

Edo demolishes illegal structures under high tension powerline in Benin

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Following a tragic fire disaster caused by high-tension powerline, the Edo Government on Tuesday demolished illegal structures and caravans built under a 132kV power line in Egor Market, Benin.

The demolition exercise fo-

cused on eave extensions, illegal structures, and stalls located directly under the high-tension power line within the market and its environs.

As the bulldozer moved in, store owners and onlookers scammed to salvage their goods while the structures were pulled down.

Emotions ran high as some stall owners were seen crying

profusely, complaining that the government did not give them enough time to evacuate their goods and property, as others commended the government for the action.

Speaking to newsmen after the exercise, the Managing Director of the Edo State Development and Building Control Agency (ESDBCA), Mr Darlington Igabali, said the traders

had been adequately informed before the demolition.

"We are executing the directive for the immediate evacuation of all illegal structures and activities along the power line right-of-way," Igabali stated.

He added that the affected traders made the job easier for his team, as many had already removed a substantial part of their structures before the offi-

cial arrived.

The ESDBCA boss emphasised that the demolished stalls belonged to traders who refused to comply with earlier directives, and that no goods were destroyed during the exercise.

"We gave them time to remove all that belonged to them. We made it humanly possible for them to do so before the demolition," he said.

One of the affected traders, Ms Lisa Iredia, acknowledged that the traders were given a seven-day notice before the exercise and that most of them complied with the government directive.

Another trader, Mrs Grace Odion, commended the government for the demolition, saying the exercise was necessary to save lives.

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#200

Nigeria's crude oil production rises to 1.8 MBD, says FG

Commissions PwC to benchmark oil sector fees, levies globally

ABUJA

The Federal Government has commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to undertake a global benchmarking of taxes, fees and levies in Nigeria's oil and gas industry to enhance investment competitiveness and attract investors.

The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil), Sen. Heineken Lokpobiri, said this on Tuesday in Abuja at the 25th Nigeria Oil and Gas (NOG) Energy Week conference and exhibition.

Lokpobiri said the initiative followed concerns raised by industry stakeholders over the multiplicity of statutory charges imposed on operators across the

petroleum value chain, affecting efficiency, competitiveness and investor confidence.

According to him, the benchmarking study is being conducted by PwC in collaboration with the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) to identify globally competitive fiscal practices and standards.

"We have commissioned PwC to carry out a global benchmarking exercise. Nigeria must be globally competitive," Lokpobiri said while outlining the government's commitment to improving the business environment for investors.

"When people say there are more than 270 fees and levies, some of them may be very small, but the real issue is the administrative burden of processing nu-

merous invoices and payments.

"I have directed that PwC should benchmark Nigeria against other petroleum-producing jurisdictions to determine what fees and rates are applicable elsewhere.

"That report will soon be ready, and I believe it will solve this problem once and for all," he said, expressing optimism about the outcome and implementation.

Lokpobiri said the Tinubu administration had consistently engaged stakeholders to ad-

dress genuine concerns affecting the oil and gas industry and strengthen investor confidence through regulatory reforms nationwide.

He said the government remained committed to creating a predictable regulatory environment capable of attracting investment, encouraging exploration activities and supporting increased crude oil production across Nigeria.

The minister said Nigeria's crude oil production had risen to more than 1.8 million barrels per day, according to the latest weekly report from NUPRC authorities.

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ROYAL BLESSING:

The Chief of Staff to Governor Monday Okpebholo, Hon Yakubu Oshorenua Musa (2nd right), led party leaders, supporters and stakeholders on a campaign tour across Etsako West ahead of this Saturday, July 11, 2026, Local Government Election, paid a courtesy visit to His Highness, Alhaji Haliru H. Momoh, Ikelebe III, The Otaru of Auchi. (middle) in Auchi, yesterday.

Strike: Medical academics gives FG 21-day-ultimatum

ABUJA

The Nigerian Association of Medical and Dental Academics (NAMDA) has issued the Federal Government a 21-day ultimatum to resolve outstanding remuneration and welfare concerns or face a nationwide indefinite strike.

NAMDA President, Dr Nosa Orhue, announced the ultimatum on Tuesday in Abuja after the association's National Executive Council (NEC) meeting.

He said the union expected government to conclude negotiations within the period, warning that NEC would reconvene to determine its next line of action if talks failed.

According to him, the association had engaged government through dialogue for more than 24 months without meaningful

progress.

Orhue said the association was dissatisfied that negotiations on the renegotiation of the 2009 agreement had remained stalled since April 9, in spite of repeated engagements.

He alleged that while improved welfare packages had been implemented for other university unions, NAMDA members remained excluded, resulting in non-payment of earned academic and professorial allowances and worsening brain drain among medical academics.

The NAMDA president attributed the dispute largely to salary disparities between university-based medical lecturers and hospital consultants performing identical professional duties.

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Late Merino strike ends Ronaldo's World Cup dream as Spain edge Portugal 1-0 —Pg 10

NEWS

Shettima, Okonjo-Iweala, Brazilian, Chinese investors for Delta summit • State targets agriculture, power, blue economy, solid minerals

ASABA

AJUWA VICTOR

The Delta State Government, said over 25 prospective investors from Brazil and China have indicated interest in the forthcoming Delta State Investment and Economic Summit, as Vice President Kashim Shettima and Director-General of the World Trade Organisation, WTO, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and ASABA - Patrice Lumumba, headline a high-powered list of participants. Secretary to the State Gov-

ernment, SSG, and Chairman of the Main Organising Committee, Dr Kingsley Emu, disclosed this during an interactive session with stakeholders in Asaba, saying the summit would connect the state's vast economic potential with local and international capital.

Emu said the summit, themed "Harnessing Our Strengths and Potential," would also attract the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Taiwo Oyedele, development finance institutions and leading private-sector players, while re-

nowned oil and gas industry leader, Engr. Austin Avuru, would serve as Chairman.

He said: "To date, 25 potential investors are coming in from Brazil and China. They have indicated interest and we are already making preparations for them.

"Our sister, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the WTO, will be the keynote speaker. Engr. Austin Avuru is the Chairman of the Summit.

The Minister of Finance has personally acknowledged his attendance, while the Vice President, Senator Kashim Shettima, has also confirmed his attendance.

"So, it is going to be a star-studded programme, with participation from the national level, development finance institutions and a host of others."

Emu stressed that local businesses would play a critical role in translating foreign in-

vestor interest into sustainable economic activity, noting that prospective investors were already seeking credible indigenous partners.

"For every potential investor who has expressed interest, they are talking about local partners, and those partners will come from among our people.

"The significant success we will achieve on this journey will depend on your coopera-

tion, collaboration and positive disposition to what we want to do," he told stakeholders.

The SSG said Delta was approaching the summit with clearly defined and bankable investment propositions rather than a broad promotional agenda, identifying agriculture, aquaculture, power, oil and gas, solid minerals, manufacturing and the blue economy as priority sectors.

Gov. Oborewori's aide calls for greater collaboration on peace building, conflict resolution

DELTA

AJUWA VICTOR

The Delta State Special Adviser to the Governor on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution, Chief Edwin Uzo, has called for stronger collaboration among government agencies, security institutions and non-governmental organisations to enhance peace building and conflict resolution efforts across Delta State and Nigeria.

Chief Uzo, represented by the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution, Comrade Kingsley Iweka Odiaka, made the call at the inaugural memorial lecture of the Late Chief Joseph Adolo Okotie-Eboh Centre for Peace Building and Human Security in Warri.

The lecture was themed, "Sustainable Peace Building and Human Security: Panacea for National Development."

In his goodwill message, he

commended the organisers—the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) and the family of the late Chief Joseph Adolo Okotie-Eboh—for providing a platform for meaningful dialogue on peace building, conflict prevention, human security, good governance and sustainable development.

According to him, the initiative aligns with the peace and security component of the Delta State Government's Renewed Hope for more Agenda, adding that the state's peace-building framework is modelled after the United Nations' approach to promoting peace and stability.

Chief Uzo noted that beyond fostering harmonious inter-community relations, the Office of Peace Building and Conflict Resolution is also focused on addressing security challenges such as kidnapping, armed robbery and herders-related conflicts through collaboration with security agencies, intelligence gathering and proactive conflict prevention.

Group decries destruction of Tinubu, Gov. Oborewori billboards

AGBOR

The Delta Unity Group (DUG) has condemned the vandalism of billboards bearing the images of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Delta State Governor Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborewori, and Chairman of the NDDC Governing Board, Hon. Chiedu Ebie, at College Junction in Agbor, Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State.

