance Management (Transformation Office), for heads of MDAs and held at the John Odigie Oyegun Public Service Academy (JOOPSA) in Benin City.

The HOS described the event as a pivotal moment in the State's developmental journey. He outlined the focus areas of the two days' meeting, which was structured around eight thematic pillars – Institutional Reform, Infrastructural Development, Environmental Sustainability, Security and Public Safety, ICT Ecosystem, Arts and Culture, Social Welfare Enhancement, and Economic Revolution.

According to the HOS, "These pillars represent the foundation of our mission to drive

sustainable growth and improve the quality of life for our people". He stressed the importance of collaboration, urging participants to use the forum to celebrate progress, identify areas for improvement, and co-create strategies that align with the State's priorities.

Dr. Okungbowa while acknowledging the hard work of the Planning Committee, commended the professionalism displayed in the organization of the event. He encouraged active participation, stating that meaningful engagement and collaboration are critical to achieving the desired outcomes.

"As we embark on this two-day journey, let us remain committed to our shared vision of excellence, innovation, and service delivery. Together, we can chart a path toward a brighter and more prosperous future for our State," he concluded.

The Permanent Secretary of the Transformation Office, Dr. (Mrs.) Joy Akhigbe, emphasized the importance of evaluating the achievements and challenges of MDAs annually. She explained that the gathering aimed to identify key issues affecting the efficiency of MDAs and bring them to the attention of the Head of Service and the Governor for further necessary action.

Dr. Akhigbe stated that the meeting will review performance metrics at individual and organizational levels. She maintained that the move was aimed at fostering accountability and continuous improvement across all sectors of governance in the State.

She disclosed that the engagement sessions had revealed significant challenges faced by MDAs, which were hindering their performance. She also highlighted the introduction of a new work appraisal module which is designed to address gaps in performance. According to her, the module will provide a comprehensive review of activities for the year and will be fully operational by year 2025.

Participants at the meeting who expressed appreciation for the initiative include the Director of Shared Services in the Office of the Deputy Governor, Mr. Omobu Sam. He described the programme as valuable, noting that it provided a clear assessment of the year's activities, uncovered areas requiring improvement, and helped participants prepare more effectively for year 2025. He added that the session offered an opportunity to address unmet aspirations and realign goals for the coming year.

## EWMB Boss Charges Environmental Corps on Cleanest State Status

By Abraham Edeniyere



Towards realising the vision of the Edo State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo of making the State to be one of the cleanest in Nigeria, the Managing Director (MD) of the Edo State Waste Management Board (EWMB), Mr. Lucky Enehita-Inegbenehi, has called on the Environmental Sustainability Corps (ESC) to redouble their efforts to achieve the Board's objectives of cleanliness.

Mr. Enehita-Inegbenehi gave the charge while addressing the 176 members of the ESC at the Government House in Benin City. He emphasized the need for collective action between the government and the residents, saying, "The vision is very clear; we want Edo to

be the cleanest State in Nigeria, and our slogan is 'We Can Do'. To achieve this, some of you will be deployed to key markets across the City, including Oregbeni, New Benin, and Oba Market".

He warned against dereliction of duties, stressing that corps deployed to specific locations must adhere strictly, as sanctions await defaulters. He sued that the task is a collective mission, which must be given the attention it deserves. He stated that salaries would be a function of attendance and diligence to duty, with zero tolerance for absenteeism.

As part of efforts aimed at ensuring clean environment, the EWMB Boss urged shop owners to take responsibility for cleanliness around their premises, saying shop owners must ensure that the area from respective shop to the walkway is clean. He concluded that shop owners will be accountable for any dirt found around their shops.

The ESC's mandate is expected to accelerate efforts in achieving the State's sanitation goals, ensuring a cleaner and healthier environment for Edo residents.

## Gov Okpebholo Pledges Business-friendly State, woos Investors

By Nosakhare Agbonigiarhuoyi

The Edo State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, has pledged to create the enabling environment for businesses to thrive in the State.

