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Daily InfoNews...

Daily News Bulletin is a daily publication of the Cross River State Ministry of Information and Orientation for the entertainment and Education of all Cross Riverians and the general public about the daily events, activities and programmes of government and the private sector operating in all parts of the State.

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CROSS RIVER STATE

VISION STATEMENT

To become a leading Nigerian State with prosperous, healthy and well educated citizens; living in harmony with people and nature, and pursuing legitimate interest in freedom moderated by good governance.

MINISTERIAL MANDATE

To project and protect the image of Government and act as Chief Image Maker/Spokesman for the State as well as supervision of the State Media Organisation.

VISION

To be the best organ of the State for the promotion of positive values, its image and overall endowment to Cross Riverians, Nigerians and the Diaspora.

Mission

To utilize in harmony all apparatus of government media to effectively disseminate information, educate and entertain the public, using the electronic, print media and interpersonal communication channels.

Tax laws: No bank account will be debited, Oyedele assures



The Federal Government has reassured that the new tax reforms, set to take effect from 1 January

2026, will not involve automatic debits from personal bank accounts, and individuals do not need to provide

explanations for transfers.

Addressing widespread misconceptions surrounding the

reforms, the Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, Mr. Taiwo Oyedele said on Channels Television's special programme on Tuesday said: 'People think that the government will debit their bank accounts from next year, and how they even came up with that, I have no idea. Nobody will debit your account for any amount you transfer. Whether it's a billion or one thousand naira, at the end of the year, you tell the government yourself'.

Explaining the process and emphasising its simplicity and transparency, Oyedele said that

the new tax system simplifies reporting and ensures fair taxation for small businesses, without burdening the vulnerable.

'You know what constitutes your income and what doesn't. So you tell the government: 'This is my income and here is the tax'. If you are exempted, you simply declare: 'This is my income, and I am exempted from tax'. It is a very simple process that we are simplifying further.

'One of the biggest benefits is that if you run a small business as a sole proprietor, an enterprise, or you are just hustling, the system will no longer be regressive, taxing the vulnerable more. We've made

it progressive', he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, President Bola Tinubu confirmed that the implementation of the new tax laws will commence as scheduled, despite criticisms from political figures, opposition groups, and labour unions.

ICAN urges accountants to embrace AI, ethical integrity
B3, NGX discuss potential areas for cooperation – Kwairanga

Tax reforms: Govt will not deduct from bank accounts, Oyedele assures

Tax ID not mandatory for all Nigerians Oyedele In a statement, President Tinubu said the laws are not designed to increase taxes but

to support a structural reset, promote harmonisation, protect citizens' dignity, and strengthen the social contract.

'The new tax laws, including those that took effect on 26 June 2025, and the remaining acts scheduled to commence on 1 January 2026, will continue as planned.

'These reforms are a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a fair, competitive, and robust fiscal foundation for our country', he said.

The president called on all Nigerians to support the reforms as they take effect in the coming days.

The reforms, signed into law in June 2025, aim to simplify Nigeria's tax system, broaden the tax base, and protect low-income earners and small businesses.

Key provisions of the tax reforms include full personal income tax exemption for those earning ₦800,000 or less, while higher earners face progressive rates capped at 25%.

Small businesses with turnover under N100 million are exempt from company tax, VAT, and the new development levy, and corporate tax for larger firms drops from 30 to 25%.

VAT remains at

7.5% with exemptions for essentials, and revenue collection will be centralised under the Nigeria Revenue Service.

Despite some controversy and court challenges, the government has clarified that ordinary citizens will not face automatic debits or new taxes, and exemptions cover minimum wage earners, pensions, gifts, remittances, and diaspora Nigerians.

The reforms are designed to ease tax burdens, support small businesses, and promote a fairer, more transparent tax system while driving economic growth, it said.

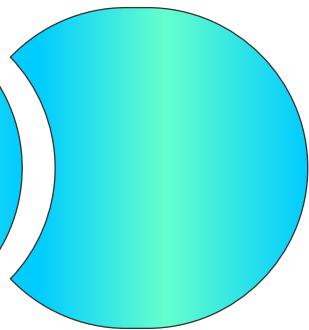
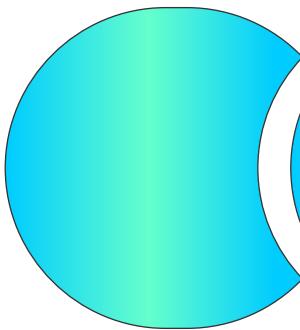
SACA DG Extends Hearty New Year Greetings to Gov. Otu, Bishop Eyoanwan, and Cross Riverians

By Nakanda Iyadim



The Director General of the Cross River State Agency for the Control of AIDS (CR-SACA), Dr. Charles Iwara, has conveyed heartfelt New Year felicitations to the State Governor, Senator Prince Bassey Otu, and the First Lady, Bishop Eyoanwan Otu, as well as to all Cross Riverians at home and in the diaspora.

Highlighting Achievements and Commitment
Dr. Iwara took the opportunity to commend the significant milestones achieved by the Governor Otu-led



administration, particularly in expanding access to quality healthcare across all 18 Local Government Areas.

He specifically noted that CR-SACA has been a major beneficiary of the Governor's generous support for the State's HIV prevention campaign. Calling on all citizens to unite and rally around the Governor's people-centric government, Dr. Iwara highlighted the ambitious plans for the

coming year.

He disclosed that the recently signed 2026 Budget is robustly programmed with activities dedicated to prevention campaigns, which are crucial now more than ever, given the recent global funding cuts.

He also celebrated the immense success of the recently concluded "Wise Up" Carnival Festival Campaign, which was sponsored by the UNFPA.

Recognizing the vital role this

awareness programme plays in shaping the health choices of the youth, Dr. Iwara announced that the State Government is planning complete ownership of the initiative to ensure its sustainability and continuous impact.

Dr. Iwara extended his warmest wishes for a prosperous and HIV-free 2026 to all Cross Riverians and visitors to the State.



JOHN OWAN-ENOH FOUNDATION MSME SUPPORT PROGRAM PHASE 2

The Minister of State for Industry, Dist. Sen. John Owan Enoh, hereby declares open the 2nd phase of the John Owan Enoh Foundation MSME Support Program to mark the New Year Celebration!

