

Appeal Court nullifies order deregistering ADC, 4 other parties

ABUJA

The Court of Appeal in Abuja on Tuesday set aside a judgment directing the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to deregister the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and four other political parties.

The other parties are the Action Peoples Party (APP), Action Alliance (AA) Accord Par-

ty (AP), and the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP).

The appellate court, in a unanimous decision by a three-member panel of Justices, held that the order which the Federal High Court issued to the electoral body on June 15 amounted to a nullity.

The court held that the high court wrongly assumed jurisdiction and made the order on an incompetent suit that was

filed by a non-juristic entity.

According to the appellate court, there was no valid suit that could have warranted the consequential order that directed INEC to derecognise the political parties.

It noted that the trial court failed to properly evaluate evidence placed before it, stressing that proof that the parties won various seats in previous elections was ignored.

It also held that the high court acted in defiance of an order that directed it to stay proceedings in the case.

It held that the high court ought to have dismissed the substantive case for want of jurisdiction and merit.

Consequently, the appellate court, in its lead judgment delivered by Justice Abba Mohammed, held that all the affected political parties remained duly registered.

It allowed separate appeals filed by the political parties and awarded monetary costs against the National Forum of Former Legislators (NFFL), which had filed the case against them.

NAN reports that the appellate court had, on June 16, ordered a stay of execution of the High Court judgment, even as it slammed the trial judge for disregarding the judicial hierarchy.

The panel berated Justice

Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court in Abuja for disobeying an order it had made on May 22 directing him to stay proceedings in the case pending the outcome of an appeal by the parties.

It noted that even though the trial judge's attention had been drawn to the order for a stay of proceedings, he intentionally flouted it and went ahead to de-

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#200

Edo mandates video confessions for kidnapping, cultism prosecution

BENIN CITY

Edo Government has said that video-recorded confessions will now be mandatory for the prosecution of fresh kidnapping and cultism cases before the state's newly established Special Criminal Court.

The Solicitor-General and Permanent Secretary, Edo

Ministry of Justice, Mr Stephen Okoror, said this in an interview with newsmen on Tuesday in Benin City.

Okoror said the directive was issued by the Chief Judge of Edo, Justice Daniel Okungbowa, adding that only fresh cases would be transferred to the Special Criminal Court.

He explained that cases already being heard in other

courts would remain there until conclusion.

"The Chief Judge has directed that if a case has already commenced in another court, there is no need to transfer it to the Special Criminal Court.

"Let them conclude it there. But fresh cases should be brought to the Special Criminal Court," he said.

According to him, the gov-

ernment had directed that statements made by suspects in capital offences must be video-recorded before such cases could be prosecuted at the Special Criminal Court.

"The instruction is specific. If we do not have a video recording of a suspect's statement admitting to an offence such as kidnapping, we will not take the case to the Special

Criminal Court.

"This is because without such evidence, there is a possibility of acquittal in regular courts," he said.

Okoror emphasised that video-recorded confessions were crucial in securing convictions, noting that properly obtained recordings could serve as strong evidence in court.

"If a suspect confesses on camera, and the recording is done in accordance with the law, conviction becomes easier. For instance, in the June 14 kidnapping case at Airport Road Vegetable Market, the video evidence alone can se-

cure conviction.

"Recording does not lie. The video speaks for itself," he said.

He added that a family member, lawyer or civil society representative must be present during the recording process and that suspects would be free to admit or deny allegations on camera.

Citing an example, the Solicitor-General referred to the ongoing prosecution of a kidnapping gang linked to the theft and repainting of a red Lexus Jeep.

He said investigations revealed that the vehicle was taken to a bush camp, disman-

CONTINUES ON PG 4»



PASSING OUT CEREMONY:

Edo State Commissioner for Security and Public Safety, Festus Ebea, speaking at the passing out ceremony of the newly recruited Forest Guards in Benin City.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that I, Mrs. Beauty Osamase is the wife of the late **Mr. SUNNY OSAMASE**. That **Late Mr. SUNNY OSAMASE** is the lawful owner of an uncompleted building on a parcel/piece of land measuring **100ft by 200ft** lying and situate at Oka-Niro plot Allotment Committee Area, Ward 33/E, Benin City, which was duly approved by the Oba of Benin, Oba Akenzua II (CMG) on October 6, 1976 vide application dated June 12, 1976. That **Mrs. EDITH AGBONGIASEDE** only transferred **50ft by 100ft**, covered with **Beacon Nos. 909 and 910**, that have the uncompleted building from the entire 100ft by 200ft. The original title documents to the property in my late husband's possession was discovered missing and all efforts to trace it proved abortive, hence, this publication for record purposes. The property is not for sale. Buyers Beware!

The general public and concerned authorities should please take note.

Signed: **Mrs. BEAUTY OSAMASE**

Kaduna killings: Tinubu orders manhunt, rescue of abductees

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US singer D4vd to go on trial for murder in death of 14-year-old

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NEWS

Wike promises to deliver Goodluck Jonathan Way by December

ABUJA

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mr Nyesom Wike, has promised to deliver the Inner Southern Expressway (Goodluck Jonathan Way) by December.

He said this in Abuja on Tuesday after inspecting the project, alongside the ongoing construction of the service carriageways of the Southern Parkway in Gaduwa District, Abuja.

He added that the 10-kilometre road project awarded in 2014 would span through the Southern Parkway to Ring Road II at Galadimawa, with five bridges.

He explained that "the road is the only project awarded by previous administration that had not completed by the President Bola Tinubu's administration, apart

from the Apo-Karshi Road."

The minister said the contractor would complete the remaining six out of the 10-kilometre road and hand it over by end of December, subject to availability of funds.

He described the road as a "major road" that would change the landscape of the FCT, if completed, adding that talks were ongoing with the Ministry of Finance to make funds available.

"We'll continue to dialogue with the Minister of Finance to see how to access funds and pay off the contractor to finish the project.

"The project is key to us and that of course will change the entire landscape of the FCT.

"The Apo-Karshi road awarded in 2010 is almost completed. We were there yesterday," he said.

Wike said that completing the projects would fulfill Tinu-

bu's promise to complete all projects awarded by the previous administrations, particularly between 2010 and 2023.

He noted that "it will be a remarkable achievement for this administration to finish all projects awarded by previous administration in order not to have abandoned projects everywhere.

"So, it's a good development for us. We're happy with what we've done," Wike said.

The minister also inspected the ongoing construction of two service carriageways of the Southern Parkway, spanning from Arterial Road S20 (Oladipo Diya Way) in Gaduwa District to Ring Road II.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the Southern Parkway serves as one of the most essential transportation corridors within Abuja's

southern development axis, linking multiple dense residential districts across Phases I to IV of the Federal Capital City.

"You know, this road was among the key projects inaugurated to mark Tinubu's third year in office. We have come to see what they've done.

"The contractors promised to hand over the project by end of December and I believe them," he said.

Reacting to Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers recent declaration over his return to the 'Rainbow Coalition' and pledged complete loyalty to Tinubu's re-election, Wike said "there is no sin in politics".

"If someone realises he made a mistake and decides to correct it, there is nothing wrong with that.

"What matters is recognising that you were on the wrong path and decides to take the



NYESOM WIKE

right path," the Minister said.

The minister, who welcomed Fubara back into his political fold, insisting that the governor had "no other choice" than to return to the political family that brought him to power.

Wike said Fubara's decision to publicly align with his po-

litical camp was a step in the right direction, adding that the reconciliation would strengthen support for Tinubu ahead of the 2027 general elections.

"I said during my last media chat that he has no other choice but to return to the same political family that produced him," he said.



MEDIA CHAT:

The coordinator of Edo State special security squad, Noah Idemudia, briefing the press on a successful operation Tuesday morning arresting four suspected cultists, while other members of the group looks on.

Kaduna killings: Tinubu orders manhunt, rescue of abductees

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has condemned the deadly attack on Naridon Village in Kaduna State, ordering security agencies to hunt down the perpetrators and rescue abducted residents.

The attack, which occurred early Monday in Kamaru Ward, Kauru Local Government Area, claimed about 30 lives, including women and children, while several houses were burnt.

Tinubu described the assault as a barbaric and cowardly act of terror against defenceless citizens.

This is contained in a statement issued by Presidential Spokesperson, Mr Bayo Onanuga, on Tuesday in Abuja.

"I have directed the Armed Forces, police, and relevant intelligence agencies to intensify operations across the affected areas to track down the perpetrators swiftly, secure the release of abducted individuals, and restore normalcy to the re-

gion," he said.

The president warned those seeking to undermine the hard-earned peace and security enjoyed in Kaduna State would not escape justice.

He extended condolences to the bereaved families, Gov. Uba Sani, the Kaduna State Government and the people of the state.

Tinubu assured the state

government and affected communities of the Federal Government's support in confronting security challenges.

"Our administration has an unwavering commitment to strengthening security infrastructure, equipping response personnel, and neutralising criminal networks attempting to disrupt the peace of the na-

tion," he said.

The president also urged residents to support security agencies with credible intelligence to enhance prompt response to threats.

"I urge our local communities to cooperate with security forces by providing actionable intelligence that would help early response efforts," he added.

Edo forest guards urged to deny criminals safe havens

RICHARD EWEKA

Edo State Commissioner for Security and Public Safety Festus Ebea on Monday urged 497 newly recruited forest guards to use their knowledge of local communities to deny criminals hiding places and strengthen efforts to tackle insecurity across the state.

Speaking at the passing-out parade for the recruits at the Nigerian Police Training School in Ogida Barracks, Benin City, Ebea said the guards would serve as first responders and community protectors in their respective local government areas.

"You are indigenous to your respective local government areas and possess the ultimate tactical advantage of terrain familiarity and community trust," he said.

"You are the shield that will deny these criminals a place to hide. You are tasked with holding ground, gathering actionable intelligence and flushing out criminality ruthlessly."

Ebea said the recruits had completed two months of training and would be deployed to support the fight against kidnapping and other violent crimes.

He said the state government, under Governor Monday Okpebholo, had supported

the training programme, while commending the recruits for their commitment.

He urged the guards to remain dedicated to their duties and make effective use of their knowledge of local terrain to help security agencies combat kidnapping, terrorism and other criminal activities.

Edo State Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice Roland Otaru, who administered the oath of office to the recruits, said the initiative was consistent with the provisions of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution, which places responsibility on government to protect the lives and property of citizens.

Otaru commended President Bola Tinubu and Governor Monday Okpebholo for supporting the initiative, adding that improving security also requires the cooperation of residents.

"The issue of security is not for the government alone as the citizens of Edo State need to support and cooperate with the government and ensure criminals are brought to book," he said.

The ceremony featured a parade and tactical demonstrations by the graduating forest guards, who displayed skills acquired during the training before government officials, security personnel and invited guests.

Destruction of Benin By-pass: Haulage firm ordered to repair 150metres

BENIN CITY

The Edo State government said it had ordered immediate temporary repairs to a section of the Benin Bypass after haulage equipment belonging to Build Well Nigeria Limited damaged the road, disrupting traffic on the federal highway.

Special Adviser on Project Implementation and Monitoring to Governor Okpebholo, Phoebe Williams-Bello, gave the assurance on Monday after inspecting the damaged section

at Idogbo on the Benin Bypass.

She said the company had accepted responsibility for the damage and signed an undertaking to carry out palliative repairs on a 150-metre stretch of the affected road.

Williams-Bello said the state government would meet with relevant agencies to ensure the repairs comply with required engineering standards.

"Following our inspection, the company responsible has accepted liability and signed an undertaking to carry out palli-

ative repairs on about 150 metres of the damaged road. We will also meet with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the repair work meets the required engineering standards," she said.

She added that Governor Monday Okpebholo's administration remained committed to protecting public infrastructure and would hold individuals and companies accountable for damage to government assets.