Sen. Okpebholo gave the assurance on Tuesday, 3rd December, 2024, during his visit to Yongxing Steel Company Limited, a privately-owned Chinese Steel Manufacturing Company, situated at Ogua Community in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of the State.

In a statement signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Edo State Governor, Fred Itua, the Governor appreciated the Company's Management for its contributions to the State's growth and development. He appealed to them to be committed to their social responsibilities to the State.

The Governor said, "Your contributions matter to us as a State. You have generated employment for our people and contributed to the growth and development of our economy. We are ready to provide an enabling environment for businesses in the State to thrive. We urge you to bring more investments to the State.

"I appeal to you to promote our people to also be part of the Management Team of this Company, to enable us feel as part of you. I want to also remind you of your social responsibility to our people and the State."

The Chairman of Yongxing Steel Company Limited, Xianghai Zhang, who was represented by the Company's Managing Director, Frank Wang, congratulated the Governor on his inauguration, and assured him that the Company will partner with his administration.

Zhang said, "We will collaborate with you to ensure that together, we build a business-friendly environment to promote economic development in the State. Collaboration is key in achieving the vision of development, growth and prosperity in the State".



## Gov Okpebholo appoints Dr. Njoku as CMD of Edo Specialist Hospital

By Erharuyi A. Joe

The Edo State Governor, His Excellency, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, has appointed Dr. Mrs. Anthonia Inibokun Njoku (Nee Ebare), as the Chief Medical Director (CMD) of the Edo Specialist Hospital, Benin City.

According to the statement signed by the Secretary to the Edo State Government (SSG), Umar Musa Ikhilor Esq., the appointment of Dr. (Mrs.) Njoku takes effect from 4th December, 2024.

As part of Dr. (Mrs.) Njoku's academic qualifications in the medical field, the statement says, "Dr. (Mrs.) Njoku attended the College of Medical Sciences, University of Maiduguri; West African College of Surgeons, West Africa Bioethics Institution, Ibadan; the University of Benin and the Harvard T.H CHAN School of Public Health, where she obtained the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (M.B.B.S.), M.Sc. in Reproductive

Health, Diploma in Bioethics and Certificate in Principles and Practice of Clinical Research, Harvard T.H CHAN School of Public Health, Harvard Boston.

The Statement continues, "Dr. (Mrs.) Njoku is a Fellow of the West African College of Surgeons (FWACS), Fellow, International College of Surgeons; Past Secretary, Nigeria Medical Association; Member, Society of Gynaecology and Obstetrics of Nigeria; Member, Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria (MDCAN) as well as the Medical Women's Association.

The statement concluded, "Dr. Anthonia Inibokun Njoku has served in several capacities in various Health Institutions. Until her appointment, Dr. Anthonia Inibokun Njoku (Nee Ebare) was a Senior Lecturer, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, College of Medical



Sciences, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma and Honorary Consultant Sp. Grade 1, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital, Irrua, Edo State".

## Press Release: CAF Champions League: Gov Okpebholo rallies support for Edo Queens

Ahead of the last group match in the ongoing 2024 CAF Women Champions League in Casablanca, Morocco, between Mamelodi Sundown of South Africa and Edo Queens, the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo has hailed the team for their achievements so far and has charged them to beat the South Africans to enable them to lead Group B into the semifinals.

The Governor assured them of his continuous support, as they represent the state and Nigeria in Morocco.

Governor Okpebholo said that his new administration is in solidarity with the girls who are representing the State and Nation at the Confederation of Africa Football Women Champions League in far away Morocco.

"I think the girls might be worried about the change of leadership in the Edo State, but I want them to know that we are with them. I have been briefed, and I know our team is in Morocco doing well. So, we will not abandon them. We are aware of the exploits, and I urge them to continue to dominate.

"My message to Edo Queens is that they have nothing to worry about. We are solidly behind them. We want our girls to beat Sundown Saturday and win for me.

"Go ahead to also win the cup and bring it to your fatherland. Sports will surely be given the top priority it deserves in my Government," the statement read.