Click the link below to apply online or print the physical Application Form and fill.

<https://hmindustry.com.ng/dashboard/application/create>

Wishing you all a Prosperous New Year!

A few things to note:

1. Beneficiaries from Phase 1 should not bother to apply in this phase. If you do, the system is built to identify you and you will automatically be disqualified from all related programs.
2. Those who applied in phase one and were not selected can simply log in and reapply. They no longer need to do the initial registration.
3. Note also that there is no lobbying, no political party connection and no recommendation whatsoever or from anyone, that will qualify any applicant. All applicants stand the same chance based on the viability of their business idea and available spaces.
4. The form for the informal sector added a few more details and will be available on this same space. Kindly note that any applicant who applies online and still fills the informal sector form will be automatically disqualified.

Thank you once again and have a happy new year celebration.

hmindustry.com.ng (<https://hmindustry.com.ng/dashboard/application/create>)

Account Login - Owan-Enoh Foundation MSME Support Program

Empowering businesses in Cross River and Cross Riverians worldwide with Owan-Enoh Foundation MSME Support Program.

Over 181,000 Condoms Distributed as Cross River State Concludes 9th Edition of “Wise Up” Youth Health Campaign at Carnival Calabar

By Nakanda Iyadim



The Cross River State Government, through the State Agency for the Control of AIDS (CR-SACA) and the Ministry of Health, with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and

other partners, has successfully concluded the 9th edition of the “Wise Up Carnival Calabar” Youth Health Campaign.

The month-long campaign, which ran from December 1 (World AIDS Day) to December 29,

2025, was implemented alongside the annual Calabar Festival and the iconic Carnival Calabar, popularly known as Africa’s biggest street party.

Since its introduction in



2016, the Wise Up Carnival Campaign has become a strategic platform for the State Government to reach adolescents

and young people with sexual and reproductive health services, HIV prevention messages, and other essential

healthcare services, particularly during the festive season when large numbers of visitors troop into the State.



The 2025 edition of the campaign was implemented under the theme "Your Choice Leaves Traces," aligning with Carnival Calabar's 20th anniversary



theme, "Traces of Time." The message emphasized the importance of responsible decision-making and the long-term health implications of choices made during periods of celebration.

A major highlight of the campaign was the establishment of a Wise Up Health

Booth at the Calabar Christmas Village, one of the busiest social and entertainment centres during the festive period. The booth provided youth-friendly and stigma-free access to integrated health services, outside the traditional hospital setting.

Over a 21-day period, the campaign recorded

impressive results. Nearly 100,000 persons were reached with direct health education, behavioural counselling and sexual and reproductive health information and services. More than 181,824 male and female condoms were distributed, while 1,189 persons received



HIV testing, with all positive cases promptly linked to care and treatment.

Other services provided included malaria and

hepatitis screening, blood pressure and blood sugar checks, family planning services, pregnancy testing, medical consultations and referrals, as well as

counselling and referral services for survivors of gender-based violence.

Implementation of the campaign was driven by over 75



trained volunteers, including health personnel from the Cross River State Ministry of Health, youth peer educators, civil society representatives and creative artistes. During the grand carnival parade on

December 29, volunteers participated as a non-competing "Wise Up Health Band," engaging spectators along the 12-kilometre carnival route with health messages, condom distribution and advocacy for increased investment in the

health sector, particularly in the context of declining donor funding.

Flagging off the campaign earlier in the month, Governor Bassey Otu, represented by the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Henry



Egbe Ayuk, reaffirmed the State Government's commitment to sustaining integrated health service delivery during major public events.

Speaking on the campaign, the Director-General of CR-SACA, Dr. Charles Iwara, described Wise Up as a cost-effective

and practical approach to maintaining HIV prevention and youth health services during periods of high mobility.

Also speaking, Mr. Oke Nteigbanam, Adolescent SRH/HIV Analyst with UNFPA in Cross River State, noted that the carnival provided a unique opportunity

to reach young people in a relaxed, stigma-free environment.

"As young people celebrate during the festive period, the Wise Up Campaign ensures they also receive the right information and services to make informed choices about their health," he said.



As Carnival Calabar marked its 20th anniversary, the successful implementation of the 2025 Wise Up Campaign further demonstrated the Cross River State Government's commitment to promoting adolescent and youth health, strengthening HIV

prevention efforts, and ensuring that cultural celebrations go hand in hand with responsible health choices.

The achievements recorded underscore the critical need for increased and sustained investment in adolescent and

youth health, to consolidate gains and ensure the long-term impact of public health interventions across the State.