The Federal Controller of Works in Edo State, Babatunde Tajudeen, described

the damage as unacceptable, saying the Benin Bypass is a federal road that should be restored without delay.

He said the affected section forms part of a 45-km rehabilitation project being handled by China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), stretching from Oluku Junction to Sapele Road.

Eugene Okolosie, chairman of the Edo State Public Property Protection Committee, said officials intercepted those responsible for the incident. He added

that the haulage equipment involved had been impounded and would remain in the committee's custody pending the outcome of investigations and compliance with government directives.

Also at the inspection were the Permanent Secretary of the Edo State Ministry of Works, John Obanor, who said the ministry would ensure quality repairs, and Build Well Nigeria Limited representative Samuel Opeyemi, who pledged the company's co-operation and said it would carry out the agreed repair works.

NEWS**Oando blames Bayelsa oil spill on sabotage, intensifies clean-up****YENAGOA**

Oando Plc has attributed the June 27 oil spill from its Azuzuama-1 flowline in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa to suspected third-party sabotage. The company, in a statement by its General Manager, Corporate Communications, Mrs Alero Balogun, said the spill occurred along the company's four-inch Azuzuama-1 flowline at the Azuzuama community.

She said Oando immediately activated its emergency response team to contain the spill in line with established response protocols and regulatory requirements.

According to her, the company worked with the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency, the Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment and representatives of the host community.

She said the collaboration facilitated the statutory Joint Investigation Visit as well as

containment, repair and remediation efforts.

Balogun said an Ultrasonic Thickness Measurement test conducted on the affected section of the flowline during the technical investigation indicated evidence consistent with induced corrosion caused by third-party interference, commonly described as sabotage.

She said the finding was affirmed by the regulatory authorities that participated in the investigation.

According to her, repairs to the damaged section of the flowline were completed on July 19 after stakeholders re-

stored access to the site.

Balogun said environmental cleanup and remediation activities were ongoing in line with applicable environmental standards and regulatory requirements.

She reaffirmed Oando's commitment to safe and responsible operations, environmental protection and continued collaboration with regulators and host communities.

She added that the company would ensure the timely completion of remediation activities while maintaining the integrity of its operations.

FG unveils unified public service portal**ABUJA**

The Federal Government on Tuesday launched the Government Service Portal (GSP), a unified digital platform providing Nigerians with seamless access to public services through a single online gateway.

Developed by Galaxy Backbone, the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy and KOICA, the portal targets improved efficiency, transparency and accountability.

The platform will simplify interactions with government institutions through faster, easier and more secure access to essential public services.

Speaking in Abuja, Permanent Secretary, Mr Nadungu Gagare, represented by Director of E-Government, Mr Johnson Bareyi, described the initiative as a milestone in Nigeria's digital transformation.

Gagare said the portal was among the flagship projects under Nigeria's e-Government Masterplan 2.0, developed through collaboration between government institutions and development partners.

He said citizens would access multiple government services through a single secure sign-in, eliminating repeated registrations and submissions across different government platforms.

"Our mandate is not simply to deploy technology but to use technology to improve governance and public service delivery.

"The Government Service Portal provides Nigerians with a single digital gateway to access government services in a

simpler, faster and more seamless manner," Gagare said.

According to him, the platform aligns with the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy, Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan, and Nigeria's Digital Public Infrastructure agenda.

The portal will integrate with the Nigerian Digital Exchange, enabling secure information sharing among authorised institutions while reducing duplication across government agencies.

Gagare said the initiative would reduce service delays, improve transparency, strengthen accountability and support the Federal Government's drive to enhance ease of doing business nationwide.

He urged Ministries, Departments and Agencies to integrate their digital services into the platform, ensuring wider accessibility and greater public value for citizens and businesses.

Managing Director of Galaxy Backbone, Prof. Ibrahim Adeyanju, described the portal as another major step towards building a connected, efficient and citizen-centred digital government.

Adeyanju said the GSP would serve as a unified digital gateway where citizens and businesses could conveniently discover and access government services from one location.

"For far too long, citizens have had to navigate numerous websites, offices and service channels to interact with government.

"The Government Service Portal seeks to change that by simplifying access, improving visibility, promoting consistency and creating a seamless experience," Adeyanju said.

**BOOK PRESENTATION:**

Nigerian Former Head of States, retired Gen. Yakubu Gowon (M); Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Amb. Sola Enikanolaye (3rd L); The Author of the Book, Amb. Jaiyeola Lewu (R); Former Senator representing Kogi-West, Sen. Dino Melaye (L); Chief Launcher, Rep. Leke Abejide (2nd R); and other dignitaries during a public presentation of the Book, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Abuja on Tuesday.

Commissioner vows crackdown on quack nursing training institutions**OLIVER IJIOGBE**

The Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomhole, has vowed to shut down any organisation involved in the training of unregistered nurses, describing the practice as a major contributor to quackery in the nursing profession.

Dr. Oshiomhole made the declaration while responding to concerns raised by students of the Edo State College of Nursing Sciences during an inspection tour of facilities at the

institution in Benin City.

He said the state government would work closely with the Director of Nursing Services to identify and close down institutions producing auxiliary nurses outside the approved regulatory framework.

"I will liaise with the Director of Nursing Services to shut down institutions churning out these auxiliary nurses who, in most cases, undermine the chances of qualified nurses securing appropriate employment," the commissioner said.

As part of his visit, Dr. Oshiomhole participated in a classroom session on the topic, Persuasion, where he pledged to patronise one of the state's primary healthcare centres to demonstrate his confidence in the quality of services being provided.

According to him, the improved standard of healthcare delivery in primary healthcare facilities is a reflection of the commitment and investments of the Edo State Government under the leadership of Governor Monday Okpebholo.

The commissioner was conducted round the college by the Provost, Mrs. Mabel Oludunne Omobude, and her management team.

Facilities inspected included the sickbay, Public Health Department, physical and electronic libraries, students' hostel, cafeteria, 250-seat lecture theatre, laboratory, nursing and midwifery skills laboratories, crèche, restaurant, and a 60-bedroom hostel currently under construction, among others.

The commissioner for Health was accompanied on the inspection tour by top government functionaries including the Special Adviser to the Governor on Health, Dr. Andrew Iyamu.

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Edo Specialist Hospital to resume of suspended orthodontic treatment**MIKE OSAROGIAGBON**

The management of the Edo State Specialist Hospital (ESH) has assured patients affected by the suspension of orthodontic treatment at the facility about a year ago that efforts are underway to resume the service.

The assurance comes as some of the affected patients continue to grapple with dental misalignment, periodic bleeding and halitosis (mouth odour), among other complications they associate

with the prolonged unavailability of follow-up orthodontic care.

The Chief Medical Director (CMD), of the hospital, Dr. (Mrs.) Anthonia Inibokun Njoku, gave the assurance while addressing journalists at the facility in Benin City, Edo State capital, recently.

Investigation revealed that the patients' ordeal began in July 2025 when they were informed that the only orthodontist at the facility had travelled abroad. Patients who subsequently re-

ported for scheduled follow-up appointments were asked to return home and "wait for a call" for a rescheduled appointment.

However, some of the patients lamented that they were yet to receive any such calls.

Further checks revealed that some affected patients had been forced to seek treatment elsewhere, with some having to restart their treatment from the beginning.

Our correspondent's previous checks at the Dental Care Unit of the hospital showed that a

list of affected patients had been compiled, pending the resumption of duty by orthodontists the hospital was seeking to recruit.

However, when our correspondent made another check a few months later, an insider, who pleaded anonymity, disclosed that the proposed recruitment of orthodontists had stalled after the hospital's management and the specialists failed to reach an agreement over their conditions of engagement.

Edo Special Security Squad arrest 4 suspected cultists**RICHARD EWEKA**

The Edo State Special Security Squad codenamed: "Operation flush out Kidnappers and Cultists," have recorded yet another success as personnel of the squad and other sister security agencies raided a hideout at Egbaen Community in Ovia North East local government area of Edo State arresting four suspected Cultists.

Principal Security Officer (PSO) Saturday Okoh leading other security agencies stormed the hideout at about 6am to apprehend the suspects and dangerous weapons were recovered from them linking them to cult related activities.

The weapon found with the suspects includes four locally made pistols, cut to size gun, one baretal pistol and one matchet despite finding the evidence in their hideout they all denied ownership but confessed to be members of Aiye Confraternity.

Speaking to journalists, the coordinator of the squad Noah

Idemudia commended the public for the provisions of useful information that has helped the squad record various successes in its operations.

He appealed for more useful information as the squad needs such information to continue to achieve successes in all its operations.

"In the early hours of Sunday we got an intelligent report that some members of black axe group wanted to carry out initiation at Egbaen Community which might lead to other disastrous activities that will cause a breakdown of law and order.

"We responded in the early hours of this morning, moved to the community and our operations was successful as we were able to apprehend four Suspects and recovered dangerous weapons.

"We thank the general public and urge them to keep the information coming as it has been of great help to the squad in several successes recorded on various occasions. We will do our best and ensure Edo State is safe for citizens.

NPC urges Edo to register digitally – Aiyejina

BENIN CITY

BENEDICT OKATE

The National Population Commission (NPC) has called on residents of Edo State and Nigerians at large to embrace the newly introduced Electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System (e-CRVS), describing it as a major milestone in modernizing the country's birth and death registration process.

Speaking at the official launch of the e-CRVS during a press

briefing at the Commission's Edo State Office in Benin City, which had representatives of the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), the National Orientation Agency (NOA), the Federal Ministry of Information and other stakeholders in attendance, the Federal Commissioner representing Edo State, Dr. Tony Aiyejina, said the digital registration platform is now fully operational across the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

According to him, the initiative marks Nigeria's transition

from manual to digital civil registration, following the launch of the e-CRVS system and the inauguration of the National Coordination Committee on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on November 8, 2023.

Aiyejina disclosed that the nationwide digital registration of births and deaths officially commenced on July 1, 2026, noting that the innovation is designed to improve efficiency,

transparency, security and accessibility in civil registration.

"The digital birth and death registration system is now fully operational nationwide. It is designed to make registration faster, more secure, more transparent and more reliable," he said.

He added that the platform has also removed geographical barriers by enabling Nigerians living in the diaspora to register births and deaths through a secure self-service portal.

"For the first time, Nigerians living abroad can register vital events through a secure self-service platform. The e-CRVS system will also prevent duplication and fraud while making the retrieval of records easier and faster," Aiyejina stated.

The Federal Commissioner stressed the importance of accurate and reliable population data for national planning, policy formulation and equitable distribution of government resources.

He therefore urged parents, guardians and other stakeholders to take advantage of the digital platform by ensuring that births and deaths are registered promptly.

"We call on parents, guardians and all relevant stakeholders to embrace this digital registration initiative. Reliable population data remains indispensable for effective national planning and the efficient allocation of public resources," he said.

Edo mandates video confessions...

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tled and re-sprayed, while the owner later identified both the vehicle and its interior features.

"They took the vehicle into the bush and re-sprayed it. The person who did the re-spraying is also being prosecuted.

"How do you spray a vehicle inside the bush? The bush had a camp with about 12 people. It was a 12-man gang that carried out the kidnap, but only five participated in that operation," he said.

Okoror said police investigations led to the arrest of a suspect who confessed on camera and implicated other members of the gang, including those who allegedly operated without masks.

He also clarified that defendants charged with capital offences must still testify in court even when they plead

guilty.

"In capital offences that attract the death penalty, the law does not allow the court to rely solely on a guilty plea.

"The defendant must still enter the dock and state whether he is guilty or not, and explain what happened," he said.

Providing an update on the trial of four defendants accused of kidnapping a woman at the Airport Road Vegetable Market, Okoror said the defence had opened its case before Justice Terry Momodu of the Special Criminal Court.

"The defence counsel opened its defence and presented its witness on recent Airport Road kidnapping.

"We subjected the witness to vigorous cross-examination and he denied all the allegations.

"It is now left for the court to decide," he said.