According to eyewitnesses, the billboards, erected as part of group's grassroots mobilization and voter education campaign, were defaced, torn down and damaged in the early hours of Monday by unidentified persons.

The images of the three leaders were reportedly scratched, covered with paint, while supporting banners were also destroyed.

Reacting to the incident,

DUG National Secretary, Hon. Fred Ofume, described the act as uncivil, undemocratic and an attack on free political expression and the Renewed Hope Agenda.

He noted that College Junction is a public space and said the destruction was aimed at intimidating citizens and disrupting peaceful political engagement.

Ofume maintained that the group would not be discouraged by the attack, assuring supporters that all damaged billboards would be replaced as DUG continues its mobilization and voter education campaign across the 25 local government areas of Delta State.

He also called on security agencies to investigate the incident and bring those responsible to justice, while urging youths and community leaders in Ika South to reject political violence and embrace issue-based politics.

**2026 NIGERIAN ARMY DAY CELEBRATION:**

Vice President Kashim Shettima receives a souvenir from the Chief of Army Staff, Lt-Gen. Waidi Shaibu, during the 2026 Nigerian Army Day Celebration at the Yakubu Gowon Stadium in Port-Harcourt on Monday.

Senate demands tougher action against South Africa over Xenophobic attacks

ABUJA

CAROLINE AMEH

The Senate on Tuesday urged President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to take decisive diplomatic action against South Africa over the persistent xenophobic attacks and killings of Nigerians and other foreign nationals in the country.

The resolution followed a motion sponsored by Senator Asuquo Ekpeyong (Cross River South), who drew the attention of lawmakers to the recurring attacks on Nigerians living and

conducting legitimate businesses in South Africa.

Leading the debate, Senator Abdul Ningi (Bauchi Central) said the Senate could no longer remain silent while Nigerians continued to fall victim to xenophobic violence.

He stressed that Nigerians have the right to live and pursue lawful businesses anywhere in the world without fear of intimidation or attack.

"Talking and lamenting will not help. Let us sever relations with South Africa. There must be action," Ningi declared.

Also contributing, Senator

Babangida Hussaini (Jigawa North West) condemned the continued attacks, describing the killings of Nigerians in South Africa as unacceptable. He urged the Federal Government to strengthen Nigeria's foreign policy and adopt a more decisive approach to protecting its citizens abroad.

Senator Adams Oshiomhole called for stronger economic measures, proposing that President Tinubu nationalise South African business interests operating in Nigeria, including MTN, Stanbic IBTC Bank and MultiChoice, and use the pro-

ceeds to compensate Nigerians who have lost lives and property in the attacks.

Other lawmakers, including Senate Chief Whip Mohammed Monguno (Borno North), also denounced the recurring attacks, describing them as a violation of human rights and calling on the Federal Government to urgently safeguard the lives, property and investments of Nigerians in South Africa.

The Senate's resolution adds to growing calls for a stronger diplomatic response to the repeated xenophobic attacks, which have continued to strain relations between Nigeria and South Africa over the years.

Uvwie Chairman inspects councillors' project

UVWIE

The Executive Chairman of Uvwie Local Government Council, Hon. Chief Anthony Onoriode Ofoni, has commenced the inspection of constituency projects executed by members of the 8th Uvwie Legislative Assembly as part of his oversight responsibilities.

According to the Chairman, the exercise is aimed at assessing the impact of the Renewed Hope for M.O.R.E. Agenda at the grassroots through projects initiated by councillors to meet the needs of their constituents.

The inspection began in Ward 1, where Councillor Loveth Orose executed a borehole project fitted with a mono pump to provide residents with access to potable water.

She explained that the intervention was in response to years of water scarcity in the community, adding that residents now enjoy a reliable source of clean water within their neighbourhood.

The team later visited Ward 7, where Councillor Tina Achubu executed projects at Eruohwo Primary School, Okoribi.

The projects included the provision of marker boards,

a borehole, writing materials and a mono pump to improve teaching and learning while promoting hygiene in the school environment.

Hon. Achubu said the intervention was inspired by the need to create a cleaner and healthier learning environment, noting that replacing traditional chalkboards with marker boards would improve classroom hygiene for both teachers and pupils.

At the Gariki cattle market in Ugbenu-Owhorhu, Councillor Tega Unuagba presented a borehole project designed to provide

potable water for traders and residents. He said the project reflected the council's commitment to inclusive development, adding that similar water projects, including boreholes and a ring well, had also been executed in Iteregbi community to address water shortages.

In the Ugbomro/Atata area, Councillor Mark Eramadawa also provided boreholes to improve access to clean water. Residents commended the intervention, saying it had eliminated the hardship of travelling long distances or relying on privately owned water sources.

NEWS**We'll replicate FCT infrastructure strides nationwide –Tinubu****ABUJA**

President Bola Tinubu has reiterated his administration's determination to replicate the infrastructural stride being recorded in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in every part of the country.

Tinubu gave the assurance in Abuja on Tuesday, while inaugurating the Transitway N2, from Central Business District to Wuse District, with two bridges, constructed by the

FCT Administration.

The president, who was represented by the Senate President, Sen. Godswill Akpabio, said that the move would ensure every part of the country is developed with roads, bridges, railways, and more.

This, according to him, will ensure that no region is left behind in the quest for a more developed and secured Nigeria.

Tinubu said that the Transitway project symbolised progress and a reflection of his administration's Renewed Hope Agenda,

committed to building infrastructure that serves the people, unlocks economic potentials, and supports sustainable growth and development.

"This infrastructure is a very important piece of the FCT's Master Plan, designed to ease traffic flow, enhance connectivity, and improve urban mobility for millions of commuters, residents, and businesses alike in the territory.

"For years, traveling between Wuse and the Central Area meant navigating bottlenecks, losing pro-

ductive man-hours, and enduring frustrating traffic gridlocks. Today, all that has changed.

"By cutting down travel times and bridging these two major districts, we are opening up new commercial corridors," he said.

The president commended the FCT Minister, Mr Nyesom Wike, for the ongoing transformation of FCT in line with the Abuja Master Plan.

"You have contributed to something larger than a roadway; you have contributed to the future of

our capital city and therefore given pride to Nigeria," Tinubu said.

In his remarks, Wike described the Transitway as a critical road corridor that seamlessly connects Wuse with the Central Business District.

The minister attributed the successes being recorded in the delivery of infrastructure in FCT to the overwhelming support of Tinubu, particularly the removal of the Administration from the Treasury Single Account.

The minister said that on July

17, the last day of the projects' inauguration, he would present what Tinubu had done for the people of the FCT and for Nigerians in the last three years.

"There are so many things Mr president has done that we have not made public so that Nigerians will know why we must continue to pray and support him," he said.

He assured FCT residents that all roads that were not on the Google map would be captured to enable residents to navigate through the city with ease.

**NIGERIAN ARMY DAY CELEBRATION:**

Vice President Kashim Shettima decorates the Orodje of the Okpe Kingdom, His Royal Majesty retired Maj-Gen. Felix Mujakperuo, Orhwe I in recognition of his service in Liberia and Sierra Leone as ECOMOG Force Commander during the 2026 Nigerian Army Day Celebration at the Yakubu Gowon Stadium in Port-Harcourt on Monday.

Edo unveils plan to improve healthcare delivery**BENIN CITY**

The Edo Government says its 2026 Annual Operational Plan (AOP) will strengthen health programme implementation, improve coordination and promote effective resource utilisation to enhance healthcare delivery.

The Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Oshiomhole, said this on Tuesday in Benin during the 2026 AOP Dissemination Meeting organised by the ministry in collaboration with the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN).

Oshiomhole described the AOP as a strategic framework for coordinating health programmes and interventions, guiding planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities

within the health sector.

He explained that although the plan was already midway through its implementation year, soft copies had earlier been made available to relevant stakeholders for review.

The commissioner said the meeting was organised to formally present the validated document, clarify stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, and renew commitment towards effective implementation.

He commended Gov. Monday Okpebholo for his vision and commitment to improving healthcare services, while appreciating development partners, including IHVN, World Health Organization (WHO), USAID, ICI and GHS-G-PSM.

Oshiomhole also acknowledged the contributions of pro-

gramme officers and heads of departments in the health sector towards the preparation of the operational plan.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Health, Dr Andrew Iyamu, described the AOP as more than a document, saying it reflected government's commitment to delivering quality healthcare services.