Osogi Honours Aide at Traditional Marriage in Nkum

By Sylvia Okoi



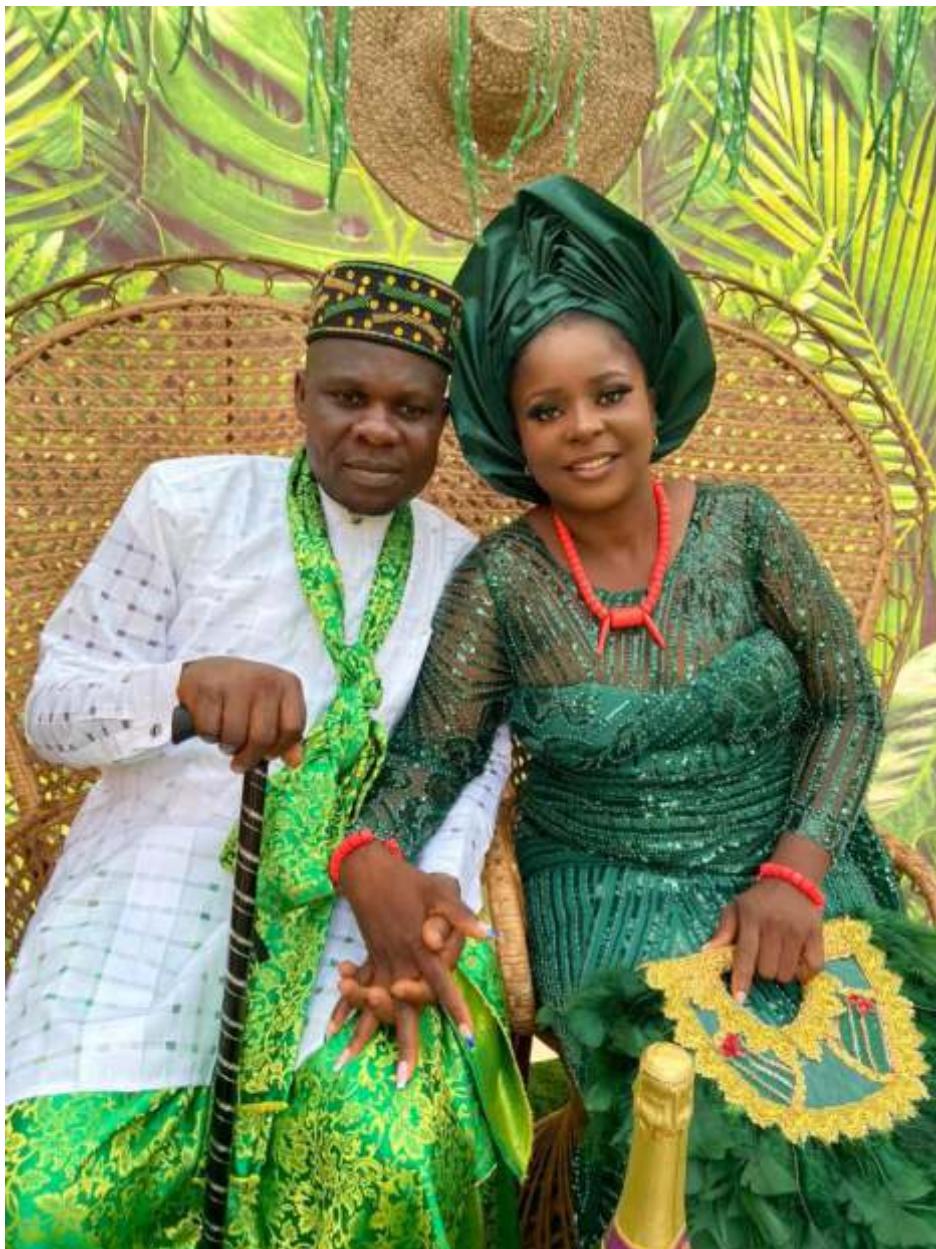
The Cross River State Commissioner for Environment, Obol Moses Osogi, on Monday, January 2, led an entourage to the traditional marriage

ceremony of his personal aide, Mr. Ernest Ofem, and his bride, Miss Gift, in Nkum village, Ikoma L.G.A.

The ceremony took place at the bride's hometown and was preceded by the

formal payment of the bride price and other traditional marriage rites as demanded by the bride's family.

Speaking at the event, Commissioner



Osogi, who served as the Father of the Day, admonished the couple to live in peace and harmony. He described marriage as honourable and noble, noting that God is pleased with a good marriage. He further urged the couple to put God first in all their endeavours. The commissioner also acknowledged his fatherly role in the life of the groom, advising him to



emulate good moral values and be a responsible father to his children and a patient husband to his wife.

Earlier, the Chairman of the occasion, Executive

Secretary, Ikom Urban Development Authority, Mr. Nsak Osed, advised the couple to be peace loving and to embrace dialogue as a means of resolving conflicts.

In his vote of thanks, the groom,

Mr. Earnest Ofem, expressed appreciation to all who attended the ceremony. He particularly thanked his boss, Commissioner Osogi, whom he described as his second father, for grooming him, instilling discipline, and inculcating a sense of responsibility in him.

The event was graced by family members, political affiliates, friends, and well wishers.



New Year Message: Gov Otu Reaffirms Unity, Highlights Key Milestones in 2026



Cross River State governor, Senator Bassey Edet Otu, has called on Cross Riverians to sustain unity and collective purpose as the surest pathway to shared prosperity, declaring that the state's steady progress is the fruit of inclusive governance and deliberate

collaboration.

In his 2026 New Year message entitled: "Together, We Flourish," the governor expressed profound gratitude to God for life and preservation, noting that many who began 2025 with the state did not live to see the New Year.

Reflecting on the

journey so far, Governor Otu reminded the Cross Riverians that from the outset of his administration, he made it clear that governance would be participatory. "I was not pretentious of having all the answers," he said, stressing that development could only be achieved through collective

effort. This conviction, he explained, birthed the "Think Cross River" initiative—an attitudinal reorientation project urging citizens to place the state's interest above personal considerations.

The governor said this philosophy of togetherness informed the constitution of key advisory and governance structures, including the State Elders' Forum (SEF), the Economic Management Team (EMT), the state Strategic Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), and the Party Caucus Forum (PCF). According to him, these bodies were designed to provide both wisdom and

technical guidance in steering the affairs of the state.

He commended members of the various bodies for their shared vision and cooperation, noting that his cabinet reflects the diversity of Cross River State. "Every ethnic nationality, every local government area and every senatorial district is a stakeholder in my administration," Governor Otu stated, describing these steps as "verifiable indices of an inclusive government."

Otu said the unity of purpose has yielded tangible dividends, evident in improved livelihoods and visible achievements across sectors. He said the gains recorded in the past two and a half years

are the direct outcome of collective resolve and consistent teamwork.

On agriculture, the governor disclosed that his administration has deliberately repositioned the sector as the backbone of the state's economy. He announced the establishment of crop-specific clusters across the state, with rice in Ndok Ogoja, cassava in Odukpani and Obubra, oil palm in Boki and Akamkpa, cocoa in Etung and Ikom, alongside coffee cultivation statewide. He also revealed that a Value Chain Policy Strategy committee has been inaugurated for cocoa, oil palm and coffee.

To enhance productivity, Governor Otu said 108 three-wheel tractors have been distributed to farmers' cooperatives, while 100 fishing and commercial boats were provided to riverine communities. He added that oil palm estates are being repositioned through Public-Private Partnerships, while digital soil mapping has been completed to guide prospective agro-investors. "We recently performed the groundbreaking for the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone in partnership with the African Development Bank," he noted.

On infrastructure, the governor described the

Bakassi Deep Seaport as the state's most significant economic game-changer. He recalled that following comprehensive technical studies, the Federal Executive Council approved the project with an initial capital outlay of \$2.27 billion. "On December 17, 2025, we received the Certificate of Compliance—the final approval document. We are now counting days to the formal groundbreaking," he announced.