COURTESY VISIT:

From Left: Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, Yu Dunhai; Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Amb Sola Enikanolaiye; and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Amb. Dunoma Ahmed, during a visit by the Chinese ambassador to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Abuja on Monday evening.

Appeal Court nullifies order...

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liver judgment.

It held that Justice Lifu's action was "a form of judicial impertinence," stressing that the Supreme Court had previously held that a judge who acts in such a manner "is unfit for the bench, as the conduct amounts to judicial rascality."

The High Court had directed INEC to deregister the five political parties, which it said had failed to meet the constitutional requirements needed to warrant their continued existence and participation in future elections.

It also barred INEC from according further recognition to the parties, accepting nominations of candidates from the affected parties, or giving effect to their activities for purposes of participating in the 2027 general elections.

Justice Lifu ordered the defend-

ants to stop parading themselves as registered political parties in the country, saying he found merit in the suit filed by the NFFL.

The NFFL had, in the suit marked FHC/ABJ/CS/2637/2026, asked the court to determine whether INEC has a constitutional obligation to remove political parties that fail to meet the electoral performance thresholds set out in Section 225A of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), as reinforced by the Electoral Act 2022 and INEC's regulations.

It was the plaintiffs' position that the five political parties listed as defendants had persistently failed to meet the constitutional benchmarks required to retain their registration.

The former legislators stressed that the requirements include winning at least 25 per cent of the votes in a state dur-

BENIN CITY

The Senate of the University of Benin (UNIBEN) has promoted the Acting Rector of Edo State Polytechnic, Usen, Dr. Nosakhare Liberty Arodoye, to the rank of Associate Professor of Economics.

The promotion followed a successful academic evaluation in which Dr. Arodoye reportedly secured the highest distinction from all three external assessors, a feat regarded as a remarkable endorsement of his scholarly contributions.

The announcement was received with excitement at Edo

State Polytechnic, where staff members celebrated the development, describing it as a recognition of the acting rector's dedication to academic excellence and institutional growth.

Commenting on the promotion, the Head of the Department of Business Administration and Management, Dr. John Amawu, said the elevation was both timely and deserved, noting that it reflected the confidence reposed in Dr. Arodoye's academic credentials by the University of Benin Senate.

He described the acting rector as a versatile scholar with a passion for research, innovation

and educational advancement, adding that his leadership had introduced a wave of digital transformation and progressive reforms at the Polytechnic.

"Arodoye is a man of many strengths who has consistently pursued academic excellence. He understands what it takes to succeed in the academic environment, and since assuming office at Edo State Polytechnic, he has continued to reposition the institution for greater achievements through innovation and technology-driven initiatives," Amawu said.

Former Registrar of the Polytechnic, Mr. Cymire Cyril, also

congratulated Dr. Arodoye, saying the promotion would further enhance the academic reputation of the University of Benin while projecting Edo State positively within the global academic community.

Similarly, the Polytechnic image maker, Comr. John Eson, Head of the Department of Surveying and Geoinformatics, Surveyor Shola Iyahan; the Head of Revenue, Mr. Dele Okumayin, and the Dean of Students' Affairs, Mr. Elvis Osumah, described the promotion as a fitting reward for years of commitment, hard work and excellence.

Tinubu's re-election will strengthen Nigeria's reforms, says Okowa

ASABA

FIDELIA OBEHIAYE FREEMAN

Former Delta State Governor, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa, has called on Nigerians to support the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the 2027 general elections, saying a second term will help consolidate

the administration's ongoing reforms and economic policies.

Okowa made the appeal while receiving members of the Working People United (WPU) on a courtesy visit to his residence in Asaba, Delta State. He said President Tinubu took over the country's leadership at a difficult time and has since introduced bold reforms aimed at

improving Nigeria's economy.

Speaking on some of the administration's policies, Okowa defended the removal of fuel subsidy, describing it as a necessary decision.

According to him, the policy has improved the financial situation of many states and local governments, making it easier for them to meet obligations such as

the payment of workers' salaries.

He also highlighted the Federal Government's National Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), stating that more than 1.6 million students in tertiary institutions have benefited from the programme. He encouraged eligible students who are yet to apply to take advantage of the initiative.

Okowa expressed confidence that President Tinubu would achieve more if given another term in office. He urged Nigerians to continue supporting the administration, saying the reforms already introduced would deliver greater benefits in the coming years.

Earlier, the National Coordinator of the Working People United, Comrade Williams Akporeha, said the group visited Okowa to introduce its objectives and inaugurate its Delta State chapter.

Edo Journalists set to bid emotional farewell to former NUJ leader, Pius Ede

TALBORT PERE HOPE

BENIN CITY

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Edo State Council, has announced a three-day burial programme in honour of its former Vice President and Secretary of Zone F, the late Comrade Pius Ede, who passed on at the age of 71.

According to the union, the burial activities would begin on Wednesday, July 29, 2026, with a Service of Songs scheduled to take place at Blessed Virgin Catholic Church, Eyaen, Benin City, by 4pm.

The event is expected to bring together family members, colleagues, friends and well-wishers to celebrate the life and contributions of the late journalist.

The programme will continue on Thursday, July 30, when the remains of Comrade Ede will leave Guobadia Hospital Mortuary for a lying-in-state at the Nigeria Union of Journalists Press Centre, No. 1 Sir Gabriel Igbinedion Way, GRA, Benin City.

The ceremony, fixed for 3pm, will provide an opportunity for members of the journalism

profession and the public to pay their final respects.

The Funeral Mass will be held on Friday, July 31, at Blessed Virgin Catholic Church, Eyaen, Benin City, beginning at 8:30am before, his body will be conveyed to his hometown, Ayogwiri Community in Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State, where he will be laid to rest.

The Edo State Council of the NUJ has extended an invitation to members of the union, friends, associates and the general public to participate in the burial activities, describing the late Comrade Ede as a dedicated journalist and union leader whose service to the profession left a lasting impact on colleagues and the media industry.

NEWS**NLNG generates \$149.6 billion, pays \$10.8 billion in taxes****LAGOS**

Nigeria LNG Limited (NLNG) says it has generated 149.6 billion dollars in revenue since inception and has begun exploratory activities for additional LNG trains beyond the ongoing Train 7 project.

The Chief Executive Officer of NLNG, Mr Adeleye Falade, disclosed this on Tuesday in Lagos during the unveiling of the company's Facts and Figures 2026 publication.

Falade said NLNG had paid 47.2 billion dollars in dividends to its shareholders and 10.8 billion dollars in taxes to the federal government since becoming

tax compliant in 2009.

He said the company currently operates six liquefaction trains, has assets valued at more than 22.9 billion dollars, and safely delivered over 6,285 LNG cargoes to international markets.

According to him, NLNG contributes about six per cent of global LNG supply, strengthening Nigeria's position in the international gas market.

Falade said the Train 7 project had reached 93 per cent completion and would increase the company's LNG production capacity by 35 per cent from 22 million tonnes per annum to 30 million tonnes.

He said the project would

● Eyes expansion beyond Train 7

also increase NLNG's liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) production by 50 per cent.

"When completed, Train 7 will increase our LNG production by 35 per cent and boost LPG production by 50 per cent," he said.

Falade said NLNG had also begun exploratory activities and initial discussions on developing Trains 8, 9, and 10 to drive future growth.

"Today, we've started having initial conversations and doing exploratory activities around

what it will take to go to Train 8, Train 9 and Train 10," he said.

He said the company supplied a record 500,000 tonnes of LPG, also known as cooking gas, to the domestic market in 2025, representing about one-third of national demand.

Falade said NLNG had supplied all its LPG to the domestic market since 2022 to improve access to cleaner cooking fuel and reduce dependence on biomass.

He said the additional LPG from Train 7 would further support Nigeria's energy transition and cleaner cooking initiatives.

Oando blames Bayelsa community oil spill on sabotage, intensifies cleanup**YENAGOA**

Oando Plc has attributed the June 27 oil spill from its Azuzuama-1 flowline in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa to suspected third-party sabotage.

The company made this known in a statement by its General Manager, Corporate Communications, Mrs Alero Balogun, made available to newsmen.

Balogun said the spill occurred along the company's four-inch Azuzuama-1 flowline at the Azuzuama community.

She said Oando immediately activated its emergency response team to contain the spill in line with established response protocols and regulatory requirements.

According to her, the company worked with the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency, the Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment and representatives of the host

community.

She said the collaboration facilitated the statutory Joint Investigation Visit as well as containment, repair and remediation efforts.

Balogun said an Ultrasonic Thickness Measurement test conducted on the affected section of the flowline during the technical investigation indicated evidence consistent with induced corrosion caused by third-party interference, commonly described as sabotage.

She said the finding was affirmed by the regulatory authorities that participated in the investigation.

According to her, repairs to the damaged section of the flowline were completed on July 19 after stakeholders restored access to the site.

Balogun said environmental cleanup and remediation activities were ongoing in line with applicable environmental standards and regulatory requirements.

C'River's ministry of water resources seeks stronger funding for SDG-WASH**CALABAR**

The Cross River Government, has pledged to prioritise improved funding for the state's Sustainable Development Goals-Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (SDG-WASH) programme.

The Permanent Secretary in the state Ministry of Water Resources, Dr Gabriel Ukwada, gave the assurance on Tuesday in Calabar, shortly after assuming office as Chairman of the Cross River Programme Group on WASH.

Ukwada who described inadequate funding as the programme's biggest challenge, said government remained a continuum, and expressed confidence that available funding opportunities could be accessed through strategic engagement with relevant authorities.

He said he would work closely with the state Commissioner for Water Resources to seek stronger government support for the programme.

"I will pursue meetings with

the deputy governor and governor to present the funding needs of the SDG-WASH initiative.

"Access to safe and potable drinking water is essential to preventing avoidable diseases in communities across the state," he said.

The permanent secretary stressed that achieving SDG targets depended largely on sustained investment in water, sanitation and other basic public services.

He also noted that recent policy developments would require adequate funding to ensure effective implementation and meaningful results.

Ukwada pledged to draw on the experience and support of colleagues to advance the programme's objectives.

He said teamwork and collective responsibility would remain central to his leadership approach in the ministry.

Reflecting on his public service career, he said he had served in several ministries and agencies, bringing commitment to every assignment.

**FACTS AND FIGURES PRESENTATION:**

L-R: Manager, Corporate Communications and Public Affairs, NLNG, Mrs Anne-Marie Palmer-Ikuku, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, NLNG Ltd., Mr Adeleye Falade and the General Manager, External Relations and Sustainable Development, NLNG, Mrs Sophia Horsfall at the company's Facts and Figures presentation at the Atlas Hall, Lagos Continental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Abia Government to begin urgent flood, erosion control works in Bende, Umuahia South**UMUAHIA**

The Abia Government says it will commence urgent intervention and mitigation works at flood and erosion sites in affected rural communities in the state.

The Commissioner for Information, Mr Okey Kanu, disclosed this while briefing journalists on the outcome of the State Executive Council (EXCO) meeting in Umuahia on Tuesday.

Kanu said that the intervention followed the directive of Gov. Alex Otti to the Ministry of Environment to take immediate action in the affected communities.

The communities are

Amamba Uzuakoli in Bende Local Government Area, and Ipupe Ubakala in Umuahia South Local Government Area to protect lives and property.

"Let me report that relief will soon come the way of inhabitants of Amamba Uzuakoli flood and erosion site in Bende Local Government Area and Ipupe, Ubakala flood site in Umuahia South Local Government Area," he said.

According to him, the governor had directed the Commissioner for Environment to deploy urgent intervention measures to reclaim degraded land and avert further destruction.

He said that the Commissioner for Environment had already visit-

ed the affected sites with a team of engineers to conduct on-the-spot assessments of the damage.

"The ministry is intensifying efforts to ensure that mitigation works commence immediately in the affected communities," he added.