Iyamu commended the commissioner and technical team for developing the plan, assuring stakeholders of continued government support towards its successful implementation across the state.

The ministry's Director of Planning, Research and Statistics, Mrs Loretta Iruobe, said the engagement was aimed at ensuring stakeholders understood the objectives of the 2026 AOP.

Iruobe said the meeting would also help stakeholders understand their responsibilities in achieving the plan's targets through effective coordination and collaboration.

She emphasised the importance of data-driven planning, partnerships and continuous monitoring in strengthening healthcare delivery and achieving health sector goals.

Other stakeholders emphasised the need for sustained partnership, accountability and commitment among all actors involved in improving access to quality healthcare services.

The highlight of the meeting was the unveiling of the 2026 Edo Health Sector Annual Operational Plan, which will guide programme implementation and track progress.

Hon Yakubu Musa leads APC campaign for Romeo Aloaye Omoike across Etsako West

The campaign for Hon Romeo Aloaye Omoike, the All Progressives Congress (APC) chairmanship candidate for Etsako West Local Government Area, gathered momentum at the weekend as the Chief of Staff to Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Hon. Yakubu Oshorenua Musa led party leaders, supporters, and stakeholders on an extensive tour of communities across the council area ahead of the July 11 local government election.

The mobilisation exercise was part of the APC's statewide campaign aimed at consolidating support for its candidates contesting in all 18 local government areas of Edo State.

At its commencement, the campaign team paid a courtesy visit to the palace of His Royal Highness Alhaji Haliru H. Momoh, Ikelebe III, the Otaru of Auchi Sacred Kingdom. Hon. Musa, accompanied by Hon. Omoike and other party leaders paid homage to the traditional ruler and sought his royal blessings ahead of the election.

The monarch offered prayers for peace before, during, and after

the polls and urged residents of Etsako West to participate actively in the democratic process by turning out large numbers to vote for candidates of their choice.

Following the palace visit, the campaign train moved through several wards where the APC leaders met with community leaders, youths, women groups, market associations, and party faithful.

Addressing residents at different locations, Hon. Omoike outlined his vision for Etsako West, promising to prioritise security, youth empowerment, and grassroots development if elected chairman.

He described security as the foundation upon which every meaningful development depends, noting that no community can achieve sustained economic growth or social progress in an atmosphere of fear and insecurity.

According to him, if elected his administration would work closely with security agencies, community leaders and relevant stakeholders in the locality to strengthen community policing, improve intelligence gathering and support initiatives aimed at protecting lives and property across the local government.

Court reserves judgment in PDP leadership dispute**ABUJA**

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Tuesday reserved judgment in a suit filed by Sen. Adolphus Wabara-led Board of Trustees (BoT) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), seeking recognition by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Justice Salim Ibrahim, who stated this after lawyers to the parties adopted their processes and presented their arguments for and against the suit, said that judgment date would be communicated to parties.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that members of the Wabara-led BoT filed the fresh suit.

They are seeking an order of the court compelling INEC to recognise the PDP interim National Working Committee (NWC)'s faction led by its National Chairman, Kabiru Turaki, SAN, in its official website.

The plaintiffs also sought an order directing the electoral umpire to, forthwith, update its records and publish on its official

website the interim NWC of the party as forwarded to it by the plaintiffs and its National Executive Committee (NEC).

They said the names of members of the Kabir Turaki-led NWC was forwarded to the electoral umpire via their letters dated May 4.

NAN reports that the originating summons, marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/1159/2026, was filed on June 4 by a team of lawyers led by Chief Chris Uche, SAN.

The BoT members, who are plaintiffs in the suit, are ex-Senate President Adolphus Wabara; BoT Secretary, former Gov. Muazu Babangida Aliyu of Niger; ex-Minister of Information, Prof. Jerry Gana and PDP chieftain, Olabode George as 1st to 4th plaintiffs.

Others are former Minister of Women Affairs, Hajija Maryam Ciroma; also an ex-Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Hajija Zainab Maina; member of BoT and NEC, Dame Esther Uduehi and PDP as 5th to 8th plaintiffs respectively.

Nigeria, Spain strengthen partnership against human trafficking**ABUJA**

Nigeria and Spain have reaffirmed their collaboration in combating trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling with the commencement of a four-day capacity-building workshop for prosecutors, investigators and intelligence officers in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the partici-

pants are drawn from the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP).

The workshop is funded by the European Union and supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) under the Support to Migration Governance in Nigeria, Component 3 project

implemented by the Spanish Government.

The training, themed "Strengthening Transnational Investigative Cooperation", is organised by the Foundation for the Internationalisation of Public Administration (FIAP) Nigeria, a Spanish public foundation.

Speaking at the opening, FIAP Project Team Director, Mr Javier Leon, said the programme was aimed at

strengthening cooperation between Nigeria and Spain in tackling trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.

Leon said although Nigeria and Spain were geographically distant, both countries shared migration routes, common security challenges and a responsibility to protect vulnerable people from criminal networks.

Ogun APC unveils Adegunwa-Balogun as Deputy Governorship Candidate for 2027 Election

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

The Ogun State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has officially unveiled Mrs. Kudirat Abiodun Adegunwa-Balogun as its deputy governorship candidate for the 2027 governorship election.

Governor Dapo Abiodun announced her nomination during the APC Strategic Caucus Meeting held at the party secretariat in Abeokuta, following consultations with party leaders and stakeholders across the state recently.

Adegunwa-Balogun, 51, will contest alongside the APC governorship candidate, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, popularly known as Yayi.

Her emergence followed the zoning of the deputy governorship position to Ogun East Senatorial District and its subsequent micro-zoning to the Ijebu Central Federal Constituency.

Adegunwa-Balogun is a seasoned finance professional. She is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and the Institute of Chartered Ac-

countants of Nigeria (ICAN).

She currently serves as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Executive Director, Finance and Administration, at Rite Foods Limited.

She is also the daughter of renowned industrialist and billionaire businessman, Alhaji Sulaiman Adebola Adegunwa.

Speaking at the unveiling, Governor Abiodun described the selection process as a product of extensive consultations and a commitment to equity and fairness within the party.

According to him, the APC's decision to pick a deputy governorship candidate from Ogun East was informed by the fact that the governorship ticket had already been zoned to Ogun West.

"If the governor is coming from the West, we felt that for equity and fairness, the deputy governor should come from the East," Abiodun said.

The governor also commended party leaders and members for maintaining unity throughout the recently concluded primaries, noting that the APC successfully produced candidates for various elective positions

without major disputes, litigation, or factional crises.

He described the development as unprecedented in Ogun State's political history and praised aspirants who stepped aside in the interest of party cohesion.

Senator Adeola, in his remarks, expressed confidence in Adegun-

wa-Balogun's ability to effectively support his administration if elected, citing her professional accomplishments, leadership capacity, and dedication to public service.

In her acceptance speech, Adegunwa-Balogun, described her nomination as a call to service and pledged to bring her extensive corporate and governance experience to bear in advancing Ogun State's development.

"I see this nomination as a call to duty and a privilege to serve. My over three decades of experience in various leadership and governance roles in the corporate world have prepared me for this moment," she said.

She noted that her involvement and exposure to governance since 1999 had given her valuable insight into public administration and service delivery.

The APC deputy governorship candidate emphasized that her emergence represented broader inclusion for women, youths, and grassroots communities in governance.

"This nomination is not about me. It is about our shared responsibility. It is about the inclusion of women, youths and all citizens in shaping the future of Ogun State," she stated.



NIGERIAN CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT BOARD:

A cross-section of participants during the Nigerian Content Development and Management Board (NCDMB) seminar in Abuja on Monday.

Nigeria's crude oil production...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

He attributed the increase to sustained investment, improved security and ongoing drilling campaigns across the sector, while emphasising that Nigeria still possessed capacity for higher output.

Lokpobiri added that active oil rigs had increased from about 40 in 2023 to more than 60, creating a stronger foundation for future production growth.

He also said approval of international oil companies' onshore asset divestments had strengthened indigenous participation, with Nigerian independent producers now accounting for more than 60 per

cent output.

According to him, the divestments have enabled international oil companies to focus on deep offshore operations while indigenous firms expand production from acquired onshore assets.

Lokpobiri said the government would continue supporting policies that encouraged exploration, increased reserves and sustained production growth to strengthen Nigeria's position in the global energy industry.

He also congratulated Renaissance Africa Energy and its partners on the success of their drilling campaign, urging operators to intensify exploration activities and boost reserves.