Governor Otu also revealed that Cross River State has successfully reclaimed ownership of the Tinapa Business and Resort Limited from AMCON after years of inactivity. He disclosed that

discussions are already underway with investors, particularly in agriculture-related ventures, to revive the iconic facility.

The governor urged Cross Riverians to remain united, stressing that togetherness remains the key to sustained progress. "To come together is the beginning, to stay together is progress, and to work together is success," he said, wishing the people a prosperous New Year and God's manifold blessings. He reaffirmed his commitment to leading a government anchored on unity, continuity and shared prosperity.



Happy New Year 2026



Erasmus Ekpang, Ph.D, anipr, ftifuh
Commissioner For Information

Chief
Image-Maker
of Cross River State



FG halts plans to cede 10,000 hectares of land to Cameroon



The Federal Government has halted plans to cede more than 10,000 hectares of Nigerian land to neighbouring Cameroon following concerns over improper boundary demarcation.

The lawmaker representing Ikom/Boki Federal

Constituency, Mr Victor Abang, disclosed this during a constituency briefing on Wednesday at Keyang II in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Abang said the proposed cession was linked to the 2002 International Court of Justice

ruling, which stipulated that the Nigeria–Cameroon boundary be defined in line with the 1913 Anglo-German Treaty.

He explained that a joint implementation committee attempted to demarcate the boundary without due regard to



established colonial boundary features, including Pillar 113A, a recognised demarcation point between both countries.

According to him, failure to observe the historic boundary would have resulted in the loss of more than 10,000 hectares of Nigerian territory, including parts of Biajua and Danare communities in Boki.

Abang said he presented a motion on the matter on July 5,

2023, which was deliberated upon by the House of Representatives, leading to the suspension of the exercise pending a comprehensive review.

The lawmaker also presented a two-year scorecard titled "The Banjuere", highlighting projects such as a mini stadium, telecommunication masts linking 35 communities, and N300 million worth of medical equipment.

He further disclosed that he

sponsored the National Park Service Amendment Bill, aimed at environmental conservation and the establishment of the Okwangwo National Park Unit as an independent entity.

Abang said the bill was expected to enhance the economic, ecological and developmental value of the Boki forest and its surrounding communities.

Akpabio Reaffirms Senate's Commitment to National Stability in 2026



The President of the Senate, Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON, has expressed confidence that 2026 will be a year of renewed hope and steady national progress, anchored on institutional responsibility, legislative diligence, and collective resolve.

In his New Year

message, signed by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Hon. Eseme Eyiboh, Senator Akpabio acknowledged the resilience of Nigerians and underscored the central role of the National Assembly—particularly the Senate—in sustaining democratic stability, promoting accountability, and advancing the

nation's development agenda.

"As we enter the year 2026, I extend my warm wishes to Nigerians for a peaceful and fulfilling year. I commend the resilience, patience, and civic maturity of our people, even in challenging times," the Senate President said.

He noted that while the Executive continues to implement its policies, the National Assembly remains firmly committed to its constitutional responsibility of lawmaking, representation, and oversight, ensuring that governance outcomes reflect the aspirations of the Nigerian people.

"The Senate and the entire National Assembly will continue to discharge their duties with diligence—providing legislative support where necessary, exercising oversight where required, and always acting in the best interest

of national unity, economic stability, and social justice."

Senator Akpabio expressed cautious optimism that ongoing efforts to address insecurity, economic pressures, infrastructure gaps, and youth unemployment would yield more visible results in the coming year, stressing that sustainable progress depends on strong institutions rather than personalities.

"Our democracy is strengthened when institutions function properly and leaders remain accountable. The National Assembly will continue to work to strengthen these institutions and to ensure that public policy is people-centred and

forward-looking."

Looking ahead to increased political activity as the nation approaches the 2027 general elections, the Senate President cautioned Nigerians against divisive politics and false messianic narratives.

"As political activities intensify, Nigerians must remain discerning. History has shown that those who present themselves as sole rescuers often deepen division rather than heal it. Democracy thrives on ideas, responsibility, and respect for national unity—not inflammatory rhetoric or deception."



He urged political actors to conduct themselves with restraint and a sense of national duty, noting that the Senate will continue to uphold democratic norms, parliamentary discipline, and the rule of law.

“The National Assembly remains committed to constructive engagement with the Executive, the

Judiciary, and all stakeholders, to build a more united, just, and prosperous Nigeria—where leadership is defined by service and institutions outlive individuals.”

The Senate President concluded by calling on Nigerians to remain engaged, vigilant, and hopeful in the year ahead.

“I urge Nigerians to

continue to support democratic institutions and to work collectively for peace, equity, and national progress.

“On behalf of my family, my constituents, the Senate, and the entire National Assembly, I wish all Nigerians a peaceful celebration and a prosperous 2026.”

Akposi Presents N13.39bn “Budget of Consolidation” to Akamkpa 8th Legislative Assembly



The Chairman of Akamkpa Local Government Council, Hon. (Ophot) Felix Akposi KSJI, has formally presented the 2026 Appropriations Bill to the 8th Assembly of the Akamkpa Legislative Council, unveiling a ₦13,393,409,690

Budget of Consolidation aimed at deepening development, strengthening the local fiscus, and sustaining people focused governance.

Presenting the budget on the 30th of December, 2025 during a plenary session of the House, Hon. Akposi explained that the

2026 estimate represents a marginal increase of ₦2,367,355,221 over the revised 2025 budget. He noted that the proposal was crafted in strict alignment with the Medium Term Expenditure Framework and reflects the administration's resolve to



reposition Akamkpa as a preferred tourist destination with a vibrant economy, enlightened citizenry, and a stable atmosphere of peace and security.

According to the Chairman, the budget is both

consolidative and forward looking, designed to complete ongoing projects while initiating new interventions consistent with the administration's guiding mantra of "Serve the People."

"This budget is a continuum of our

promise to the people of Akamkpa," Hon. Akposi stated. "It is anchored on fiscal prudence, equity, and the responsible management of our commonwealth. We are consolidating on gains already recorded while



laying a solid foundation for inclusive growth and sustainable development.”