Kanu also disclosed that the Abia State Climate Change Policy Document was awaiting the governor's approval, describing it as a major step toward addressing environmental challenges in the state.

"The Abia State Climate Change Policy Document is ready for sign-off by His Excellency the Executive Governor of Abia State.

"As soon as the governor signs off on that policy document, it will become operational.

"This development will make the international community to begin to take Abia State more seriously in its efforts to combat climate change, particularly with regards to opening up several climate funding opportunities across sectors in the state," he said.

Kanu noted that implementation of the policy would also help reduce the impact of climate-related challenges such as flooding, erosion, heat waves and food insecurity.

"Secondly, the implementation of the policy will reduce climate issues in Abia State, for example, in such areas as health, flood, erosion, heat waves, decline in food security, among others, while guaranteeing sustainability," he said.

Polytechnic students block Lagos/Abeokuta expressway as robbers kill student, injured 2

Itori (Ogun) Students of D.S. Adegbenro Polytechnic, Itori, on Tuesday blocked the Itori/Ewekoro corridor of the Lagos/Abeokuta Expressway to protest an alleged killing of one of them by suspected armed robbers.

According to the students, the armed men attacked the students' hostel at Eruku community on Monday night, robbing several victims of their valuables while one was shot dead and two others sustained serious injuries.

The deceased, a female final year student sustained a gunshot injury and was rushed to Shodipo Hospital in Eruku where she died, while one of the injured victims was said to have been transferred to FMC Abeokuta.

The SUG President of the school, Opeyemi Ogunuga lamented the incessant attacks by criminals, alleging that students were frequently robbed on their way to and from school.

He added that the students had repeatedly appealed for tighter security around the area, which he said, had yielded little or no results.

He called on the Ogun State Government, security agencies and relevant authorities to urgently intervene by strengthening security around the institution and its host communities.

"No student should lose their lives while pursuing an education. We demand immediate action to protect lives and

restore confidence in the safety of the area," he said.

Addressing the students, the Area Commander of the Ewekoro Division, ACP Seyi Williams, described the incident as unfortunate and promised that the police would conduct a thorough investigation into the matter.

He sympathised with the students and assured them that those responsible for the atrocities would be identified and brought to justice.

He, however appealed to the students to clear the road and allow motorists and pedestrians to go about their lawful daily activities.

He noted that the road is a federal highway and, as such,

serves thousands of commuters daily, urging them not to obstruct traffic that could inconvenience innocent motorists and residents.

Meanwhile, the school has postponed the exams scheduled to hold on Tuesday and Wednesday till Friday to enable students in the affected areas regain their composure.

This was communicated in a statement issued by Engr. Gideon Adekunle, the Chairman Timetable, Examination and Academic Calendar Committee of the school.

"Exams continue on Friday July 30, as scheduled on the timetable. The new schedule for the postponed exams will be communicated in due course," he said.

NGO targets vaccine rejection, zero-dose children in Sokoto

SOKOTO

An NGO, Connected Development (CODE), has mobilised government agencies, community-based groups and civil society organisations to address vaccine rejection and reduce the number of zero-dose children in Sokoto.

The initiative is supported by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and implemented in partnership with the Sultan Founda-

tion for Peace and Development (SFPD).

The programme aims to reduce the number of zero-dose children in the state by 80 per cent through improved immunisation coverage and stronger community engagement.

Dr Tukur Garba-Magaji, Director of Disease Control at the Sokoto State Primary Healthcare Development Agency (SSPHCDA), unveiled the initiative at a two-day inception meeting and workshop on

Tuesday in Sokoto.

Speaking at the event, the Lead Facilitator and Anchor of the Sokoto Tracking and Accountability for Equitable Immunisation (S-Trace) Consortium, Mr Mukhtar Modibbo, said the initiative formed part of a broader regional programme.

According to him, the programme is being implemented in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Cameroon and Malawi to address challenges in health, education, gender

and community development.

Presenting the project's baseline findings, Modibbo said Nigeria currently had the highest number of zero-dose children globally, with Sokoto among the most affected states in the country.

He said that an estimated 585,635 children under five years across 13 local government areas in Sokoto had not received routine immunisation, while Wamakko and Tambuwal LGAs recorded the highest burden.

"The S-Trace intervention is expected to directly target 468,504 zero-dose children across seven selected local government areas, with stakeholders expressing confidence that coordinated action would significantly improve immunisation coverage and child survival outcomes.

"Our mission is to break the barriers preventing children from accessing life-saving vaccines, particularly in hard-to-reach communities where poor access, widespread vaccine hesitancy and weak demand continue to undermine immunisation efforts," Modibbo said.

He explained that the programme would be implemented

through collaboration with government institutions and other stakeholders using strategies centred on community mobilisation, advocacy, financing, improved service delivery and health system strengthening.

Others, he said, included evidence generation, continuous learning and accountability mechanisms aimed at improving routine immunisation uptake and reducing the number of unvaccinated children.

Programme Manager, Mr Abdulazeze Abdulazeze, described vaccination as one of the most cost-effective public health interventions for preventing avoidable childhood illnesses and deaths.



DECORATING THE NEWLY PROMOTED OFFICER:

NDLEA Zonal Commander, Obaniyi Sylvester, newly promoted Commander of Narcotics, Obiajuru Okorie and Oyo State NDLEA Commander, Lawal Adetula decorating the newly promoted officer on Tuesday in Ibadan.

NDLEA decorates 114 newly promoted officers in Oyo

IBADAN

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), on Tuesday, decorated 114 newly promoted officers in the Oyo Command.

The newly decorated officers are one Commander of Narcotics, Obiajuru Okorie, seven Deputy Commanders of Narcotics and 106 others.

Speaking during the decoration ceremony, the NDLEA Commander in Oyo State, Mr Lawal Adetula, urged the newly promoted officers to rededicate themselves to serving the agency, Nigeria, and humanity.

Adetula said that being promoted and decorated wasn't merely an elevation in rank but a call to greater responsibility.

The commander advised the newly decorated officers to ensure they create an impact and add value to the society.

According to him, life without an impact is a life without value.

"Let the people of Oyo State know that something positive has happened. Don't just wear the uniform or the decoration.

"Ask yourself every day, what value can I add to society. No mat-

ter the position you attain in life, be humble.

"I have met professors of philosophy, professors of engineering, professors of medicine, and professors in many other fields, one thing I have learned is that no position belongs to you by yourself.

"Someone gives you the opportunity to occupy that position. Therefore, never allow your position to define your character.

"Instead, let your character add value to your position," the commander advised.

Adetula appreciated the NDLEA Chairman, retired Brig.-Gen. Buba Marwa, for ensuring that those duely deserving to be promoted were those promoted and as at when due.

The commander recalled what he passed through before the appointment of Marwa as NDLEA chairman, saying he lost almost seven years due to delayed promotion during the last administration.

Adetula said that he made impact within three months of his being promoted to Commander.

"When I was posted to Osun State Command, an agrarian state, within one year, history was made.

Adamawa government investigates alleged 2.3m market allocation scam

YOLA

The Adamawa Government has launched an investigation into an alleged 2.3 million fraud linked to the allocation of shops at the newly rebuilt Modibbo Adama Ultra Modern Market, Yola.

Mr Joab Salma, Commissioner for Commerce, Trade and Industry, disclosed this while briefing newsmen on Tuesday, in Yola.

Salma alleged that a suspected fraudster collected more than

2.3 million from traders after promising to influence shop allocations before disappearing.

He advised members of the public to make payments only through approved government channels to avoid falling victim to fraud.

The commissioner said the challenge arose after the government directed traders' associations to submit names of those who lost shops during previous fire incidents at the market.

According to him, the initial list contained more than 1,000

names, exceeding the capacity of the reconstructed market.

He said a screening exercise reduced the number of verified traders to 303, while Gov. Ahmad Fintiri later approved an additional 47 spaces, increasing the allocations to 350 shops.

Salma, however, said protests persisted over the allocations due to alleged manipulation of the verified list by some union officials.

He said credible complaints indicated that names of genuine traders were removed and

replaced with those of individuals who never operated in the market.

"Investigations further revealed that some beneficiaries admitted, had never traded in the market but were promised shops after submitting their names.

"The ministry also discovered cases involving names of deceased persons and impersonators claiming ownership of shops.

"The ministry has constituted a verification committee, headed by the Permanent Secretary, to review petitions from affected traders and identify genuine beneficiaries," he said.

NPC establishes 4,011 E-CRVS centres nationwide – Commissioner

DAMATURU

The National Population Commission (NPC) says it has established 4,011 functional birth and death registration centres across the 774 local government areas in the country under its Electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system.

NPC Federal Commissioner representing Yobe, Mr Tonga Bularafa, disclosed this during a media briefing in Damaturu on Tuesday, marking the commencement of the exercise in the state.

Bularafa said the commission was planning to increase the cen-

tres to about 8,000 to improve access to registration services and ensure that births and deaths were promptly captured nationwide.

He said the digital registration initiative, which became operational on July 1, was being implemented through the VitalReg platform across the 17 local government areas of Yobe.

According to him, the initiative marks a major milestone in the modernisation of Nigeria's civil registration system and aligns with the Federal Government's digital transformation agenda under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

"The Commission is leverag-

ing technology to improve service delivery, strengthen data integrity and guarantee that every birth and every death occurring in Nigeria is documented accurately and securely," he said.

Bularafa expressed concern that although Nigeria recorded an estimated 5 million births annually, millions of births and deaths remained unregistered.

He said birth registration coverage stood at about 57 per cent nationwide, while death registration remained below 20 per cent, stressing that the gaps denied many citizens legal identity and limited the availability of reliable demographic data for

national planning.

The commissioner said the VitalReg platform would provide faster registration services, round-the-clock online access, digital certificate issuance where applicable, improved data validation, reduced paperwork and waiting time.

Bularafa said the commission entered into partnership with the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), UNICEF and Barnksforte Technologies Ltd. to decentralise birth registration and legal identity services to the grassroots.

Nwigwe emerges IPAC chairman in Ebonyi, pledges inclusive leadership

ABAKALIKI

Mrs Queendarlyn Nwigwe has been elected and inaugurated as the Chairperson of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), Ebonyi State chapter.

The inauguration took place at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) office in Abakaliki.

The event was attended by the Commissioner for Inter-Party Affairs, Mr Philip Okorie and the IPAC Director-General and National Chairman of the National Rescue Movement (NRM), Mr Chinedu Obi.

Also in attendance were the political party leaders, electoral officials and other stakeholders.

Other members of the newly inaugurated executive committee were Bishop Constant Edward, Deputy Chairman; Mr Peter Ozuma, Secretary; Evangelist Kate Ohakam, Deputy Secretary and Mr Stanley Ogodo, Organising Secretary.

Others are; Mrs Juliet Nwiny, Publicity Secretary; Mrs Mercy Nwogbala, Treasurer and Mr Paschal Ani, Financial Secretary.

In her acceptance speech, Nwigwe acknowledged the initial challenges encountered during the election but assured members that her administration would be transparent, inclusive and committed to promoting unity and democratic values within the council.

She pledged to strengthen communication among political parties, promote peaceful elections and campaigns, and sustain a conducive political environment across Ebonyi State.

Nwigwe assured members that she would discharge her responsibilities with fairness, neutrality and impartiality.

Her answers were in response to concerns that her position as the All Progressives Congress (APC) Women Leader in the state could affect her role as IPAC chairman,

NEWS

FG invest over ₦1trn in tertiary education, removing financial barrier – Minister

ABUJA

The Federal Government says it has invested more than N1 trillion in the tertiary educational sector within two years, while removing financial barriers preventing qualified students from accessing higher education.

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, disclosed this on Tuesday in Abuja, during a meeting with members of the National Committee for the Advancement of Occupational

Therapy, Audiology, Speech and Language Therapy Education.

Alausa highlighted President Bola Tinubu's educational reforms and infrastructural investments targeted toward expanding educational opportunities and strengthening human capital development nationwide.