Medical academics gives FG...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

He explained that medical academics combine teaching, research and clinical responsibilities, including patient care, surgeries and hospital administration.

According to him, they earn less than their counterparts in the hospital system despite maintaining the same professional qualifications and practising licences.

Orhue said the Federal Government had previously recognised the unique status of medical academics through their placement on the Consolidated Medical Salary Structure (CONMESS). He added that the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, had supported salary parity and communicated the position to the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission.

He, however, alleged that some government agencies were frustrating implementation of

the agreement.

Orhue reaffirmed that the Consolidated Medical Salary Structure (CONMESS) remained the only acceptable salary framework for medical and dental academics.

He warned that any attempt to replace it with another structure could trigger industrial action.

He also rejected what he described as the forced migration of members above 65 years from CONMESS to the Consolidated University Academic Salary Structure (CONUASS).

According to him, the move amounts to a demotion and results in financial losses for affected academics.

He said the association was also demanding implementation of special pension benefits for retired hospital-based academics and opposed the National Universities Commission's requirement for medical academics to obtain PhD qualifications.

Edo waste mgt boss advocates community - led environmental action

BENIN CITY

The Managing Director of the Edo State Waste Management Board (EWMB), Dr. Lucky Enehita-Inegbenehi, participated as a panelist at a stakeholders' engagement organised by the Edo State Tourism Agency, where he spoke on the theme, "Community-Based Tourism Development, Preservation and Climate Change."

During the discussion, the Managing Director highlighted the strong connection between

environmental sustainability and tourism, noting that community-based tourism thrives on clean environments, rich cultural heritage, and well-preserved natural resources.

He stressed that climate change, biodiversity loss, and poor waste management pose significant threats to these valuable assets, making environmental stewardship a shared responsibility.

Dr. Enehita-Inegbenehi also outlined the board's ongoing efforts to promote environmental sustainability across

Edo State through continuous public sensitisation, market-to-market advocacy, and the expansion of waste management services across the 18 Local Government Areas.

He further highlighted the transformation of previously neglected locations through sustained waste evacuation and sanitation interventions, reaffirming the Board's commitment to creating cleaner and healthier communities.

Speaking on the board's vision for a sustainable future, the Managing Director

disclosed plans to establish recycling facilities across the State, with the long-term goal of extending recycling infrastructure to every Local Government Area.

He also urged residents to support registered waste collectors and adopt responsible waste disposal practices, emphasizing that collective action is essential to building a cleaner, greener, and more prosperous Edo State.

"Together, we can protect our environment, strengthen tourism, and secure a healthier future for generations to come," he stated.

Four remanded in custodial centre over alleged murder

OLIVER IJIJOBGE

BENIN CITY

Four persons have been remanded in a custodial centre by a court in Benin City over alleged conspiracy and murder.

The defendants are Believe Uyiegu, Osasere Uyie, Monday Amadasun, and Osugie Osaro.

The Police Prosecutor, Dike Divine, Esq., informed the court that the defendants allegedly conspired on February 26, 2026, at Green Park School, opposite College Road, Benin City, to commit the offence of murder, an offence punishable under the relevant laws.

The prosecutor further alleged that on the same date, at

the same time and place, the

defendants unlawfully caused the death of one Omorotionwan Okunmafiyi, an offence punishable under the Criminal

Law of Edo State, 2022.

The four defendants pleaded not guilty to the charges when they were read to them.

Following their pleas, the

court ordered that they be remanded in a custodian centre and adjourned the case to a later date for the commencement of hearing.

Woman remanded over alleged armed robbery

OLIVER IJIJOBGE

BENIN CITY

A 30-year-old woman, Blessing Afeez, has been remanded in a correctional facility pending the determination of a case bordering on alleged armed robbery.

The defendant, Blessing Afeez, and another suspect currently at large, were alleged to have conspired on December

8, 2025, to commit a felony, to wit: armed robbery, an offence punishable under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

According to the charge, the defendant and her accomplice, on the same date, time and place, allegedly robbed their victim of the sum of One Million Naira (N1,000,000) while armed with firearms and other dangerous weapons.

The prosecution further alleged that the offences com-

mitted are contrary to and punishable under the provisions of the Robbery and Firearms (Special Provisions) Act, Cap R11, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

When the charges were read to her, the defendant pleaded not guilty.

Following her plea, the court ordered that she be remanded in a correctional facility pending further proceedings in the matter.

NEWS

2027: Prioritise workers welfare or lose our votes, TUC tells politicians

ABAKALIKI

The Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) in Ebonyi has urged political parties and candidates for the 2027 general elections to prioritise workers' welfare in their manifestos.

The State Chairman of the Congress, Mr Chidi Igboji, gave the advice in an interview with newsmen in Abakaliki on Tuesday.

Igboji said that the organised labour would no longer support leaders who neglected workers' welfare, stressing

that employees deserved governments committed to improving their living and working conditions.

According to him, workers will assess candidates based on their commitment to policies that ensure the prompt payment of salaries, career progression, pension administration and other welfare programmes.

"We will support leaders who place workers' welfare at the centre of their policies and ensure the prompt payment of salaries and other entitlements.

"The era of supporting leaders who pay little attention to

the wellbeing of workers is over. Those seeking our votes must demonstrate a genuine commitment to the welfare of the workforce or lose our votes."

The labour leader commended the Ebonyi Governor, Fran-

cis Nwifuru, for implementing policies that he said had improved the welfare of workers and pensioners in the state.

He cited the payment of pensions, promotion of workers, the annual N100,000 Christmas gift to workers and other welfare initiatives as evidence of the governor's commitment

to the workforce.

"We commend Nwifuru for the payment of pensions, promotion of workers and the support his administration has continued to provide for our well-being since he assumed office.

"Such policies encourage productivity and strengthen

workers' confidence in government," Igboji said.

He urged political office seekers ahead of the 2027 general elections to place greater emphasis on workers' welfare, noting that the workforce remained a critical stakeholder in Nigeria's democratic process.

FG urges intelligence-driven partnerships to strengthen national security

ABUJA

The Federal Government has urged private security operators to embrace intelligence-driven operations, technology and stronger Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) to strengthen national security and tackle evolving security threats nationwide.

The Minister of State for Defence, Dr Bello Matawalle, made the call at the maiden Nigeria Private Security Development Summit 2026 on Tuesday in Abuja.

Matawalle was represented by his Special Adviser, Retired Rear Adm. Arikun Abdulkadir at the event with the theme "Re-imagining Private Security in Nigeria: From Manpower to Intelligence-Driven Protection."

He said the theme of the summit reflected the changing realities of modern security management.

According to him, terrorism, cybercrime, piracy, transnational organised crime, misinformation and other hybrid threats have become increasingly sophisticated, intercon-

nected and technology-driven.

He added that evolving threats required intelligence superiority, rapid response and effective collaboration among public and private security institutions.

Matawalle said national security now extends beyond territorial defence, stressing that "peace, investment and sustainable development depend on secure environment."

He said the Federal Government had continued to strengthen Nigeria's security architecture through reforms under President Bola Tinubu's administration.

The minister listed the reforms to include the National Security Strategy 2024, the National Defence Policy, the National Cybersecurity Policy and Strategy and the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) Act 2023.

He explained that Nigeria was investing in cyber defence, Artificial Intelligence, digital intelligence, surveillance systems, data analytics and integrated command-and-control platforms.

ADC intensifies grassroots mobilisation, consultations ahead of 2027 elections

LAGOS

We are taking our message to the grassroots because every successful political movement is built on the support and participation of the people.

"Our consultations and ward meetings will further unite members and attract new supporters," he said.

Bello urged residents to embrace issue-based politics and participate actively in the democratic process.

He said that sustained engagement with communities remained critical to good governance.

The candidate expressed confidence that the mobilisation campaign would position the ADC for greater electoral success in 2027.

"Our focus is to build a strong, inclusive and peo-

ple-centred political platform that reflects the aspirations of Lagos West residents.

"We believe grassroots participation is the foundation of sustainable democracy," he said.

Bello urged residents of Lagos West to support issue-based politics and participate actively in the democratic process.

He added that politics and leadership should be service and development rather than personal interests.

The candidate expressed confidence that sustained grassroots mobilisation would position the ADC as a credible alternative in future elections.

"We remain committed to building a people-oriented political platform that prioritises good governance, accountability and sustainable development for all residents of Lagos West," he said.