Edo Queens will engage in a fierce battle with the defending champions Mamelody Sundown Girls in the last group game of the CAF Women Champions League on Saturday, November 16 2024 in Casablanca, Morocco. The match is scheduled to kick off at 6 pm on Saturday.

The Nigeria Women Premier League champions, Edo Queens began with a 3-0 victory over Commercial Bank of Ethiopia with Emem Essien, Folashade Ijamilusi, and Goodness Osigwe scoring for the Queens.

Edo Queens ended their second match in a goalless stalemate with Masar FC of Egypt on Wednesday to lead Group B. They need a draw to qualify for the semifinals.

Signed:  
Fred Itua,  
Chief Press Secretary to Edo State Governor



## Edo Dep Gov Congratulates Oshiomole On LEADERSHIP Award Nomination As Politician of the Year 2024

By Godspower Eguasa



Edo State Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa has congratulated Senator Adams Aliu Oshiomhole on his nomination as Politician of the Year 2024 by LEADERSHIP Group Limited for his contributions and commitment to democratic governance, economic development and nation-building.

Idahosa, in a statement by his chief press secretary, Friday Aghedo, described the Edo North senatorial district representative in the National Assembly as a father and mentor whose leadership on national development is nothing less than exemplary, noting that he was

privileged to have been groomed by the former governor.

"I owe Oshiomhole for what I have become politically today. I have tried to emulate him for all that I do politically today. Oshiomhole's idea of politics is always about the people and nothing more.

"I heartily congratulate my father and mentor, Sen. Adams Oshiomole on his well-deserved award as Politician of the Year 2024, nominated by the management of topmost Nigerian Newspaper, LEADERSHIP.

"I am proud to be associated with you. Your impact and contributions to the country's development have given hope to many.

"Political leadership should be citizen-centric and that is what you have always championed relentlessly. I celebrate your impact, lofty achievements and what you have done and still doing for humanity. I am proud to have you as my leader. Accept my hearty congratulations your excellency," Idahosa said.

## Gov Okpebholo dissolves AAU Governing Council, other State-owned tertiary institutions ... *disengages management staff of Edo Specialist and Stella Obasanjo Hospitals*

Edo state Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has approved the dissolution of the Governing Councils of all state-owned tertiary institutions.

In the same vein, the Governor has also approved the disengagement of the Management Staff of Edo Specialist Hospital and Stella Obasanjo Hospital, Benin City with immediate effect.

Both approvals were conveyed in a "Government Special Announcement" dated November 20, 2024 and signed by the Secretary to the State Government, Umar Musa Ikhilor, Esq.

"It is hereby announced for the information of the General Public that the Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo has approved the dissolution of the Governing Councils of all State owned Tertiary Institutions in Edo State with immediate effect.

"Accordingly, all affected members of the Governing Councils of all State owned Tertiary Institutions are to handover all Government properties in their possession to their respective Heads of the Institutions.

"It is hereby announced for the information of the General Public that the Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo has approved the disengagement of the Management Staff of Edo Specialist Hospital and Stella Obasanjo Hospital, Benin City with immediate effect.

"In view of the above, the Management Staff of the aforementioned hospitals are to handover all Government properties in their possession to the most senior officer in their various Institutions," he announced.



## Gov Okpebholo Names Gani Audu Chief of Staff

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has approved the appointment of Hon. Gani Audu as his Chief of Staff. The appointment takes immediate effect.

In an official communication signed by the Secretary to the State Government, Musa Umar Ikhilor, Audu's appointment will help Governor Okpebholo in driving meaningful reforms in the State.

"It is hereby announced for the information of the general public, particularly the good people of Edo State, that His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Governor of Edo State, has approved the appointment of Hon. Gani Audu as his Chief of Staff. The appointment takes immediate effect," the official

communication signed by the Secretary to State Government read.

Hon. Audu, born 18th August 1969, obtained an HND from Auchi Polytechnic in 1994, a PGD in Business Administration from Benson Idahosa University in 2011 and an M.Sc in Intelligence and Global Security from Baze University, Abuja in 2024.