According to him, the reforms are designed to ensure that no qualified Nigerian is denied access to higher education because of financial hardship, irrespective of family background or economic status.

He said the administration had deliberately removed long-standing financial obstacles that prevented many brilliant students from pursuing tertiary education, describing education as a fundamental national investment.

"The President has opened up access to students so that not having money, or coming from an indigent family, will no longer stop anyone from achieving educational opportunities," Alausa said.

The minister commended President Tinubu for prior-

itising education, saying that the reforms served as strategic investment in Nigeria's youth and a deliberate effort to building a globally competitive and productive workforce.

He said students had emerged among the greatest beneficiaries of the Renewed Hope Agenda, with the government backing its promises through unprecedented investments in infrastructure, teaching facilities and improved learning environments.

Alausa disclosed that the federal government had committed N250 billion to construct new hostels across tertiary institutions, significantly

expanding accommodation capacity and improving students' welfare nationwide.

He added that more than N150 billion had also been invested in rehabilitating hostels, classrooms, engineering workshops and other academic facilities to improve teaching, research and learning across public tertiary institutions.

He added that the present administration had invested over N130 billion in rehabilitating medical schools nationwide to improve healthcare training and address shortages in critical medical and allied health professions.

He further revealed that an-

other N52 billion had been approved for modern equipment in 18 medical schools, while almost N30 billion was committed to establishing 11 medical simulation laboratories.

The minister said the investments would enhance practical clinical training, improve research capacity and equip future healthcare professionals with globally acceptable skills required to strengthen Nigeria's health sector.

Alausa also disclosed that almost N110 billion had been invested in engineering workshops and modern equipment for federal universities of technology, conventional universities offering engineering programmes and polytechnics.

He noted that the interventions would strengthen science, technology, engineering and innovation, while producing graduates equipped with practical competencies required to drive industrialisation and sustainable national economic development.

Ekiti court revokes bail of APC guber aspirant, Abimbola

ADO-EKITI

An ADO-Ekiti Chief Magistrates' Court, on Tuesday, revoked the bail earlier granted to an All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship aspirant, Abimbola Olawumi over alleged cyber bullying and false accusation on social media.

The News defendant was first arraigned before the court on July 23 for alleged cyber bullying and false accusation on social

media against one Yemisi Joluwe.

She had pleaded not guilty to the four-count charge preferred against her, and the court granted her bail on self-recognition as canvassed by her defence counsel on the her first arraignment.

In a resumed hearing of the case on Tuesday, the counsel to the defendant, Mr Odunayo Okunade, in his submission, apologised to the court over his client absence in court.

Okunade said that his client

was unable to attend the proceedings due to her health challenges and tendered a medical report to support his submission.

But the Police prosecutor, Mr Samson Osobu, opposed the defence's argument, saying that the defendant absence was unjustifiable and that they were not aware of the medical report.

Osobu argued that in spite of claiming to be ill, the defendant was allegedly active on social media as on Monday and Tuesday where she reportedly continued

to bully, threaten abuse and terrorise the complainant and other people on social media.

According to him, the defendant's conduct amounts to a gross abuse of the bail earlier granted by the court.

He therefore urged the court to revoke the bail of the defendant and issue a bench warrant on her.

In his ruling, the Chief Magistrate, Mr Abayomi Adeosun, expressed displeasure over the defendant's failure to appear in court.

Adeosun said that the court was disappointed that the defendant failed to honour its proceedings in spite of being admitted to bail on self-recognition, noting that parties granted bail were expected to comply strictly with the conditions attached to it.

He consequently revoked the bail earlier granted to her and issued a bench warrant on the defendant, and adjourned the case until August 17 for hearing.

RECONCILIATION NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **OVUAKPORORO EJIRO STABASTINE** and **OVUAKPORORO EJIRO BENISON STABASTINE**. Are one and same person. hence now wish to be known and called **OVUAKPORORO EJIRO STABASTINE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

Alleged defamation: AGF leads prosecution in Sowore's trial

ABUJA

Mr Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, on Tuesday appeared for the prosecution in the trial of Omoyele Sowore, publisher of Sahara Reporters.

Sowore is being prosecuted by the Department of State Services (DSS) for alleged criminal defamation before Justice Mohammed Umar of the Federal

High Court in Abuja.

Sowore, the presidential candidate of the African Action Congress (AAC), was alleged to have made false claims against the person of President Bola Tinubu by referring to him as "a criminal" in a post he made on his "X" and Facebook accounts.

Against this development, the DSS charged him with criminal defamation, cyberstalking and incitement.

Fagbemi, on Tuesday, led a

team of lawyers, including the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Rotimi Oyedepo, SAN, and Akinlolu Kehinde, SAN, among others, in the trial.

He urged the court to reject Sowore's subpoenaed letter, asking the DSS DG, Oluwatin Ajayi, to testify in his defence.

The AGF, who said the DSS had been so responsive enough to allow the 2nd defence witness (DW-2), an official from the service, to give testimony on the last adjourned date, said the application for Ajayi to testify was to delay the proceedings.

Stylist docked for allegedly stealing hair worth ₦1.3m

ABUJA

The police on Tuesday, dragged a 37-year-old man, stylist, Patrick Ikogor before a Wuse Chief Magistrates' Court in Abuja, for allegedly stealing human hair worth N1.3 million.

The defendant is standing trial on charges bordering on criminal breach of trust, and theft by servant.

He, however, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The prosecutor, Festus Ajayi

told the court that a complainant, one Ms Iyede Oghogho reported the matter at the Maitama Police Station on July 24.

Ajayi alleged that the complainant employed the defendant as a hair stylist in her salon with a monthly salary of N170,000.

He alleged that the defendant developed the habit of stealing human hair products from the salon, amounting to N1.3 million.

The offence contravenes the provisions of sections 289 and 312 of the Penal Code.

Defence counsel, Helen Ak-

pala applied for bail of the defendant pending determination of the case, and cited the provisions of section 158 and 162 of Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015.

The Magistrate, Hafsat Amiru granted the defendant bail in the sum of N500,000 with two sureties in like sum.

The court held that the sureties must reside and work within the court's jurisdiction, and must provide means of identification.

Aminu adjourned the matter until Sept.10, for hearing.

Man, 46, arraigned for allegedly receiving stolen bags of fertilizer

ADO-EKITI

The police on Tuesday, charged a 46-year-old man, Owolabi Sola, at an ADO-Ekiti Chief Magistrates' Court for allegedly receiving 43 bags of stolen fertilizer.

Sola, whose address was not

provided, is standing trial on a charge of receiving stolen items.

He, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The prosecutor, ASP Akinwale Oriyomi, told the court that the defendant committed the offence on July 13, at Oke-Ako Ekiti in Ikole Local Gov-

ernment.

He alleged that the defendant unlawfully received 43 bags of stolen fertilizer worth two million naira, from Owolabi Sunday, Taiwo Ayenigba and Adeyanju Daniel, property of an Agro-allied company, YSJ Nigeria Ltd.

CAVEAT EMPTOR / PUBLIC NOTICE

**PROPERTY OF ABASS OWOSIMIBO ABIDEMI AT
8C, LATEEF ADEGBEYEGA STREET, GRANMATE BUS-STOP,
OFF OKOTA-PALACE WAY, ISOLO, LAGOS**

The general public is hereby notified and put on notice that all original title documents, survey plans, receipts, and other documents of title relating to the property located at 8C, Lateef Adegbeysa Street, Granmate Bus-Stop, Off Okota-Palace Way, Isolo, Lagos are currently in wrongful custody.

Said documents were taken without the authority, consent, or knowledge of the lawful owner.

⚠ WARNING

By this publication, the general public, intending purchasers, lessees, mortgagees, financial institutions, developers, surveyors, real estate agents, and all persons howsoever described, are hereby cautioned and warned **NOT TO ENTER INTO ANY TRANSACTION, DEALING, SALE, LEASE, MORTGAGE, CHARGE, GIFT, OR ANY FORM OF ENCUMBRANCE** with respect to the said property with any unauthorized person.

Any person or institution that deals with any unauthorized person in respect of the said property does so **AT HIS/HER OWN PERIL/RISK**, and such transaction shall be null, void, and of no effect whatsoever in law. The lawful owner will not be bound by, and will not recognize, any such transaction.

This notice is issued in compliance with due process and to protect the interest of the rightful owner.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, INQUIRIES,
OR DELIVERY OF THE SAID DOCUMENTS,
PLEASE CONTACT:**

ABASS OWOSIMIBO ABIDEMI
8C, Lateef Adegbeysa Street,
Granmate Bus-Stop,
Off Okota-Palace Way, Isolo, Lagos.

Tel: 08081061475

OR, THROUGH THE SOLICITORS:

Meridien Partners (U.A. & E. Chambers)
Plot 13, Port Harcourt Crescent,
Off the National Industrial Court of Nigeria,
Area 11, Abuja.

Tel: 09122000727-8



Dated this 23rd day of July, 2026.

**SIGNED
ABASS OWOSIMIBO ABIDEMI
Owner**

FOREIGN

NEWS

**EMERGENCY MEETING:**

France's UN ambassador Jerome Bonnafont spoke at the UN Security Council in New York on Monday during an emergency meeting on the Ukraine-Russia war

US singer D4vd to go on trial for murder in death of 14-year-old

A judge has ruled that US musician D4vd will go on trial for murder over the death of a teenage girl.

The decision came after a five-day preliminary hearing, in which Los Angeles prosecutors questioned a dozen witnesses and displayed graphic photographic evidence as 14-year-old Celeste Rivas Hernandez's family watched on.

The star, whose legal name is David Anthony Burke, is accused of killing the girl, whose remains were found last September in a Tesla registered to his address.

Burke, 21, has pleaded not guilty to charges of murdering and sexually abusing her.

Burke is scheduled to be charged on 31 August. The trial is to start within 90 days of that date.

Prosecutors have alleged Burke stabbed the teen before dismembering her body after years of sexual abuse.

They allege he killed her because the teen had threatened to reveal his relationship with

a minor and destroy his multi-million dollar music career.

Evidence read in court on Monday showed threats Hernandez made to Burke on 22 April 2025, stemming from arguments about his friendship with another girl.

"I swear to GOD I will kill u", one expletive-laden text said, followed by a threat to strangle him and tell her dad lies about him. "i will end ur career and ur life I will damage anything," the text went on.

The following day, Hernandez went to Burke's Hollywood home in an Uber he had sent to pick her up.

Prosecutors alleged that Burke stabbed her once she arrived.

During questioning at the hearing on Monday, Detective Corey Farrell of the Los Angeles Police Department said text messages indicated that the defendant and the girl had attended church with her family.

In response to the defence, the detective said he was aware the teen had misrepresented her

age to the defendant, telling him she was 16 and 18 at different times.

Burke's defence lawyers argued there was not sufficient evidence that he had committed the crime.

They said her parents were aware of what was going on between them and had even given written consent for her to travel to London with Burke for a week.

The defence highlighted texts on the 22nd and the 23rd of April that suggested Celeste had insisted on going to Burke's Hollywood Hills home and that he had argued against her coming before agreeing to send her an Uber on the night of the 23rd.

He "repeatedly expressed love and care for Ms Hernandez after they broke up", defence attorney Marilyn Bednarski said in court.

The medical examiner's inability to prove how the two penetrating wounds found in the girl occurred and the lack of surveillance video capturing Burke being home on the night

of 23 April showed a lack of evidence, the defence argued.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Charlene Olmedo ruled that evidence presented during the preliminary hearing provided probable cause for a trial.

Burke is charged with murder, continuous sexual abuse of a child under 14, and unlawful mutilation of human remains.

"The people have met their burden on all counts," Judge Olmedo said.

She found that prosecutors met the threshold for the charge of murder with special circumstances, including lying in wait, motive for financial gain and eliminating a witness.