He outlined the projected revenue sources to include an opening balance of ₦232,380,10, internally generated revenue of ₦151,868,833, SSA of ₦10,500,000, FSA of ₦2,907,168,031, and total recurrent revenue of ₦3,943,229,361. Recurrent

expenditure is projected at ₦3,943,229,361, while capital expenditure stands at ₦9,450,180,329, underscoring the administration’s emphasis on infrastructure and long term value creation.

The sectoral allocation of the budget shows a deliberate balance across critical areas. The Social Services Sector is allocated ₦2,163,375,825

representing 27 percent, while the Economic Sector receives ₦2,152,883,478 also at 27 percent. The Environment and Regional Development Sector is earmarked ₦1,178,006,972 accounting for 23 percent, with General Administration proposed at ₦1,238,269,600, bringing the total allocation to 100 percent.



On capital revenue receipts, the Chairman disclosed that transfers from consolidated revenue fund charges amount to ₦799,496,440, opening balance ₦38,972,709, value added tax ₦2,060,908,442, excess crude ₦12,500, exchange rate differential ₦328,010,885, government share of foreign exchange ₦75,465,780,

electronic money fund ₦138,476,365, ecological fund ₦343,843,255, non oil revenue ₦108,416,384, solid mineral revenue ₦18,696,450, and other capital receipts ₦15,550,000. Grants and loans were recorded as nil, bringing total capital funds to ₦2,341,343,830.

Extracts from the budget further indicate a 31 percent contribution

from the joint account, statutory contributions to Cross River State reserved funds, counterpart funding obligations, capital expenditure commitments, contingency provisions, and projected surplus or deficit positions, all structured to preserve macro stability at the local level and ensure consensus ad idem between the executive and legislature.

Formally laying the budget before the House, Hon. Akposi appealed for partnership and expeditious consideration.

"I respectfully seek the collaboration of this Honourable House to give this budget the necessary scrutiny and timely approval," he said. "Together, we can chart a new course for Akamkpa and translate these figures from the exchequer into tangible benefits for our people."

Responding on behalf of the legislature, the Leader of the 8th Assembly, Hon. (Princess) Magdalene Ekpe, commended the Chairman for what she described as proactive and

visionary leadership.

"Your visible imprint in project implementation and delivery is commendable," she said. "It is the prime objective of this House to synergize with you to ensure that the people of Akamkpa truly enjoy the dividends of democracy and your sacred commitment to service."

She further described the proposed budget as people oriented, assuring the Chairman of the Assembly's readiness to undertake diligent deliberations and ensure a smooth passage.

"This budget reflects the aspirations of our constituents," Hon. Ekpe added. "This House will do the needful so that

every provision captured is translated into real impact for the people of Akamkpa."

The high point of the session was the formal presentation of the 2026 Budget of Consolidation to the 8th Assembly, followed by a brief photo session, marking another significant step in the council's ongoing quest for prudent appropriation, responsible governance, and sustainable development.

Carnival Calabar: Senator Jarigbe Commends Gov. Otu's Revival Initiatives



The Senator representing Cross River North Senatorial District, Senator Jarigbe Agom Jarigbe, has hailed the Calabar Carnival as a unique brand that deserves protection and promotion.

He made this remark at the 2025 Calabar Carnival grand finale, themed

"Traces of Time," held in Calabar.

The 20th edition of the Calabar Carnival (Africa's Biggest Street Party) featured vibrant displays of colors, creativity, and cultural expression by various bands, among other activities.

Senator Jarigbe noted that the event showcases

Nigeria's rich cultural heritage and commended Governor Otu's administration for reviving the carnival after years of decline.

He urged governments and the private sector to collaborate in protecting and promoting the Calabar Carnival as an international brand. The Lawmaker also



commended the State government's efforts in

sustaining the festival, which aims to position Cross River as a tourism

and hospitality hub in Nigeria and Africa.



News Commentary On Celebrating The 20th Anniversary Of The Carnival Calabar -Africa's Biggest Street Party

The iconic Carnival Calabar—one of the greatest tourism offerings of Cross River State, is marking a significant milestone this 2025, as it celebrates 20 years of showcasing Nigeria's rich cultural heritage christened "Africa's Biggest Street Party".

Founded by Governor Donald Duke in 2004 then as Carnival float before it later metamorphosed into Carnival Calabar in 2005 with the formation of five competing Bands including Bayside, Sea Gull,

Passion 4, Masta Blasta and Freedom Carnival Bands; the Carnival has grown into a premier tourism brand, boosting the



State's economy through encouraging the growth of small scale enterprises and promoting unity among Nigerians and indeed Africa as a whole.

In its revolutionary trajectory, under the leadership of Governor Liyel

Imoke, the Carnival from 2007, expanded its scope and appeal while solidifying its position as a major cultural event in the Calabar Festival programmes with the introduction of the Children Carnival, King and Queen Competition as well as the Miss Carnival Beauty Pageant.

Then came the tenure of Governor Benedict Ayade, who scrupulously continued to support and enhance the Carnival's activities with the introduction of

Miss Africa beauty Pageant alongside other innovative offerings to give it that African appeal as well as expand its scope and iced it with the introduction of two additional competing Bands- Diamond and Calas Vegas Bands.

In 2023, being his first outing, Governor Bassey Edet Otu introduced an innovative theme, "Season of Sweetness", which emphasized on the importance of community cohesion and people centred inclusiveness.

Building on this success, the 2024 edition focused on "Shared Prosperity", to highlight the benefits of

collaboration and mutual growth. Governor Otu went on to decentralised the Carnival celebration in the State through the introduction of the Ikom and Ogoja Carnivals, to accommodate residents of Local Government Areas in the Central and Northern Senatorial Districts of the State, respectively. In addition, the Governor through the Carnival Commission Law provided a legal framework for the operations of the Carnival as an entity in the State. His tenure has also witnessed the introduction of the Miss Humanity Beauty Pageant, the Diaspora Carnival Band as well as the massive light up of major Streets in

the Calabar Metropolis. This year's edition themed "Traces of Time", is the marking the 20th Anniversary of the Annual showpiece.