**NIGERIAN CONTENT SEMINAR:**

Representative of the Executive Secretary, Nigerian Content Development and Management Board (NCDMB), Bamidele Abayomi (L) with the Former Executive Secretary of NCDMB, Chief Ernest Nwapa, during the Nigerian Content Seminar in Abuja on Monday.

CVR: INEC introduces self-service voter registration platform

LAFIA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has introduced a self-service online voter registration platform for eligible first-time voters as part of efforts to improve accessibility, service delivery and citizens' participation in the electoral process.

Mallam Mohammed Abubakar-Sadiq, Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Nasarawa State, disclosed this at a news briefing on Tuesday in Lafia.

Abubakar-Sadiq said the platform would become operational on Wednesday, July 8, through the Commission's Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) portal, where eligible citizens could access step-by-step registration guidelines.

He said the platform would enable first-time voters to initiate and complete their voter registration process, including biometric capture, using their personal devices without physically visiting any INEC office.

According to him, the platform incorporates robust identity verification, biometric validation and backend integrity checks to safeguard the credibility, integrity and accuracy of the National Register of Voters.

The REC said the initiative was in line with the Commission's commitment to innovation, accessibility and improved service delivery.

He, however, said that eligible voters who had begun the physical registration process, transferring of their voting point or replacing their stolen

or defaced Permanent Voter Card (PVC) should visit INEC registration centres.

He also announced that the Commission had approved a two-week extension of the ongoing nationwide Continuous Voter Registration exercise.

Abubakar-Sadiq said the third and final phase of the exercise, initially scheduled to end on July 10, would now close on July 26.

He said the extension followed a review of the nationwide exercise and feedback from INEC state offices, political parties, civil society organisations and other critical stakeholders.

"The extension is to provide additional opportunity for eligible Nigerians who are yet to register as voters to do so ahead of future electoral activities.

"It underscores the Commission's commitment to ensuring that every eligible Nige-

rian has a fair and reasonable opportunity to be included in the National Register of Voters," he said.

The REC recalled that the nationwide CVR exercise commenced on Aug. 18, 2025, adding that the first and second phases recorded a significant number of registrants across Nasarawa State, including Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWDs).

He urged eligible residents of the state who had yet to register to take advantage of both the extension and the newly introduced technology-driven registration platform.

Abubakar-Sadiq reaffirmed INEC's commitment to conducting a credible, inclusive, transparent and accessible voter registration process through the deployment of technology to improve citizens' experience.

Stakeholders seek stronger partnerships to tackle youth unemployment in Ikorodu

IKORODU (LAGOS)

Youth leaders, entrepreneurs and government officials in Ikorodu have called for stronger collaboration among stakeholders to expand opportunities for young people.

They said such collaboration would enhance vocational training, digital skills acquisition and access to funding.

The stakeholders made the call in separate interviews with our correspondent on Tuesday in Lagos.

They assessed ongoing efforts to tackle youth unemployment and promote entrepreneurship in the division.

The Coordinator, Ikorodu Youth Development Network, Mr Adewale Adebayo, said equipping young people with practical and digital skills remained one of the most effective ways of tackling unemployment.

According to him, many youths possess the passion to succeed but require relevant training, mentorship and financial support to establish

sustainable businesses.

"Young people are eager to work and contribute to economic development.

"What they need are opportunities to acquire relevant skills and access affordable funding to turn their ideas into thriving enterprises," he said.

Also speaking, a fashion entrepreneur and vocational trainer, Mrs Kemi Balogun, said skills acquisition programmes had continued to transform the lives of many young people across Ikorodu Division.

She urged governments, corporate organisations and development partners to in-

vest more in vocational centres and entrepreneurship development.

"Vocational training has helped many youths become self-reliant.

"We need more support in terms of equipment, grants and mentorship to enable beneficiaries to compete in today's economy," she said.

On his part, the Director of Youth Development, Ikorodu Local Government, Mr Azeez Afinni, said the council remained committed to implementing programmes that would promote youth development and innovation.

Police confirm 30 cases of alleged politically motivated killings in Osun

ABUJA

The Nigeria Police Force has confirmed 30 cases of alleged politically motivated killings ahead of August 15 governorship election in Osun state.

The Force Public Relation Officer (FPRO), CSP Anietie Iniedu, disclosed this on Tuesday when he appeared

on Channels TV programme, "Morning Brief".

Speaking during the programme, monitored in Benin City, the FPRO said a few arrests had been made.

He said some of the suspects were paraded by the police and a few of them had been charged to court.

"From the complaints received, we cannot rule out the

involvement of some politicians in the killings,' he said

Iniedu, however, declined giving details of the cases, the suspects and their accomplices, as according to him, doing so would amount to subjudice and media trial.

He assured that the details would be provided when investigations are completed and when the cases in court are determined.

Reacting to alleged police complicity in the political crisis in the state, Iniedu said the police will never be part of any

cover up and will not shield any person involved in any crime.

"It is logical that when an election is coming up, there will be accusive fingers pointed by the gladiators, particularly against the police.

"But I can assure you that the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Olatunji Disu, has given a marching order that any suspected criminal must be tracked, arrested and prosecuted," he said.

He recalled that the IGP recently visited Osogbo, the state capital, to address esca-

lating political tensions and pre-election violence ahead of the governorship election.

Iniedu said the IGP met with the state Governor, Ademola Adeleke and key stakeholders to warn against thugery and political violence.

"When we were in Osogbo, the IGP met with every stakeholder. The Governor and the opposition made accusations and counter accusations.

"The posture of the IGP is

that, we will not tolerate killings and any form of breakdown of law and order.

"The IGP also warned parents to caution their children and wards to shun violence and desist from being used as tools to settle political scores," he said.

On the allegation of partisanship and shielding suspects made against the State Commissioner of Police, Ibrahim Gotan, the FPRO said the IGP met the CP on the issue.



NIGERIAN CONTENT SEMINAR:

Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Media and Publicity, Rep. Akin Rotimi Jr; Chairman, House Committee on Rules and Business, Rep. Francis Waive, and the Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Rep. Bello Isa, briefing the House of Representatives Press Corps on the activities of the Green Chambers to commemorate Third Session of the 10th Assembly, at the National Assembly Complex in Abuja on Monday.

Ebonyi govt sustains ban on primary, secondary schools' graduation ceremonies

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

ABAKALIKI

The Ebonyi state government has issued an order prohibiting both public, private primary and secondary schools in the State from organizing or conducting any form of graduation, valedictory or related ceremony in the state without official authorization.

The government in a statement, warned any school that

violates the latest directive will face the wrath of the law.

Government noted that despite the repeated directives to that effect by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, some principals and head teachers of both public and private schools had continued to organise graduation, valedictory and end of session ceremonies.

In order to ensure strict compliance to the latest directive, the Commissioner for Primary and Secondary

Education, Dr Donatus Ilang, has constituted an investigative panel to identify schools that have flouted the directive whereby appropriate sanctions would be imposed.

He assured that any offending institution would not be spared, including the prosecution of those responsible where necessary, withdrawal of the school's operational approvals in accordance with the law.

The Ministry has also invited relevant security agencies, directed to support in the enforcement of the directive.

Meanwhile Parents and

guardians have equally been advised to report any principal or head teacher who may or had collected money for the unauthorised graduation, valedictory or related ceremonies and had refused to refund the payments to report same promptly to the ministry for immediate action.

The government however, urged all school proprietors, principals, head teachers, parents and other stakeholders to comply fully with the directive in the interest of order, accountability and effective regulation of the education sector.

Expert decries rising hypertension, diabetes cases among young Nigerians

BENIN CITY

Dr Marvelous Idemudia, a medical doctor at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Clinic, has expressed concern over the growing number of young Nigerians being diagnosed with hypertension and diabetes.

Idemudia, who made the disclosure in an interview with our correspondent, said that the conditions once considered more common among older people

are now increasingly prevalent among younger adults.

"The increasing prevalence of hypertension and diabetes among young adults should not be ignored.

"Unhealthy diets, stress, sedentary lifestyles, and poor health habits are among the major factors driving this trend."

She warned that failure to address these issues could increase the burden of non-communicable diseases in the country.

According to her, poor nu-

trition, physical inactivity, and prolonged stress are contributing significantly to the development of these diseases among younger people.

Idemudia noted that many young adults did not undergo routine medical check-ups because they believed such conditions affected only older people, resulting in late diagnosis and treatment.

"It is important to go for regular blood pressure and blood sugar screenings, get adequate sleep, and manage stress effectively," she said.