Following the hearing, Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman said his office only presented a fraction of the evidence it had against Burke, and that it would present everything in the coming trial.

Hochman also said his office had not yet determined if it would pursue the death penalty against Burke.

US walks out of UN Security Council meeting during France's remarks

The US delegation walked out of a UN Security Council meeting on Monday, in protest at comments made by France that compared Washington's voting on human rights to that of authoritarian states.

The diplomatic row was initially sparked last week, when the US joined North Korea and Russia in voting against extending Volker Turk's term as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

After the vote on Friday, France's UN mission criticised the US and compared it to North Korea and Russia. "The US used to be a beacon of human rights. Not anymore," it posted on X.

In response, US ambassador Mike Waltz accused France of voting for a human rights chief who had been "lecturing" democratic countries while "cozying up to the world's worst oppressors", without elaborating on what he meant.

Turk has criticised Russia's war in Ukraine and Israel's military conduct in Gaza.

The US team's walkout came while France's ambassador Jerome Bonnafont was speaking during an emergency Security Council meeting on Russia's war in Ukraine.

US ambassador Dan Negrea said the delegation would continue to make similar protests until France "renounces their condescending and disrespectful rhetoric".

The fight over Turk's second term, which was passed with 144 states in favour, 10 against and 13 abstentions, reflects tensions between Washington and the United Nations.

The Trump administration has cut funding for UN agencies and withdrawn from dozens of its entities.

On Friday, US ambassador Jeff Bartos criticised Turk's reappointment and said "there will be consequences" to the assembly which "tolerates procedural overreach, backroom deals, and the misuse of UN posts".

"The United States will immediately reassess our engagement, participation, and funding," he said.

However, French ambassador Bonnafont described Turk as "a voice of conscience" who demonstrated "rigor and impartiality" during his first term.

Deputy UN spokesperson Farhan Haq declined to comment on the US walkout, adding the UN expected all member states to respect the decision.

Law student charged after bomb discovery in car will be bailed

A law student charged in connection with the discovery of a bomb in a car in County Monaghan is to be released on bail.

Isobella Perrie Sullivan of Abbeylands Park, Clane, County Kildare, had previously faced a delay in her bail application while checks were carried out on a €15,000 (£12,800) independent surety.

The 25-year-old did not appear before Cavan District Court either via video link or in person on Tuesday.

The court heard that the surety had been provided by an individual in County

Mayo, along with their bank details.

During the brief hearing, gardai (Irish police) asked for an amendment to her bail conditions to include a condition that she not make any contact, directly or indirectly, with the co-accused in the case or with any associates of that person.

However the judge said that the request was covered by the bail conditions set out at her initial appearance on Friday.

Perrie Sullivan is due to appear again before Monaghan District Court in August.

Zelensky to press Trump on air defences while in Washington

Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky is due to hold important talks with US President Donald Trump at the White House, where he is hoping to firm up commitments to bolstering Kyiv's anti-ballistic missile defences.

Zelensky has arrived in the US at a significant stage in Russia's full-scale war in Ukraine, with Moscow's mayor saying the capital was targeted by 390 drones in a matter of hours overnight.

The Ukrainian leader is expected to press Trump over support he gave earlier this month for Kyiv to be given a licence to produce Patriot interceptor missiles.

Russia has escalated dead-

ly ballistic missile attacks on Ukraine's capital recently, and Zelensky has said interceptors are urgently needed.

Patriot missiles have been at the top of Zelensky's wish-list for some time, but after the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, these US air defence interceptors are in very short supply.

Promising a licence is one thing, but co-producing the highly sophisticated PAC-2 and PAC-3 interceptors on Ukrainian soil is another, because it involves a lengthy political, legal and technical process.

A delegation from US manufacturer Raytheon visited Kyiv last week and Zelensky said the defence firm had expressed "readiness to take our partner-

ship to an even higher level".

After he speaks with Zelensky, Trump will have another important meeting - with Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu. It is the first time the two have met in person since the war on Iran started in late February.

Zelensky and Netanyahu are in Washington to attend the funeral of Senator Lindsey Graham, who died this month aged 71.

The Ukraine war appeared to coincide with the US-Israel war with Iran at the weekend, when Ukrainian forces targeted an Iranian cargo ship in the Caspian Sea.

Kyiv has described Iran as a "direct accomplice to Russian aggression against Ukraine" and

Zelensky has said Ukrainian intelligence has evidence that Russia has shared satellite imagery with Tehran, enabling Iran to attack US military facilities and Gulf states.

Trump has said he will "find out if that's true. I'll ask Putin about it", while saying if true, it had no impact at all.

Meanwhile, in Moscow, Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said more than 390 Ukrainian drones had targeted the region between 20:30 on Monday and 06:30 on Tuesday local time, and that most had been intercepted by air defences.

Footage confirmed by BBC Verify showed damage to a high-rise building in Chekhov, south of the capital and a fire at

a warehouse in Berezhki to the west. Local officials in Chekhov said there had been no casualties.

Since Zelensky last spoke to Trump in early July, Ukraine has repeatedly targeted logistics hubs, many belonging to Russian e-commerce company Wildberries, exacerbating issues faced by small and medium-sized business in parts of Russia.

Speaking at the Kremlin on Monday, President Vladimir Putin told members of Russia's parliament, the Duma, that their country's enemies were resorting to "terrorist methods" against civilians but would "never break" the Russian people.

"We will achieve our objectives and will together do

everything for victory, for Russia," Putin said.

At the weekend, he was confronted over the war's objectives by an ally, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who said the roots of the war were "not understandable".

Tokayev said a peace deal with Ukraine could be reached if the war was halted for negotiations to take place.

"Perhaps it is time to freeze this conflict and return to the Istanbul formula 2.0," Tokayev suggested, referring to talks that began shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday that freezing the war now was impossible "given Kyiv's position."

NEWS**FOREIGN****South Africa's President calls for African nations to work together on migration**

South Africa's president Cyril Ramaphosa is calling for African countries to cooperate on migration.

"We need to work together to address issues like conflict, instability, poverty and social discord," Ramaphosa said on Monday.

His appeal to the Pan-African parliament follows weeks of anti-immigrant protests led by groups who blame undocumented migrants for unemployment, crime and strain on public services.

Ramaphosa warned that unmanaged cross-border movement could undermine security and social order, and said no country should address the challenge alone.

"As African countries, we have to acknowledge and address the conditions that drive migration in the first place," Ramaphosa told a session of the parliament, which is the legislative body of the African Union.

Pretoria is facing growing criticism from other African governments over attacks on their citizens in South Africa.

Last week, a Nigerian national died while under arrest in Cape Town. Abuja has accused police of using "egregious tactics that led to his death."

At least four migrants have been killed in the violence, though some foreign governments say the death toll is higher.

The attacks were "sad and abhorrent", Ramaphosa said, adding that "we in South Africa deeply regret and mourn" the lives lost. "We've taken a firm stand against hatred for people from other countries, xenophobia or Afrophobia," Ramaphosa said.

Tens of thousands of African migrants have left South Africa over the last two months, with countries including Ghana, Nigeria and Malawi helping to repatriate their citizens.

A Japanese town wrestles with identity after protests over its first mosque

Plans for a new mosque in Fujisawa have sparked a wide range of emotions.

Today, it's a field of grass. But soon, it'll be the site of the first mosque in this Japanese town.

"It makes me worry about how our community might change," says long-time resident Noriko Izumizawa.

Plans to build an Islamic religious site in Fujisawa, a laid-back seaside town about an hour's drive south of Tokyo, have sparked a wide range of emotions.

There is anger and fear, as well as hope and acceptance, exposing the growing anxieties over immigration and social change as Japan grapples with a labour shortage from a shrinking and ageing population.

Although immigration remains politically sensitive and restrictive, Japan is increasingly relying on foreign workers to fill open jobs. That means an

influx of immigrants with various cultures, languages, religions and ways of being.

So the debate that is playing out in towns like Fujisawa across the country is one that goes to the heart of how Japan sees itself.

Izumizawa is not alone in the way she feels. She is among a group of Fujisawa residents who are anxious about the increasingly visible Muslim community. She says that the polarising debates around immigration in the US and Europe have also contributed to her unease.

Noriko Izumizawa worries about how the construction of a new mosque in her town could change the local community.

Earlier this year, anti-mosque protests flared up at the local train station, where thousands took to the streets to object to the proposed con-

struction of the mosque. Some argue that a mosque much larger than the nearby Japanese Shinto shrine is disrespectful.

There have also been reports of hate speech and misinformation spreading on Japanese social media. Local outlets say mosques have been receiving abusive phone calls and emails, some of which has prompted anti-hate groups to organise counter protests calling for no hate.

Hiroki Suzuka, who manages a coffee shop opposite the road where the Fujisawa mosque is set to be built, calls for greater understanding and dialogue.

"I'm not particularly opposed, but I wouldn't say I'm strongly in favour either," Suzuka said.

"I think the first step is to learn about them, what Islam is, what kind of people they are, and what values and perspectives they hold. It begins with

having an open mind and a desire to understand each other."

Being Muslim in Japan
Businessman Mohamed Mohideen has lived in Osaka for the past 39 years. He moved from his home country Sri Lanka in 1987 for better work opportunities during the economic bubble.

The verbal abuse has worsened in recent years. He recalled members of his Muslim community being called terrorists, accused of making bombs, and being told to get out of Japan.

"When that happens, the only thing we can do is be patient. They're trying to provoke a fight or create a confrontation. They want to see how long we'll tolerate it," Mohideen explained.

"So we stay calm, speak gently, and treat them kindly, because Japanese people generally don't know much about Islam."

Widespread damage from magnitude 7.1 earthquake in south-west Japan

The fire department said the second floor of the mall collapsed, "leaving many people trapped inside"

Several people are trapped inside a shopping centre after a strong earthquake hit south-west Japan, officials say.

Local media reports that there was an explosion at the Aeon Mall in Kumamoto prefecture, following the magnitude 7.1 earthquake.

The quake hit inland on Kyushu island at 16:27 local time (07:27 GMT), with about 300,000 people being told to move to evacuation shelters. There was a brief tsunami warning that was lifted within the hour.

Emergency services said "many people" were trapped inside the Aeon Mall in the Kumamoto prefecture.

In the town of Kashima, "a shopping complex's second floor collapsed, leaving many people trapped inside," the fire department said in a statement.

Japan is one of the world's most earthquake-prone countries, experiencing about 1,500 quakes a year.

The meteorological agency has warned of strong aftershocks given the shallow epicentre - 10km (six miles). Footage aired by national broadcaster NHK shows cracked roads and bridges and several buildings on fire.

The quake's epicentre was about 20km (12 miles) south of Kumamoto, which is Kyushu island's largest city with a population of about 700,000.

"We are still assessing the extent of injuries and property damage, but I have been informed that there have already been several injuries," Prime

Minister Sanae Takaichi said on Tuesday.

Footage of the shopping centre shows white smoke rising from the building, as people run into the carpark. Large parts of the mall's exterior have been blown off, exposing the steel beams underneath.

Aeon Mall is a popular nationwide chain that operates about 160 centres across Japan. It holds department stores, boutiques, pharmacies and food courts.

Dozens of people were injured during the earthquake - about 10 were in an elderly care home and at least 50 people are being treated in hospital, NHK reported.

An 89-year-old man living in the city of Uki told NewsJP that the earthquake "shook violently up-and-down and side-to-side for about 10 to 20 seconds."

Train services have been suspended and electricity has been cut off for thousands of homes.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said first responders had been deployed, including Japan's self-defence force, fire services and coast guard.

"We urge residents in areas where the shaking was particularly severe to pay close attention to evacuation information issued by local authorities via radio, television and the internet, and to act calmly," he said.