Over the years, Carnival Calabar has featured spectacular parades, live music performances and cultural exhibitions, attracting a large population of visitors from across the globe into Calabar for the annual extravaganza. The event has also provided a platform for local artistes, artisans and businesses to showcase their talents and products as well as advanced their enterprises.

Carnival Calabar is a testament to the power of culture in driving economic growth and social cohesion", said Governor Bassey Otu."We are committed to sustaining this legacy and exploring new ways to promote our rich heritage."

As we celebrate two decades of Carnival Calabar , Tourism stakeholders in Nigeria are optimistic about its continued success following its rich history, vibrant culture and commitment to innovation, making it a shining example of Nigeria's cultural excellence.

Furthermore, examining its overall

gains, one will definitely agree that a 20 year milestone is significant for several reasons. Indeed ,the Carnival Calabar has played a crucial role in preserving and promoting Nigeria's cultural appeal showcasing its rich history, music and art.

As a major tourist attraction, it has contributed significantly to Cross River State's economy, generating substantive revenue and creating over ten thousand jobs through the craft, fashion and talent components.

In two decades, the Carnival Calabar has evolved, incorporating new themes at every

year's celebration. Today, it pride itself as one of the innovative institutions as well as an iconic global tourism brand ,ranking top fifth in the World.

More so, the Carnival's success is a testament to the visionary leadership of all former Governors of the State- Donald Duke, Liyel Imoke, Ben Ayade and now Bassey Otu who have supported and enhanced the event with continuous expansion in content and trending innovations.

Indeed the Carnival has gained international recognition, attracting visitors from around the



world to Calabar, showcasing Nigeria's cultural richness globally with over two billion television viewership annually.

These milestones celebrate the Carnival's enduring impact on Nigerian culture, economy and society paving

the way for continued growth and innovative expansion.

As we conclude the 2025 Calabar Festival and Carnival programmes, we extend our profound gratitude to all visitors for making this year's showpiece a remarkable one. It

can only get better in 2026. Happy New Year Nigerians

This News Commentary is Compiled by the Ministry of Information, Cross River State.

Ekpang Family Welcomes New Year with Thanks Giving

...As Family Holds Thanksgiving Mass, Celebrates Daughter's 9th Birthday in Calabar

By Rose Undie and Solomon Effiom



The family of Dr. and Mrs. Erasmus Ekpang has expressed profound gratitude to God for the gift of life and abundant blessings as they marked a special thanksgiving service and birthday

celebration in Calabar. The thanksgiving Mass was held on Sunday during the 9:00 a.m. service at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, drawing friends, relatives, associates, and well-wishers who gathered to share in the family's joy

and prayers. The occasion also marked the 9th birthday of their daughter, Eliana, whose celebration added colour and warmth to the event. The young celebrant was showered with love, goodwill messages, and gifts from family

members and guests, reflecting the joy of another year of growth and grace. Speaking during the mass, Dr. Erasmus Ekpang expressed heartfelt appreciation to God for life, good health, and the opportunity to serve humanity. He also thanked his Excellency Senator prince Bassey Otu the Governor of Cross River State and his wife for the opportunity given to him to serve. He noted that the

thanksgiving was an expression of the family's unwavering faith and gratitude for God's continual guidance and protection. "We are truly grateful to God for another year of life and His countless blessings upon our family," he said, adding that the celebration was also an opportunity to reaffirm their trust in God for the future. The celebration later continued at the family's residence, where

guests were treated to a warm reception, sumptuous meals, and a ceremonial cake-cutting in honour of Eliana's birthday. The thanksgiving Mass and birthday celebration highlighted the Ekpang family's deep commitment to faith, family values, and gratitude, as they look ahead with hope, joy, and renewed thanksgiving for the blessings they continue to enjoy.

Absolute Cooperation With God, An Antidote To Human And Spiritual Challenges

....rev Fr Bassey



Christians have been reminded of the necessity to be disposed to the workings of God in submissiveness and unblemished cooperation.

Rev Fr Emmanuel Bassey, Priest of St Anthony of Padua, Quasi Parish, Basin Satellite Town, Calabar who was

speaking in a homily on New Year day said that absolute cooperation with God is the only plausible antidote to human and spiritual problems.

He said that in emulation of the family of Jesus Christ who willingly accepted the demands from God and became the first Holy Family ,

Christians must allow the will of God to permeant their lives.

The Priest emphasized that entering into the new year with obedience to God mentality is all that was needed to make a difference in both spiritual and physical wellbeing.

Rev Fr Bassey pointed out that healthy mind and body will always be guaranteed when God is allowed to guide life navigation.

The Mass featured family Thanksgiving and prayers for good fortunes for the year 2026.



Our Ref: GO/HOS/4/VOL. III/280

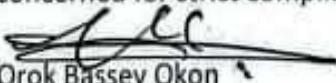
DECEMBER 10, 2025

The Hon. Speaker,
The Hon. Chief Judge,
All Commissioner/Special Advisers,
The Secretary to the State Government,
The Chief of Staff,
All Chairmen of Commissions & Boards,
All Permanent Secretaries/Special Assistants,
The Clerk of the House/Chief Registrar,
The Accountant-General/Auditor-General (State/Local Govt),
The Head of Personal Staff to the Deputy Governor,
All Heads of Extra-Ministerial

HEAD OF SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 9/2025
RE-DESIGNATION OF THE INFORMATION CADRE AS INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER CADRE

The Office of the Head of Service wishes to notify the Ministry of Information of the re-designation of the existing Information Cadre to the Information & Public Relations Officer (IPRO) Cadre with immediate effect.

2. The re-designation is in line with ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening professional communication functions, enhancing public engagement, and ensuring alignment with national and global standards of public information management.
3. Consequently, the following academic qualifications and professional certifications shall now be recognized and accepted for entry, progression, and professional practice within the Information & Public Relations Officer Cadre:
 - a. Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communication
 - b. Bachelor's Degree in Journalism
 - c. Bachelor's Degree in Theatre Arts
 - d. Other related degrees and communication-based qualifications
 - e. Professional certifications from the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR)
 - f. Professional certifications from other recognized and reputable bodies in the field of communication, media, and public relations.
4. You are requested to take necessary steps to implement this directive, including updating all establishment records, scheme of service references, and relevant personnel documentation to reflect the new designation.
5. Please bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all officers and departments concerned for strict compliance.