Hon. Audu was elected Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Council from 2004 to 2010. He was elected member Edo State House of Assembly (Etsako West Constituency 1) from 2015 to 2023.

Hon. Audu was the deputy governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress in the 2020 Edo State Governorship elections.



## CHRISTMAS: Year 2025 Will Be Better For Edo People - Governor Okpebholo

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has assured that his administration will make 2025 a better year for the people, through practical and good governance.

Okpebholo gave the assurance while delivering his goodwill message at the hallowed chamber of the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA), venue of the 2024 Nine Lessons and Carol, organized by the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku for Honourable Members and Staff of the Assembly.

The Governor who joined the 24 Honourable Members and Staff of EDHA in a melodious tune, thanked God for his blessings upon the State and prayed for love, oneness and unity of the State as it progresses into 2025.

"God has been good to us in the State. As the year is coming to an end, we will not end with the year, but see the end of it and together we shall all enter 2025, praying for more blessings," he stated.

The high point of the Carol was the rendition of different melodious tunes by the EDHA choir and El-Excess Choral choir to the delight of everyone, even as Santa Claus entertained the audience.



## Governor Okpebholo Signs N675BN 2025 Budget Into Law



Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has signed the 2025 Appropriation bill of N675 billion, tagged 'Budget of Renewed Hope for A Rising Edo' into law after the bill was passed by the Edo State House of Assembly.

Assenting to the bill at the Government House, Benin City, Governor Okpebholo said the budget would revive the economy of Edo State and deliver the dividends of democracy to the people of the State.

Governor Okpebholo said: "I have just signed into law, a budget of 675,220,058,858.52 tagged a renewed Hope budget for a rising Edo. It is hoped that the 2025 approved budget will revive the economy of Edo State and deliver the dividend of democracy to the good people of the state."

He also mentioned that, in preparing the budget, special care was taken to ensure that a larger percentage was appropriated for capital expenditure, stressing the administration's commitment to embarking on massive capital project in the new fiscal year

The Governor further commended the Speaker of Edo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku and other members of the Assembly for the speedy consideration of the budget.

Speaking earlier while presenting the bill to the governor, Rt Hon. Agbebaku said the budget was significantly increased from the initial sum of 605billion to ensure more funds is allotted to the agricultural sector.





Ministry of Communication  
and Orientation

"My administration will embark on practical governance as it will key into the renewed hope agenda of president Bola Tinubu to improve road infrastructure in the state."