She advised young Nige-

rians to adopt healthier lifestyles by engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining a balanced diet, reducing their intake of junk food, salt, and sugary foods, and getting adequate rest to manage stress effectively.

She also urged individuals with a family history of hypertension or diabetes to undergo regular medical screening.

She noted that early detection and prompt management could prevent serious complications such as stroke, heart disease, kidney failure, and vision loss.

Institute wants Nigeria to focus on mining sector, reduce investor risk

ABUJA

A report by the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), states that Nigeria should focus on reducing investors' risk in the mining sector.

This, it said, was to enable it optimally support its economic diversification as well as its energy transition.

The report was authored by NGRI's Country Manager in Nigeria, Tengi George-Ikoli, the Programme Officer, Ahmad Abdulsamad and Africa Senior Economic Analyst, Thomas Scurfield.

The report, titled 'Economic Diversification, Energy Transition and Minerals: Opportunities for Nigeria', was unveiled in Abuja at the National Dialogue on Nigeria's Energy Transition.

The report noted that even though Nigeria's mineral sector offered a significant opportunity to support economic diversification and energy transition, it should not be treated as a quick substitute for oil and gas revenues.

"An immediate priority should be to reduce investor risk and strengthen state capability.

"This requires: accessible and credible geological data integrated with the Nigeria Mining Cadastre; regulatory certainty, including through clearer federal-state roles.

"Focused national mining companies that de-risk rather than replace private investment and action to address insecurity and improve artisanal and small-scale mining governance."

According to the report, aligning mining with infrastructure, energy and industrial planning should also be an early priority.

It stated that the move could help unlock scale, strengthen competitiveness and maximise broader economic benefits.

The report urged Nigeria to adopt a balanced, evidence-based approach to developing its mineral resources to support economic diversification and the country's energy transition.

It said mining had potential to significantly boost industrialisation, job creation and the energy transition drive, but warned that weak governance, policy uncertainty and poor environmental management could undermine the sector's potential.

Police detain officers over alleged assault on civilian, launch investigation

ABAKALIKI

The Police Command in Ebonyi has identified and detained police officers allegedly involved in an altercation and assault with a civilian in Ohaukwu Local Government Area of the state.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Joshua Ukandu, stated this in a statement issued in Abakaliki on Tuesday.

Ukandu stated that upon receiving the report of the incident, the Commissioner of Police in the state, CP Hope Okafor, immediately ordered the transfer of the officers to the Command Headquarters.

PPRO said the commissioner also directed the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) to commence a comprehensive inves-

tigation into the matter.

According to him, the officers have since been detained and will undergo appropriate disciplinary procedures in line with the outcome of the investigation.

"The command has identified the officers involved in the incident and taken immediate administrative action to ensure a transparent investigation.

"The officers have been transferred to the Command Headquarters, detained, and will face disciplinary measures in accordance with the findings of the investigation," he said.

The police spokesman expressed the command's sympathy to the victim, who is currently receiving treatment at the Federal Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki.

He assured members of the public that the investigation would be conducted thoroughly, transparently and without bias to ensure justice was served.

NEWS**JUDICIARY**

Wife buys ammunition, sells to notorious terrorist, hubby, DSS operative tells Court

IBADAN
Mr Babatunde Afolabi, an investigator with the Department of State Services, has told the Federal High Court, Ibadan, that Asmau Omar, a defendant in a case of illegal arms dealing, allegedly procured and sent ammunition to her

husband in his hideout. It would be recalled that Omar and three others have since 2024 been facing a 15-count charge bordering on conspiracy, illegal dealing in ammunition, as well as aiding and abetting terrorism.

The co-defendants Olamide Okesola, Emmanuel Olatunji, and Adeleke Adewale – are per-

sonnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC),

All the defendants, who had pleaded not guilty to the offences at their arraignment in the case which started in 2023, had objected to the tendering of their alleged extra judicial statement, claiming it was obtained under duress

However, Justice Nkeo-

nye Maha had ruled against the preliminary objection on Friday, July 3, and held the statements as admissible in evidence.

At the resumption of hearing on Monday, Afolabi made the disclosure while being led in his evidence-in-chief.

“My lord, in our bid to arrest Dandake, a notorious terrorist whose act of terrorism

covers Kwara, Kogi, Oyo and Ogun states respectively, we arrested Asmau trying to courier some arms and ammunition to her husband.

“Asmau, the fourth defendant has also been on our radar for a long time because our intelligence revealed that she is a courier of illegal arms to terrorists.

“So, she was arrested in the company of Buhari Lawan trying to courier ammunition to her husband.

“During our intelligence analyses, we discovered that the defendant usually move arms and ammunition and we found out the source.

“After their arrest, ammunition were found in their pos-

session,” he said tendering a Compact Disc video showing the defendant and the ammunition in her possession as an exhibit before the court.

During cross examination, Afolabi pointed out that the defendant’s husband was identified as a notorious terrorist because many terrorists arrested by the DSS in the past have confirmed him as a notorious terrorist, terrorising most states in the South-Western Nigeria.

At the conclusion of the cross examination, the defence counsel, Mr A.B. Ademilua said that he would not open any defence because no case has being established against his clients.



2026 NIGERIAN ARMY DAY CELEBRATION:

From left, Chairman Senate Committee on Environment, Sen Olubiyi Fadeyi; Chairman Senate Committee on Works, Sen Allwell Onyesoh; Minister of State for Works, Bello Goronyo; Minister of Works, Dave Umahi; Senate Deputy Chief Whip, Sen Onyekachi Nwibonyi; Chairman, House Committee on Works Akin Alabi and Sen Osita Ngwu during the 2026 Nigerian Army Day Celebration at the Yakubu Gowon Stadium in Port-Harcourt on Monday.

Defendant, 29, discharged, acquitted of manslaughter charges

IBADAN
An Oyo State High Court in Ibadan, on Tuesday, discharged and acquitted one Afeez Akintola, 29, earlier remanded in April, over alleged manslaughter.

Justice Oluwaseun Ademola-salami remanded Akintola in a correctional facility without taking his plea and adjourned pending issuance of legal advice from the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP).

When the case was called on Tuesday, Ademola-salami said

the legal advice dated May 19, absolved Akintola of the offence.

She therefore discharged and acquitted the defendant.

The State Prosecution Counsel, Mr Oluwafemi Akinlotan, had alleged that the defendant committed the offence on April 4, at about 4.00 p.m., at

Imini Village, Oyo town.

He alleged that the defendant shot one Olalekan Adeshina with a dane gun.

The offences, the prosecutor said, was contrary to Section 316 and punishable under Section 319 of the Criminal Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

MAN, 42, in Court for allegedly accusing Police of collecting ₦50,000

IBADAN
A 42-year-old Hammed Akintola, was on Tuesday arraigned in an Iyaganku Magistrates’ Court, Ibadan, for allegedly accusing police of collecting ₦50,000.

Akintola, a Phone repairer was charged with false ru-

mours and defamation, to which he pleaded not guilty.

The Prosecutor, ASP Femi Omilana, said the defendant committed the offences on June 30, at about 10.30 p.m., at Maku area of Ibadan.

He alleged that the defendant unlawfully sent a false news on WhatsApp voice note

to Goke Ogunrinwale.

Omilana alleged that the defendant in the false defamatory message accused police officers attached to the violent crimes response unit at the Maku division of collecting ₦50,000 from a commercial motorcyclist.

The Prosecutor said the defendant knew it was false and

therefore committed offences contrary to Sections 59 and 375 of the Criminal Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

The Magistrate, Mrs Adebola Adeola granted the defendant bail in the sum of ₦500,000 and two sureties in like sum.

She adjourned the case until August 6, for hearing.

Man, 25, teenager docked over alleged ₦5m electric wire theft

ABEOKUTA
A 25-year-old man, Chapel Peter and a teenager were on Tuesday arraigned before a Magistrates’ Court in Isabo, Abeokuta, over alleged house-breaking and theft of electric wires worth ₦5.1 million.

The defendants, whose addresses were not provided, are facing a seven-count charge bordering on burglary, stealing and malicious damage to property.

They, however, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The Prosecutor, Insp Opeyemi Lawal, told the court that the defendants committed the offences between January and July 3 at Royal Garden, Awo Village, Owode-Egba, Abeokuta.

Lawal said that Peter broke into the houses of the complainants, Messrs Olaniyi Oriade and Adebayo Lateef, with intent to commit felony.

He further said that Peter stole electric wires valued at ₦1.7 million, belonging to Oriade.