Orok Bassey Okon
Head of Service





CIVIL DEFENCE, CORRECTIONAL, FIRE AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES BOARD (CDCFIB)

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

IMPORTANT UPDATE ON CDCFIB RECRUITMENT EXERCISE

The Civil Defence, Correctional, Fire and Immigration Services Board (**CDCFIB**) wishes to inform the general public that plans are ongoing towards moving to the next stage of its recruitment exercise i.e physical screening/document verification.

Accordingly, applicants who performed well have been shortlisted on merit and are advised to visit the Board's official recruitment portal address at "recruitment.cdcfib.gov.ng" from **Wednesday 7th to Friday 9th January, 2026** to select their preferred screening venue and date.

Kindly note that official communication with respect to the next stage of the exercise shall be only through the Board's portal. Applicants are advised to disregard any communication via email or other channels.

The screening exercise will hold from **Monday 12th to Friday 16th January 2026** across the 36 States and the FCT.

The Board wishes to congratulate successful applicants and wishes to reiterate that the selection process was in line with Federal Character principle as well as the needs of each of the Services.

e-Signed

AM Jibril

Maj Gen (Rtd)

Secretary to the Board

29th December, 2025

OLD FEDERAL SECRETARIAT, AREA 1, PMB 95 GARKI, ABUJA



MINISTRY OF INFORMATION
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

<https://www.crossriverstate.gov.ng> ■ Email: commissioner@moi.cr.gov.ng

Ref: CR/MOI/AD/385/VOL.IV/237

18th December, 2025

PRESS STATEMENT

CLARIFICATION ON REGULATIONS FOR TAKING OF PHOTOGRAPHS AT THE CROSS RIVER STATE LIBRARY COMPLEX

The attention of the Government of Cross River State has been drawn to the unregulated and uncoordinated taking of photographs and making of Videos by users and visitors to the recently re-opened Cross River State Library Complex.

These unwholesome trends have continued to remain an issue of great concern to the Management of the Cross River State Library and the Government wishes to address them in the overall interest of the Public as follows:

1. The Cross River State Library Complex remains a public institution owned by the Cross River State Government. It has not been sold, leased, or transferred to any individual or private entity.
2. Government wishes to however note that certain sections within the State Library Complex -such as the Café and Multi-Purpose areas; are managed spaces established to promote sustainability, orderliness, and the protection of public assets.
3. The already introduced guidelines regulating photography and videography within designated areas of the Library Complex were introduced solely to preserve a conducive learning and research environment for users. These measures were further intended to reduce overcrowding, limit noise and distractions as well as prevent the misuse or damage of Library facilities.
4. Government wishes to emphasize that as a public Library, maintaining quiet study conditions and safeguarding resources remains a core responsibility of Management of the Library.
5. Again, Government recognises the fact that unrestricted filming and photography can lead to congestion and disruption of services for other Library Users.
6. In the light of the above, all clients-group or Individual, MUST give prior

notification and receive formal approval from the Library Management to guarantee seamless identification and Commercial Photography in the Complex.

7. Government further directs all clients and users to strictly adhere to the guidelines to correct all noticeable inconsistencies, enhance engagements and avoid congestion in the Library. They are also to note that these standardised guidelines are not intended to penalise Library Clients and Visitors but to make the Library more accessible, orderly, serene and beneficial to all members of the public.

Finally, Government sincerely appreciates the support so far and solicits for continued cooperation so that together with the Library Management, improved service delivery and transparency will be achieved in line with international best practices.

Thank you, as Government wishes you all a merry Christmas and a happy New year -2026.



Erasmus Ekpang Ph.D., anipr, tifuh
Commissioner for Information.





Indiscriminate BUSH BURNING is still outlawed in Cross River State.

**Do not indulge in indiscriminate bush
burning. Avoid the wrath of Government.**



MINISTRY OF INFORMATION
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

<https://www.crossriverstate.gov.ng> ■ Email: commissioner@moi.cr.gov.ng

Ref: CR/MO/AD/365/VOL.IV/

12th December, 2025

PRESS STATEMENT

**DESTRUCTION/STEALING OF PUBLIC UTILITIES BY CRIMINAL
AND UNSCRUPULOUS ELEMENTS**

The Government of Cross River State has observed with dismay and total disappointment the inordinate stealing and destruction of Public Utilities recently installed by the "People First" administration of His Excellency, Senator Prince Bassey Edet Otu for use by members of the Public, especially in this Yuletide Season of Sweetness.

These unscrupulous and criminal elements are surreptitiously destroying and vandalizing Solar Light Installations, Christmas Lights installed to light up the Calabar City Centre in the Spirit of Yuletide Season while some have taken their destructive tendencies too far by stealing Port-Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company's Meters, thereby obstructing Power Supply in some parts of the Calabar Metropolis. The Government in very strong terms, condemns these unwholesome trends which it should be noted, are alien to the Culture and tradition of our people. Besides, these destructive activities totally negate the robust infrastructural development of the State in line with the "People First" Agenda of Governor Otu, who is putting in place all these social amenities and facilities for use by the populace.

Accordingly, the Government has raised the RED FLAG and hereby directs all Security apparatus in the State to beam their search light on these criminal elements and miscreants with a view to arresting them to face the full weight of the Law. Government further directs the Special Adviser on Public Utilities and his team that have the mandate to protect, secure and provide services to collaborate with all relevant Government MDAs to embark on massive sensitisation of residents on safety, compliance and prosecution of defaulters.

Members of the Public are kindly advised to take note and report any suspicious activity and movement around these installations and amenities to: Engr. Jerome Egbe, Ph.D Special Adviser to the Governor on Public Utilities or to the nearest Police Station for prompt and necessary action.

Let us remain vigilant as we savour the best of the 2025 Calabar Festival. Merry Christmas and Happy New year-2026.

Erasmus Ekpang Ph.D., anipr, ftifuh
Commissioner for Information.

DG CRSEMA Remind Cross Riverians Of Extant Laws Against Indiscriminate Bush Burning

By David Akate



The Director General, Cross River State Emergency Management Agency CRSEMA, Mr Antigha Gill has reminded the people of the State of the extant laws against indiscriminate bush burning and it's consequences.