**Sen. Monday  
Okpebholo**

*Governor, Edo State*

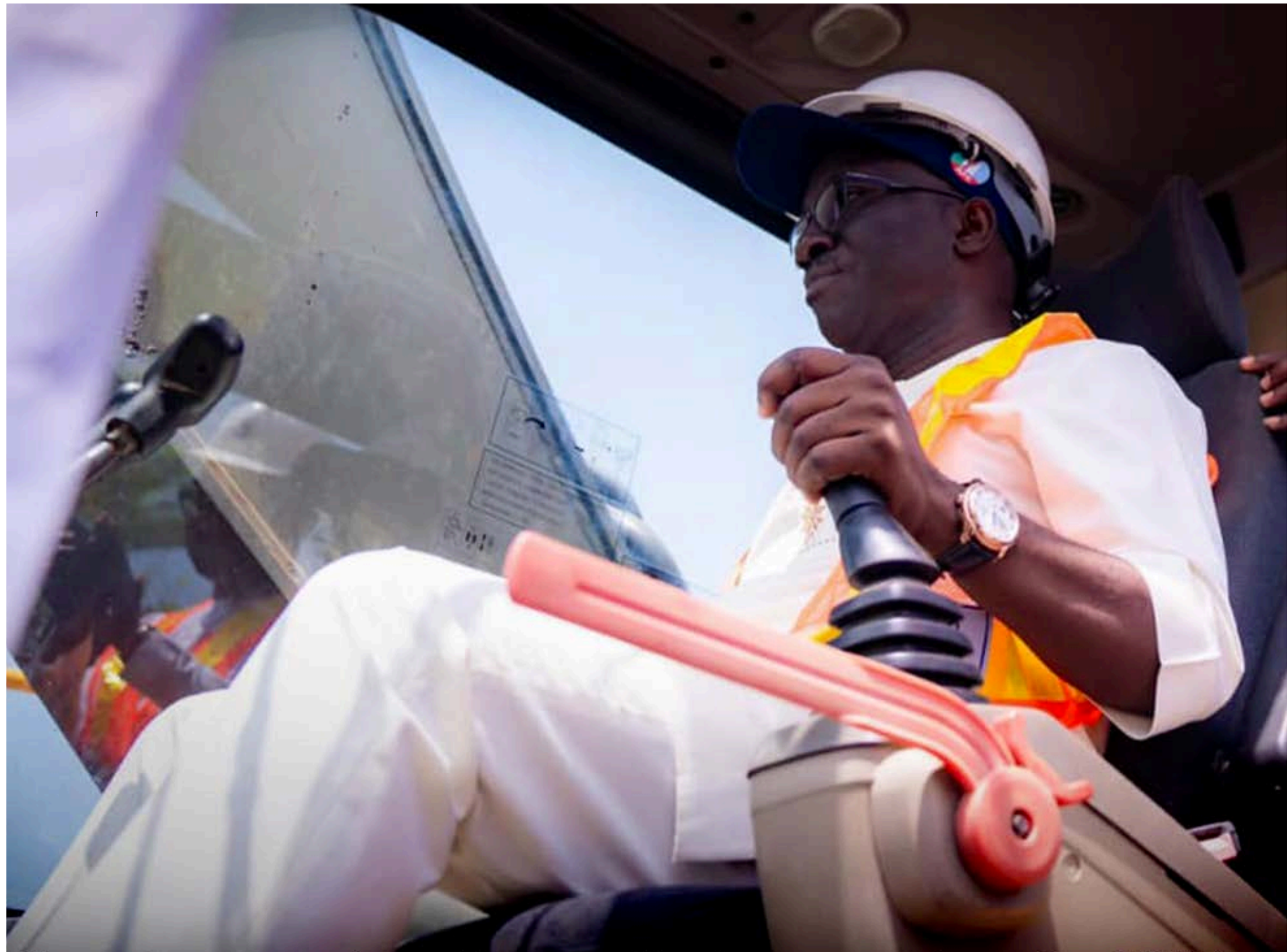




"We shall partner with the Federal Government and other stakeholders to develop road infrastructure in Edo State".

**Sen. Monday Okpebholo**  
*Governor, Edo State*





"I am honoured and happy that our great party, APC is bringing good governance and dividends of democracy to the people of Edo State and Nigeria in general"

**Sen. Monday Okpebholo**  
*Governor, Edo State*





Ministry of Communication  
and Orientation



"Your contributions matter to us as a State. You have generated employment for our people and contributed to the growth and development of our economy. We are ready to provide an enabling environment for businesses in the State to thrive. We urge you to bring more investments to the State".

—— **Sen. Monday Okpebholo**

*Governor, Edo State*

## Christmas: Gov Okpebholo Urges Christians to Emulate Christ's Virtues

... emphasizes the need for Christians to discourage violent conflicts and remember the love, peace, and sacrifice that Jesus Christ epitomized.



ECO NEWS

## Okpebholo Pledges Commitment to Fair, Equitable Recruitment Process in Edo Civil, Public Service

...chides heads of MDAs on ongoing recruitments clouded in secrecy, nepotism and lack of due process



ECONEWS

## Gov. Okpebholo restores full statutory rights to Oba of Benin



ECONEWS

## Dr. Oshiomhole Inspects Health Facilities on First Day in Office

The newly appointed commissioner for health pledges to align his work with the the State Governor, Sen Monday Okpebholo's agenda of providing quality healthcare services



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