The prosecutor also stated

that the defendant broke into Lateef’s house and stole electric wires valued at ₦2 million as well as 14 CCTV cameras valued at ₦1.4 million, all totalling ₦5.1 million.

He said that the defendants also maliciously damaged security wires valued at ₦700,000, belonging to Lateef. Lawal said that the minor, a 13-year-old boy, received the stolen items from Peter, knowing they were stolen.

“Peter, upon his arrest, made a confessional statement that he had been committing the

crimes and intended to sell the stolen items to the teenager.

“Peter had been doing the business with the teenager for some time now,” the prosecutor told the court.

Lawal said that the offences contravened Sections 383, 390(9), 411, 427, 451 and 509 of the Criminal Code, Vol. 1, Laws of Ogun State, 2006.

The Magistrate, Miss O.T. Odubanjo, granted Peter bail in the sum of ₦3 million, while the minor was granted bail in the sum of ₦500,000, with one surety each in like sum.

Travel agent docked alleged ₦4.1m visa fraud

IBADAN
A 43-year-old travel agent, Adewale Lasisi, on Tuesday appeared before an Iyaganku Magistrates’ Court, Ibadan, over an alleged ₦4.1 million visa fraud. Lasisi, whose address was not provided, is facing a two-count charge of conspiracy and obtaining money under false pretences.

He, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The Prosecutor, Insp Adeshina Folaranmi, told the court that the defendant committed the offences with some others still at large on Feb. 6 at New Garage, Ibadan.

Folaranmi alleged that the defendant collected the ₦4.1

million from the complainant, Mr Abiodun Alabi, to procure a UK visa for him, but failed to do so.

He said the defendant converted the money to his personal use.

Folaranmi said that all efforts made by the complainant to retrieve his money or get the visa from the defendant proved abortive.

He said the offences contravened Sections 419 and 516 of the Criminal Law of Oyo State, 2000.

The Magistrate, Mrs Oluwabusayo Osho, granted the defendant bail in the sum of ₦2 million with two sureties in like sum and adjourned the case until Jan. 26, 2027, for mention.

Lawyer fulfils childhood dream after decades of perseverance

ABUJA
Mr Godfrey Oluwabunwa, a Nigerian businessman and entrepreneur, has fulfilled his childhood ambition of becoming a lawyer after decades of perseverance and determination.

Oluwabunwa, formally called to the Nigerian Bar on Tuesday, described the achievement as “a testament to perseverance, faith and commitment to a lifelong dream.

“Dreams may be delayed, but they are not denied,” he said in a statement reflecting on his journey from repeated admission setbacks to becoming a legal practitioner.

He said his experience showed that setbacks should not discourage people from pursuing their goals, stressing that determination and patience were essential to overcoming challenges.

Oluwabunwa had aspired to study law from childhood and made several attempts to gain admission after completing secondary school.

Although he met the admission requirements, he was re-

peatedly offered English Language and Literature because of admission constraints, including the catchment system.

Rather than abandon his ambition, he excelled in his chosen course while taking available law courses and seeking opportunities to transfer to the Faculty of Law.

After graduating from University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID), Oluwabunwa returned to study law during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He graduated with outstanding results before completing professional training at the Nigerian Law School.

He was eventually called to the Nigerian Bar on July 7, more than four decades after first pursuing the dream.

The entrepreneur, a Harvard alumnus and now legal practitioner, attributed his success to perseverance and divine grace.

He narrated that “in 1995, I surrendered my life to Christ. That decision transformed my character, strengthened my discipline, deepened my faith and became the foundation upon which I built every subsequent success.

FOREIGN

NEWS

China sentences official to death for taking \$325m in bribes

A court in eastern China has sentenced a former city official to death for taking more than 2.2bn yuan (\$325m; £243m) in bribes over 30 years.

Yang Youlin, who served in various positions in Nanjing city from 1993 to 2023, was also convicted of embezzlement, abuse of power and money laundering, with his ill-gotten gains amounting to one of the highest in recent years.

The 69-year-old exploited his roles to help others secure engineering contracts, land transfers and financing, in exchange for money and valuables, said state media.

Yang was investigated as part of President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption crackdown which has cut through military ranks and high-level banking, among other sectors.

Yang, who spent much of his career working on economic and technological development in Nanjing, had committed offences "of an extremely serious nature" and "caused exceptionally heavy losses to the interests of the state and the people", a court in Changzhou city said on Monday.

Since coming to power, President Xi has launched

waves of anti-corruption drives, which critics say have also been used as a tool to purge political rivals.

Death sentences for white collar crimes however remain rare, though they are meted out occasionally, typically if the cases involve large sums exceeding 1bn yuan.

For instance, former finance chief Lai Xiaomin was executed in 2021 for taking 1.8bn yuan in bribes over a 10-year period.

Li Jianping, a former Inner Mongolia official, was executed in 2024 for embezzling and taking bribes totaling more than 3bn yuan.

In many other cases, the courts handed out jail terms or suspended death sentences, which get commuted to life imprisonment after a specified duration.

The courts have also reduced sentences in some cases where the convicted individuals reported on other offenders.

But while Yang provided similar assistance to authorities, his offences were so "grave" that his assistance "was insufficient to warrant a more lenient punishment", the Changzhou court said.

Yang pleaded guilty and "expressed remorse in his final statement", according to state media.

Zimbabwean football star survives gun attack in South Africa

Zimbabwean footballer Divine Lunga has survived a gun attack in Johannesburg, South African police have said.

The football star, 31, was driving in the inner city suburb of Hillbrow on Sunday when his car was shot at by an unknown gunman, according to local reports.

Lunga, who plays for both Zimbabwe's national football team and top South African club Mamelodi Sundowns, escaped unharmed.

Crime is a major problem in South Africa and the country has one of the highest murder rates in the world.

Police spokesperson Captain Tintswalo Sibeko said they were investigating a case of attempted murder but that no arrests had been made.

She did not provide further details, but South African publication The Citizen said

that Lunga was on his way to church with his younger brother when they came under attack.

The duo were driving through Hillbrow when the suspect opened fire on their car, apparently mistaking him for an undercover police officer.

Lunga has played 21 times for Zimbabwe's national team and was part of the team's squad for the Fifa World Cup 2026 qualifiers.

The defender joined Mamelodi Sundowns in 2021 and has helped them win four domestic league titles, as well as their second African Champions League in May.

Neither team has commented on the shooting but the Warriors, as Zimbabwe's national team is known, has posted a picture of Lunga in a prayer position with a short caption, reading "In God we trust" alongside his name.



DIVINE LUNGA



MEETING WITH SYRIAN LEADER:

Macron's officials said the French president did not hear any explosions on his way to meeting Syrian leader Ahmed al-Sharaa.

Zelensky to press NATO for air defence systems after intense Russian strikes

Ukraine's president plans to use the Nato meeting in Turkey to urge Kyiv's allies to deliver the air defence systems it urgently needs to protect it from escalating Russian attacks.

Volodymyr Zelensky's call for help rings with extra intensity after Russian missiles rained down on the Ukrainian capital twice in less than a week, crashing into blocks of flats and killing more than 50 civilians.

The summit in Ankara will also be a chance for Zelensky to hold a crucial meeting with Donald Trump and press home his case that Russia's "brutal" attacks are a show of weakness, not strength, and that Vladimir Putin should be pressured into talks towards a "dignified" peace.

The latest strikes on Ukraine come as it has been stepping up its own long-range drone at-

tacks against Russia, hitting oil refineries and military targets there and causing significant fuel shortages and power cuts.

Underscoring that threat, Moscow's mayor Sergei Sobyanin said anti-air defences intercepted "most" of the 430 unmanned aerial drones fired by Ukraine towards the capital overnight. The severity of the damage was not immediately clear.

Russian social media accounts are full of videos of people queuing for hours to buy petrol and fighting over what little they're allowed.

On the eve of the Nato gathering, which will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, Zelensky voiced hope that the meeting in Turkey would not be "empty".

Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte has urged member states to "pull their weight" and ensure Ukraine gets what

it needs "to defend its sovereignty".

He underlined that Kyiv was "changing the dynamic on the battlefield", referring to efforts to stall Russian ground troops in the east.

That's also about the recent drone strikes, apparently giving Ukraine an edge.

The phrase of the month here is "window of opportunity".

But as the war in the skies has intensified, Russia's ballistic missiles are causing Kyiv real problems.

Ukraine's air force issues a daily tally of the weapons Moscow launches alongside the number intercepted.