The DG who was speaking in an interview with correspondents in his office emphasized that the State Government has activated all law enforcement apparatus including the traditional governing structure to keenly watch out for culprits for arrest and prosecution.

Mr Gill lamented the progressive destruction of the State flora and fauna in massive scale through indiscriminate bush burning especially during the dry season.

He disclosed that 2025 recorded large farm lands



and reserve forests as well as crops worth millions of Naira consumed by unwarranted inferno occasioned

by careless use of fire which has grossly affected the socio-economic landscape of the State.

According to him, while he acknowledged that rural farmers require discreet burning of farmlands for crop cultivation igniting portions not needed is uncalled for culminating in economic waste.

He challenged the leadership at the grassroots level to support government in the campaign against indiscriminate bush burning by monitoring their subjects with a view to checkmating the ugly trend.

The DG also expressed his worries over the high rate of urban fires which has in recent times consumed property worth billions of Naira leaving in it



trails lost of lives and massive displacement of people.

He attributed the causes of the incidences to electrical defaults, cooking gas explosions and improper handling of other combustible materials stressing that such sad situations can be controlled with

commitment by citizens.

Mr Gill said that in due course the consistent synergy with fire fighting outfits in the State will converge in intensive public training on the prevention and Management of accidental infernos.

The DG used the opportunity to commend the State

Governor Apostle Senator Prince Bassey Edet Otu for his dogged efforts towards revamping the Fire Service architecture across the State.



PUBLIC RELATIONS BYTE- DECEMBER 2025

AS CARNIVAL CALABAR 2025 BEGINS, CROSS RIVER STATE CHAPTER OF NIPR EXTENDS WARM GREETINGS TO ALL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS. WE COMMEND THE STATE GOVERNMENT FOR IMPROVED SANITATION, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES, AND URGE EVERYONE TO KEEP OUR SURROUNDINGS CLEAN AND RESPECT PUBLIC SPACES.

CROSS RIVER STATE, NIPR REMAINS COMMITTED TO CREDIBLE COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. WE WISH EVERYONE A SAFE, PEACEFUL, AND MEMORABLE DECEMBER.

**PASTOR AUSTIN MBOSO, PHD, MNIPR
STATE CHAIRMAN, CRS-NIPR**



MINISTRY OF INFORMATION
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

<https://www.crossriverstate.gov.ng> ■ Email: commissioner@moi.cr.gov.ng

Our Ref: CR/MOI/AD/162/Vol.IV/741

4th November, 2025

PRESS STATEMENT

ILLEGAL OPERATIONS OF LOTTERY AND GAMING BUSINESSES IN CROSS RIVER STATE

The attention of the Government of Cross River State has been drawn to the illegal and deceptive operations of some Lotteries and Gaming Companies and Organisations in Cross River State without proper registration and authorisation from the Cross River State Lotteries and Gaming Agency established by Law No 3. of 2024.

These illicit operations being perpetrated by some Lotteries and Gaming businesses, both those with physical office addresses and those operating online, are a flagrant violations of the Supreme Court Judgement of 22nd November, 2024 which nullified the National Lotteries Act 145 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2005 and vested the regulatory powers over Lotteries and Gaming businesses on States of the Federation of Nigeria.

The Government of Cross River State wishes to restate categorically here that by the Cross River State Lotteries and Gaming Law assented to by His Excellency, Governor Bassey Edet Otu on the 12th of May, 2025, only the Cross River State Lotteries and Gaming Agency is vested with powers to issue Licences and regulate Lotteries and Gaming businesses and Services in any part of the State, be it a physical office or online.

For the avoidance of any doubt, these Lotteries and Gaming activities include Online Sports Betting, Casino Games, Public Online Lotteries, Pools Betting, Raffle Draws, Scratch Cards, Interactive Games and any other game of chance where a stake and potential winning is involved.

Government hereby enjoins all Radio and Television Stations operating in the State to please liaise effectively with the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), the Cross River State Signage and Advertising Agency (CRISAA) to demand for the Agency's Operational Permit before accepting to publicize their businesses on air as paid advertisements.

Finally, the Government sincerely appreciates and thanks all Lotteries and Gaming Companies and Organisations that have complied with the Law and solicits the understanding and cooperation of all concerned while also making it clear that violators/defaulters shall face the full wrath of the law.

**Thank you all as you continue to
"Think Cross River State", please.**


Erasmus Ekpang Ph.D., anipr, ftifuh
Commissioner for Information.

For more details and compliance, contact:

The Director General
CRS Lotteries and Gaming Agency,
5E, Abang Odok Ogar Close, Off Mekenge Layout, Marian Road,
Calabar. **07070967372**
www.lotteryandgaming.crossriverstate.gov.ng/contact

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STEPS TO OBTAIN CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY IN CROSS RIVER STATE

- 1**
Obtain an Application Form at CRGIA's Office, Old Secretariat Road, Off Murtala Mohammed Highway, Calabar, Cross River State
- 2**
Submit Application Form with Required Documents
Fill and submit the form along with necessary documents, e.g. Registered Title Document, survey plan, identification, etc.
- 3**
Assessment and Payment of Fees.
The office will assess applicable charges, registration fees, processing fees, etc. Make the required payment.
- 4**
Inspection and Publication (for private land)
Property is inspected by LUAC officials
Notice of application is published for 21 days to allow for objections.
After clearance, Governor's Approval in Principle is obtained.
- 5**
C of O (Certificate of Occupancy) Engrossment and Signing
The Certificate of Occupancy is prepared (engrossed) and signed by the Governor or delegated authority.
- 6**
Registration and Delivery
Final registration is completed at the Lands Registry.
Registered documents are delivered to the applicant (client).

NATIONWIDE CONTINUOUS VOTER REGISTRATION (CVR)



Register to Vote

ONLINE PRE-REGISTRATION
STARTS ON 18TH AUGUST, 2025
www.cvr.inecnigeria.org

IN-PERSON REGISTRATION
STARTS ON 25TH AUGUST, 2025
All 37 INEC State Offices or 774 Local
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Overspeeding:**

**Speed thrills
But Kills.**

**Always obey
speed limits**

— **FRSC** —
CROSS RIVER STATE SECTOR COMMAND