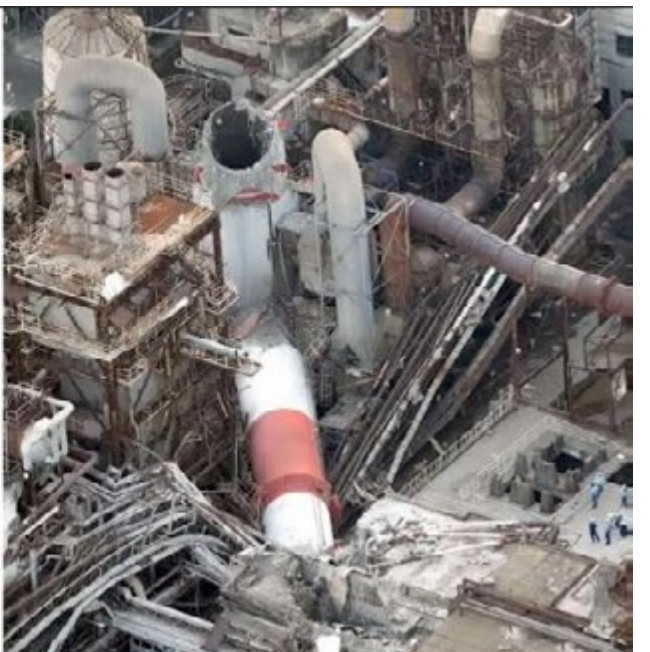
Takaichi said 3,600 soldiers would be deployed to help with the disaster recovery as aftershocks continued to rumble.

The International Atomic Energy Agency posted to X that the earthquake "caused no damage or safety issues at the Sendai Nuclear Power Plant, located around 100km (62 miles) from the epicentre, and that it remains in operation."



EARTHQUAKE:

People trapped in Japanese mall after earthquake, with others reported missing at paper factory.

**Hong Kong activist allowed to stay in UK after deportation threat**

Former Hong Kong opposition leader Wu Chi-wai has been allowed to stay in the UK with his family for six months, after initially being detained at the border.

Wu had arrived at London's Heathrow Airport last Wednesday, where he was detained for nearly 10 hours and initially refused entry, he told BBC Chinese. He said he was later told he could stay for only one week, after which he would have to report to the airport to be deported.

But on Monday, the UK Border Force approved his entry and granted him a standard stay of six months, he said.

The 63-year-old was the leader of the now-defunct Democratic Party and one of the most recognisable faces of the city's quashed pro-democracy movement.

Wu is one of the so-called

Hong Kong 47, a group of high-profile pro-democracy leaders who were sentenced to jail after a controversial national security trial.

He was released in June after spending more than five years in prison for subversion and other convictions.

Wu told BBC Chinese that his son and wife moved to the UK in 2022 and 2023, and the only communication he had with them since then was through monthly phone calls and letters. He had hoped to reunite with his family in the UK during his recent visit, he added.

Ahead of his departure, Wu said he had consulted staff at the British Consulate General in Hong Kong, asking if there would be any problems with his entry.

"The information I received was that there would be none," he said, adding that consular

staff said they would explain his criminal record and itinerary to the UK Border Force.

The Border Force said he was not considered a "genuine visitor" who was solely visiting family, he said.

Wu denies that he had intended to apply for political asylum in the UK - a claim that was previously reported in the media.

Rights group Hong Kong Watch, which had called on UK authorities to allow Wu to stay in the country, said in a statement that it welcomed the recent news.

"This is the right outcome, and it should never have taken this long," Megan Khoo, Hong Kong Watch's policy director, said in a statement on Monday. "He should never have faced the prospect of removal back to the city that jailed him."

Wu was released in June after spending more than five years in prison

Wu was using his British National (Overseas) (BNO) passport - a special travel document issued to Hong Kong permanent residents before 1 July 1997, when Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule - to enter the UK.

BNO passport holders are typically allowed to stay in the UK visa-free for six months.

Since 2021, the UK government launched a visa programme for BNO passport holders. Those granted the visa are eligible to work, study and live in the UK, putting them on a pathway to citizenship after they settle in the UK.

The new policy came after Hong Kong was rocked by massive pro-democracy protests, which authorities cracked down on. Since then, Hong Kong has come under increasing control from Beijing, and many of its pro-democracy figures have been either fled the city or been jailed.

FEATURE

Phillips Consulting's Findings Lay Bare Obaseki's Governance Failures

Dr. Patrick Akhere Ebojele

It is not uncommon every year for all and sundry to carry out governance rankings, generate headlines, shape public opinion, and create ammunition in political debates. The Phillips Consulting 2026 State Performance Momentum Index is the latest example. While it has attracted widespread attention, its assessment of Edo State has been misconstrued and very dangerously, too.

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo assumed office on November 12, 2024. By the time Phillips Consulting compiled its Momentum Index, his administration had been in office for barely seven months. That is hardly enough time for any government to reverse inherited challenges, execute major projects, and produce measurable outcomes across critical sectors. This is the first sign that it was not about the present government in Benin City.

Of truth, governance is a process and not necessarily an event. Budgets must be passed, contracts awarded, projects mobilised, and policies implemented before citizens begin to experience their impact. Inevitably measuring a government so early in its life cycle captures more of what it inherited than what it has created.

It is clear that the report says more about the administration of former Governor Godwin Obaseki than it does about Governor Okpebholo. If Edo was underperforming on key governance indicators when the data was collected, those conditions were largely shaped by the policies and outcomes of the previous eight years before Governor Okpebholo's entrance. In that sense, the report unintentionally reinforces the central argument advanced by the current administration since taking office—that it inherited significant fiscal, institutional, and governance challenges requiring time to address.

Even Phillips Consulting makes an important distinction by describing its exercise as a Momentum Index rather than an assessment of absolute performance. That distinction is germane. A state recovering from a faulty base may record rapid movement within a short period, while another embarking on deeper structural reforms may appear to move more slowly because meaningful reforms naturally take longer to produce



MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

GODWIN OBASEKI

measurable results.

It is on this score that the information about Edo must be evaluated as much of the data reflects conditions inherited from the previous administration rather than the policies of the current government. Judging a new administration almost entirely on historical indicators risks creating a misleading narrative.

What of the methodology? The index combines indicators such as citizen satisfaction, internally generated revenue, fiscal self-reliance, debt per capita, and transparency into a single composite score. While such indices are common, they often compress complex governance realities into one number, making it difficult to appreciate the unique circumstances facing individual states.

The index has other defects. Information in the public domain also points to significant differences in survey sample sizes. Lagos reportedly had more than 12,000 respondents, while some states had fewer than 100 and others fewer than 200. Such disparities affect statistical reliability. Smaller samples carry larger margins of error, making broad comparisons less dependable. That does invalidate the report and also suggests its conclusions should be interpreted with caution rather than being treated as definitive. What of the reality on the ground? Since taking office, Governor Okpebholo has launched an ambitious infra-

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These projects are tangible investments in economic growth and improved living standards. Yet infrastructure development is inherently long-term. Roads still under construction can not immediately translate into governance scores until they are completed and their economic benefits become measurable.

structure program across Edo State. Road construction and rehabilitation are ongoing in the three senatorial districts. Drainage projects are being expanded to tackle flooding, while

erosion control works continue in vulnerable communities. The Ramat Park Flyover, the first of its kind in Benin City, has become a visible symbol of the administration's drive to modernise the state's infrastructure.

Education is another sector where the administration is investing for the future and has received accolades. Through the Senator Monday Okpebholo Education Talent Hunt Competition, outstanding students have received scholarships to state-owned tertiary institutions. It is an investment in human capital whose full benefits will emerge over several years, not within the narrow timeline captured by the Momentum Index.

Healthcare reforms are also underway. The government has prioritised the revitalisation of primary healthcare centers to improve access to affordable medical services, particularly in underserved communities. Better healthcare outcomes take time, but the foundations are being laid through investments that are expected to strengthen the system over the long term.

Security has received similar attention. The administration has reduced bloodbath arising from violent cult clashes and established a Special Criminal Court to accelerate the prosecution of cultism and kidnapping cases while strengthening security operations across the state. Restoring public confidence and creating a

safer environment for businesses and residents can not be measured within a few months, yet these reforms are critical to sustainable development.

Governor Monday Okpebholo is equally pursuing digital governance reforms by improving public service delivery, expanding electronic government platforms, and strengthening digital capacity within the civil service. These initiatives are designed to improve transparency, revenue generation, and administrative efficiency—the same indicators future governance assessments are likely to reward once the reforms become fully operational.

This is why reducing Edo's performance to a single momentum score does not tell any part of the story. Independent assessments remain valuable because they encourage accountability and challenge governments to improve. However, accountability must also be fair. Reports should recognise political transitions, inherited conditions, and the time required for reforms to produce measurable outcomes. Without that context, statistics risk creating impressions that are incomplete or even misleading.

It was on this basis that Edo State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Prince Kassim Afegbua, rejected the Phillips Consulting report, describing it as "reckless and misleading." He argued that the assessment overlooked ongoing infrastructure projects, educational reforms, healthcare improvements, and institutional changes already underway across the state. He also maintained that much of the data reflected the fiscal realities inherited from the previous administration rather than the direction of the current government.

His point is: Can a government that has spent barely seven months in office fairly be judged on indicators largely shaped by eight years of its predecessor? Ultimately, governments are remembered less for annual rankings than for enduring achievements. Roads, schools, hospitals, stronger institutions, and improved public services leave a more lasting legacy than league tables published once a year.

• *Ebojele, PhD, in public administration, is the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State.*

NEWS

AIG Jimoh warns against media trials, reaffirms rule of law

LAGOS

The AIG of Police in charge of Zone 2 Command, Onikan, Lagos, Mr Olohundare Jimoh, has warned against media trials and urged members of the public to allow criminal investigations to follow due process.

Jimoh gave the warning while addressing journalists after receiving a leadership recognition award from Dr Wole Odunsi, publisher of National Express

Newspapers and promoter of the Critical Leadership Value Organisation, on Tuesday in Lagos.

He said individuals should avoid assuming the roles of investigators, prosecutors and judges through social media, stressing that criminal matters should be handled within the framework of the law.

“There are laid-down procedures for seeking redress. People should allow the law to take its course rather than conducting investigations and

delivering judgments on social media,” he said.

The AIG maintained that no individual, irrespective of status or position, was above the law, adding that everyone, including senior police officers, remained subject to the same laws of the land.

He reaffirmed the command's commitment to improved policing, enhanced service delivery and strengthened security across Lagos and Ogun states.

Jimoh said the command would continue to strengthen

crime prevention, professionalism and people-centred policing while ensuring the safety of residents.

The police boss added that the recognition would motivate officers and men of the command to redouble their efforts in safeguarding lives and property.

According to him, the Nigeria Police Force remains committed to its constitutional responsibility of preventing crime, detecting offences promptly and ensuring that residents are safe in their homes,

workplaces and communities.

“The responsibility of the Nigeria Police Force is to ensure that people are safe wherever they are. We will continue to improve our service delivery and reduce crime to the barest minimum,” he said.

Jimoh commended Odunsi for promoting security awareness through journalism and public enlightenment, noting that the media remained a critical partner in supporting security agencies.

He said the command wel-

comed constructive criticism from members of the public, as genuine observations would help improve police operations and service delivery.

The AIG also reaffirmed his commitment to transparency in criminal investigations, explaining that cases capable of being handled by the Lagos and Ogun police commands were left with the respective commands, while only matters requiring zonal intervention were transferred to Zone 2.

Sports

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

Mangongo salutes Enabulele, describes Edo as Nigeria's Cricket Powerhouse

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Head Coach and High Performance Manager of the Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF), Steven Mangongo has described Edo State as undisputed powerhouse of cricket development in Nigeria.

The NCF head coach stated this during his courtesy visit to the Executive chairman, Edo State Sports Commission Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele in Benin City yesterday.

He attributes the giant stride of Edo state and successes in the sport to deliberate investment in grassroots programmes and

effective leadership.

The Zimbabwean-born cricket expert Mangongo who is in Benin City on a five-day official visit to Edo State.

said he was impressed by the level of cricket development in the state, noting that Edo has consistently produced quality players for the national teams and remains a model for other states to emulate.

He commended the Edo state Sports Commission Chairman Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele for his commitment to grassroots sports development.

"It is a privilege to be here in Edo State. This state is very

special whenever cricket in Nigeria is discussed, I keep repeating this everywhere, because it comes from my heart. At every level I have engaged players, Edo State keeps coming up as a producer of exceptional talent," Mangongo said.

He stated that if Nigeria intends to build a sustainable cricket structure, the developmental model being implemented in Edo should be replicated across the country.

"Edo remains the powerhouse of cricket in Nigeria. If Nigeria must get it right, the template of Edo must be adopted nationwide.

"I had goosebumps when I visited the training ground and saw cricketers from the Under-8, Under-18, Under-19 women's team and national team players all training together. It shows that cricket is in safe hands because there is a functional sports development plan in Edo State.

"We celebrate success because of good leadership, and that is what you have demonstrated. I want to be part of this journey because I can see the future and I see immense success," he stated.

Enabulele thanked the Mangongo for visiting the state and described the Edo State Cricket Association as one of the Sports Commission's strongest partners in grassroots sports development.

He said the association's commitment to nurturing young talents aligns with the vision of Governor Monday Okpebholo's administration to build sports from the grassroots.

"When it comes to developmental programmes, the Edo State Cricket Association is in the front burner of this Commission. I have dependable hands managing cricket in the state. They don't just work; they keep me informed about every stage of the development process.



The Head Coach and High Performance Manager of the Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF), Steven Mangongo with Nigeria's Cricket Powerhouse.

UK boxing foundation partners Ogun SWAN, PIN to promote peace

A UK-based Boxing-for-Development organisation, Empire Fighting Chance, has partnered with the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), Ogun Chapter, and Peace Initiative Network (PIN) to promote peace, youth development and sports journalism.

The partnership was announced on Monday during a press conference in Abeokuta.

Executive Director of Empire Fighting Chance, Martin Bisp, said the partnership aims to promote the use of boxing as a catalyst for peacebuilding, youth development, and social change.

Bisp said boxing has the power to transform lives beyond competition, adding that the organisation uses non-contact boxing to engage vulnerable youths affected by violence, gang activity, and crime.

He said the programme builds confidence, discipline and a sense of belonging, while creating pathways to education and employment.

The Fight For Peace official explained that boxing gyms provide a welcoming environ-

ment that breaks down social barriers, giving young people a sense of belonging while exposing them to life-changing opportunities.

He noted that the initiative, which started in Bristol, England, has expanded, with more than 150 boxing clubs trained in the United Kingdom, before expanding to Canada and now Nigeria.

"Our greatest achievement is that these organisations no longer depend on us.

"Even if Fight for Peace ceased to exist tomorrow, those com-

munities would continue saving lives. That is the legacy we want to leave behind," he said.

He disclosed that the organisation brought seven suitcases of boxing equipment donated by former world heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua.

He said that the items, which would be donated to the boxing community, would support grassroots boxing development in Ogun state.

Also speaking, Alex, Head of Community Development at Matchroom Boxing, described

the visit as an honour, saying the organisation is committed to using sport unite communities and create lasting social impact.

"Our responsibility is not only to organise world-class boxing events but also to connect those events with communities and leave a lasting legacy through sport," he said.

Alex praised Anthony Joshua for transforming boxing globally and serving as a positive role model for young people.

"Anthony Joshua is someone whose values and character represent everything we want young people to aspire to. We are proud of everything he has achieved both inside and outside the ring," he said.

According to him, returning to Ogun state, where Joshua's family has its roots, made the visit particularly significant.

Alex said the donated equipment—including boxing gloves, punch pads, gum shields and other training materials—would enable the programme begin immediately after the training sessions.



UK boxing foundation with Ogun SWAN

Beşiktaş: No Saudi Club bids for Wilfred Ndidi

Beşiktaş Football Director Önder Özen has addressed reports about the potential transfer of Super Eagles captain Wilfred Ndidi.

Özen stated that while there is interest from Saudi clubs in Ndidi, no formal offer has been received so far.

Turkish newspaper Milliyet reported that Al-Ittihad had proposed €10.5 million for Ndidi, with the possibility of increasing to €12.5 million through bonuses.

Özen commented, "There is interest from Saudi Arabia in Ndidi. However, no official written offer has yet arrived. If one comes, we will evaluate it."

Last season, the Nigerian midfielder appeared in 31 matches across all competitions for Beşiktaş, scoring 2 goals.

He played 25 matches in the Trendyol Super League, netting 2 goals and earning 5 yellow cards.



WILFRED NDIDI

WAFU B U20: Maikaba reveals next target after Flying Eagles beat Ghana

Nigeria's Flying Eagles head coach, Abdu Maikaba, has shifted his attention to the team's next fixture following their impressive 4-2 victory over Ghana in the opening match of the WAFU B U20 Championship.

The Flying Eagles began their campaign in style with a commanding win over their West African rivals, putting themselves in a strong position to qualify for the knockout stage.

Speaking after the match, Maikaba stressed the importance of maintaining focus and taking the tournament one game at a time.

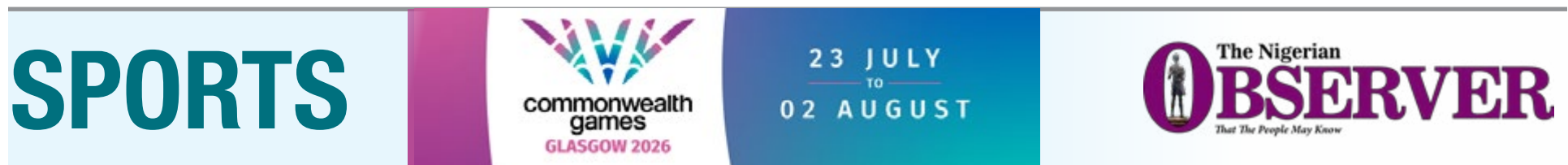
"Our full focus is on the next game. We approach this tournament one match at a time, and that's exactly how we'll continue. We know that a victory over Togo will secure our place in the semi-finals," Maikaba said.

Nigeria will now turn their attention to their crucial clash against Togo, knowing that another victory will guarantee a place in the semi-finals of the competition.

The Flying Eagles will be aiming to build on their impressive opening performance and continue their strong start to the tournament



FLYING EAGLES VS GHANA



Glasgow 2026: Team Nigeria opens Day Five on Bright note with strong performances, gears up for Athletics showdown

Team Nigeria made an encouraging start to Day Five of the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, recording impressive performances in athletics and swimming as more Nigerian athletes booked places in the

semifinals and set the stage for another exciting day of competition.

Edidiong Udo announced himself in style, storming to victory in Heat One of the men's 400 metres in 45.73 seconds to qualify for the semifinals. Competing in his first international 400m race for Nigeria, Udo won his heat by almost a full second to join Samuel Ogazi in the semifinals, giving Team Nigeria two representatives in the men's event.

In the women's 400 metres, Esther Elo Joseph secured automatic qualification for her maiden Commonwealth Games semifinal after finishing third in her heat in 52.82 seconds. She will be joined by experienced campaigner Patience Okon-George, who also progressed after placing fourth in her heat with a time of 53.27 seconds.

Alongside Ella Onojuvwewo, Nigeria will have three athletes contesting the women's 400m semifinals.

Team Nigeria also enjoyed

success in the pool as Abduljabar Adama and Colins Ebingha both advanced to the men's 50m butterfly semifinals. Adama finished fourth in his heat in 23.99 seconds, while Ebingha followed closely in fifth with a time of 24.01 seconds, ensuring Nigeria will have two swimmers in the semifinal later on Tuesday.

Attention now turns to the evening session, where Team Nigeria's sprinters will continue their quest for medals. National record holder Kayinsola Ajayi, Favour Ashe and Nicholas Fakorede will compete in the men's 100 metres semifinals, while Rosemary Chukwuma, Miracle Ezechukwu and Blessing Ogundiran line up in the women's semifinals. Victory in their respective semifinal races would secure places in Tuesday evening's finals.

Nigeria will also be chasing success in other events as Oyesade Olatoye competes in the women's hammer throw final with her sights set on a podium finish, while Patricia Mbata

enters the ring for her women's 75kg boxing quarterfinal.

In wheelchair women's 3x3 basketball, Team Nigeria will face Australia as the country's athletes continue their push for more medals in Glasgow.

With six gold medals already secured and several medal opportunities still ahead, Team Nigeria remains firmly on course for another memorable day at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.

No.	Names	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1.	AUSTRALIA	26	13	20	59
2.	ENGLAND	8	13	11	32
3.	CANADA	7	8	6	21
4.	NIGERIA	6	4	0	10
5.	SCOTLAND	5	4	2	11
6.	SOUTH AFRICA	3	3	5	11
7.	MALAYSIA	3	0	2	5
8.	INDIA	2	5	3	10
9.	JAMAICA	2	0	0	2
10.	NEW ZEALAND	1	4	3	8

Rafiatu Lawal breaks Commonwealth Records in Women's 58kg Weightlifting

Nigeria's Rafiatu Folasade Lawal has delivered another record-breaking performance for Team Nigeria at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, smashing both the Commonwealth Games Record and Commonwealth Record in the women's 58kg snatch event.

Lawal produced a stunning 103kg lift in the snatch category, setting a new benchmark and putting herself in a commanding position heading into the Clean & Jerk phase of the competition.

The Nigerian weightlifter currently leads the standings with a 9kg advantage over Canada's Ann-Sophie Taschereau, who sits in second place after recording a 94kg snatch.

Lawal's dominant display continues Nigeria's impressive showing in weightlifting at the Glasgow Games, following a series of outstanding performances from the country's athletes.

With the Clean & Jerk still to come, Lawal remains firmly in control as she targets another gold medal for Team Nigeria

Team Nigeria storms to six golds, climbs to third at Commonwealth Games

Day Four of the 2026 Commonwealth Games got off to a flying start for Team Nigeria as the country claimed three weightlifting gold medals, taking its medal haul to six gold and four silver and moving into third place on the medals table.

Edidiong Umoafia opened the day's golden run by winning the men's 71kg title before Onome Didi added a second gold in the women's 53kg event. Rofiat Lawal then completed the treble, producing

a Games record performance to clinch gold in the women's 58kg category.

The six gold medals leave Nigeria tied with Canada on gold medals, although the Canadians occupy second place by virtue of a higher overall medal count. Team Nigeria could further improve its standing when Adedapo Opadeji competes in the men's 79kg weightlifting event later on Thursday.

Nigeria also recorded encouraging results on the athletics track. Oghene Tejiri Ashe,

Nicholas Fakorede, and Oluebube Ezechukwu all booked places in the men's and women's 100m semifinals, joining Kanyinsola Ajayi, who received a bye into semis.

In the field events, Oyesade Olatoye qualified for the women's hammer throw final, further boosting Nigeria's hopes of adding to its medal tally.

Director-General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Bukola Olopade, has expressed satisfaction with Team Nigeria's performance

at the 2026 Commonwealth Games, saying the country's target of 16 gold medals remains firmly within reach following another impressive day of competition.

Speaking after Nigeria's haul of three weightlifting gold medals, Olopade said the athletes' performances continue to align with the projections of the Elite Podium Board, describing their display as both encouraging and inspiring.

"The projections of the Elite Podium Board remain on track, according to the Chairman of the Board, and we are working closely with them to achieve our objectives. Most importantly, our athletes have been exceptional in their performances. They have shown great determination and resilience, and we hope they can maintain this momentum throughout the Games."

He added that Team Nigeria's impressive medal-winning run has reinforced confidence that the country's ambitious target of 16 gold medals—and a record-breaking Commonwealth Games outing—is achievable.



RAFIATU LAWAL