On Monday, almost all drones were blocked successfully but the failure rate for missiles was glaringly obvious.

Ukraine did not stop a single ballistic missile in that attack.

It isn't easy: they fly at several thousand kilometres an hour and there just aren't enough US-made Patriot air defence missiles in Ukraine to counter them.

"It is simply absurd that, in today's world, production has still not been scaled up to the level actually required to protect people from ballistic terror," Zelensky said, venting his frustration in a video address on Monday.

He has been calling on European allies to hand over their own stockpiles of Patriot missiles, arguing that they're no good to anyone in storage when civilians are being killed now in Ukraine.

"Russia is placing its bets on ballistic weapons, and those who want peace must place their bets on protection against ballistic attacks," Zelensky argues, setting out his case for meetings in Ankara.

Explosions injure 18 in Damascus during Macron's visit

Syrian media says, explosions were reportedly heard near the hotel where French President Emmanuel Macron had been staying.

State news agency Sana said two explosive devices had been detected by security forces, which went off as specialised units began the process to defuse them.

One device was placed inside a parked vehicle, while the other was concealed in a bin, the agency said.

Macron has been in the capital for talks with his Syrian counterpart Ahmed al-Sharaa at the presidential palace. His officials said he was safe and did not hear the explosions.

After travelling to Syria, the French president is set to head to Turkey for the Nato summit.

Syrian media said four po-

lice officers were among the injured, and the interior ministry had launched an investigation to identify those responsible for the attack.

Videos and images posted on social media on Tuesday morning showed plumes of smoke and flames rising from a vehicle near a hotel in the Syrian capital.

One eyewitness, told BBC Arabic's Middle East Daily that they had been standing in front of the ministry of tourism headquarters when the first explosion occurred.

They said that while security forces were searching for suspicious objects after the first bomb detonated, "a second explosion occurred approximately 20 metres from the site of the first blast".

"The first explosion caused

material damage but no casualties. The second explosion, however, caused injuries to several members of the public security forces and the traffic police," the eyewitness told the BBC.

BBC Verify analysis located the explosions at approximately 125m from the Four Seasons hotel, on a major thoroughfare running through the capital.

As reports of the explosions came in, Syrian state television said that al-Sharaa had welcomed Macron to the presidential palace.

Writing on social media after the blasts, Macron said: "Nothing can smother the aspiration of Syrian women and men to live in a fully sovereign, safe, pluralistic, and united Syria."

"This morning I met Syria in all its diversity. I saw dignity, courage, and determination.

My visit continues."

Macron arrived in Syria on Monday evening, becoming the first EU leader to visit Syria since al-Sharaa came to power following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024. It is a trip that underlines Syria's return to the global stage following years of international isolation.

Sharaa, a former al-Qaeda commander from Syria's Sunni Muslim majority, has vowed to unify a divided country after five decades of the repressive rule of the Assad family and a 13-year-old devastating civil war.

The explosions in Damascus underline the major security challenges the authorities face posed from a range of militants including the Islamic State group, which has claimed a series of attacks on government targets in recent months.

Resistance and revenge - Iran wanted to send a message with its farewell to Khamenei

Three days of public mourning in Tehran for its slain supreme leader ended with a major political spectacle the men now in charge wanted the world to see.

The hulking funeral cortege, carrying the coffins of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and four family members, inched along a 10km route – slowed, and often stopped, by millions of mourners in one of the largest public gatherings in many years.

In a week of funeral events, Monday's march was the most significant in carefully choreographed ceremonies steeped in political messaging of resistance and revenge.

But many also stayed away, hurting from two wars in less than a year, inflation spiralling at around 80%, and the pain of January's anti-government protests.

Some blame Khamenei, who was also the commander-in-chief, for the security crackdown which killed many thousands.

"Of course I'm not going to the funeral," one man told us outside one of the many "mookebs", the rest stations set up in the city and on its outskirts to provide free food and water, most of it from private donations.

"Many people don't have work and are so unhappy," he explained.

Aerial footage from Monday's procession showed one of Tehran's main arteries chock-full of loyalists consumed by grief and chanting the Islamic Republic's signature slogans of "death to America" and "death to Israel".

"Tears arise from the pain and sorrow that surges within a person, and the world sees

this truth," declared Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, rebutting US President Donald Trump's claim that these were "fake tears".

The commemorations now move to some of the most sacred sites for Shia Muslims, including in Qom, south of Tehran, on Tuesday, and then to Najaf and Karbala in neighbouring Iraq.

The final burial is on Thursday at the sprawling Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad, the ayatollah's birthplace and Iran's holiest city.

"The funeral proceedings are designed to frame him as more than a national leader but a transcendent religious and political figure whose authority extended across the Muslim world, and particularly Shia Islam," observed Mohammad Eslami, research fellow at Tehran University.

There's a harsher view of his legacy. "The revolution he pre-

served was for a world which no longer exists," assesses Karim Sadjadpour, author of Reading Khamenei: the World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader.

In Tehran, a flatbed truck, decorated with intricate lattice-work and Arabic Islamic script, carried five caskets, painted in the green, red and white of Iran's flag, including the smallest for Khamenei's 14-month-old granddaughter Zara.

All were killed by Israeli-American air strikes on 28 February, in the first hours of the war.

Red was the loudest colour in the huge crowds of bereaved wearing black. Religious flags symbolising blood and martyrdom amplified calls to avenge the supreme leader's assassination.

Posters in English singling out Trump as the main target were held high for the hundreds of foreign journalists given rare access to cover this funeral.

An Iranian messaging app had advised government supporters to use slogans such as "Our revenge is inevitable," and "They will pay. Hard."

"I want to say one sentence to President Trump and the world," declared a grey-haired man named Mojtaba, who came to us saying he had a message.

"Soon, very soon you will see signs of revenge at the top of the White House, and soon the colour of the White House will be the colour of my red flag."

"Some of these calls are just ritualistic," a government official told me. "But the anger is real among hardline critics within the system who oppose the new deal with the United States which killed our leader."

To address a dire financial situation, Iran's new leaders, after surviving weeks of war, must now keep negotiating if they wish to see badly needed relief through the easing of sanctions and unfreezing of assets.

Government supporters in what were welcoming crowds kept approaching foreigners - including what the government says were 400 social media influencers - to ask "where are you from?" They often

urged visiting media to "tell the truth".

But even in this through there were other voices too. Two young Iranian women, clad in the black cloaks of most female mourners, pulled us aside to whisper that the "real voices of revolution" had been heard in the protests just months ago on these same streets.

The road ahead is still uncertain as Iran buries the last of the first-generation founders of its 1979 revolution.

Nearly four decades ago, I was in Iran when it buried its first supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini. In the frenzied stampede, his flimsy wooden coffin broke and his white shrouded body tumbled into the crowds.

Iran enters a new era with its third Supreme Leader, 56-year-old Mojtaba Khamenei, who's still not been seen in public since the air strikes which killed his father severely injured him.

The sight of his three brothers at the open-air Grand Musalla mosque compound, where their father lay in state made his absence all the more conspicuous.



PUBLIC MOURNING IN TEHRAN:

The coffins of Khamenei and four family members were carried in a hulking funeral cortege.

Guinea-Bissau to hold referendum on expanding presidential power

A proposed change to the constitution of Guinea-Bissau giving more power to the president will be put to a referendum on August 30, the country's military junta said in a decree on Monday.

The army seized power of the country in November, just days after a presidential election, overthrowing the head of state and suspending the electoral process.

The junta has since approved a constitutional amendment to abandon the parliamentary system and move to a presidential one.

Under the proposal, the president could appoint the prime minister and members of government and dissolve parliament.

New elections aimed at re-

storing civilian rule are scheduled for December 6 but voters will first be asked whether they agree with the amendment.

Transitional leader General Horta N'Tam will not be allowed to run for president, the junta said in December.

Guinea-Bissau has witnessed five military takeovers and a string of attempted coups since it gained independence from Portugal in 1974.

To date, the prime minister came from the parliamentary majority but that led to diffi-

cult periods of coalition governments.

Umaro Sissoco Embalo, who was ousted in 2025, ruled by decree until his removal, after dissolving the opposition-dominated parliament in December 2023.

UN Human Rights Council condemns escalating violence in Sudan's el-Obeid

The top United Nations human rights body, on Monday, approved without a vote a measure that condemns the escalating violence by Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and its allies in and around the city of el-Obeid in the North Kordofan region as the war in the African country continues into its fourth year.

The resolution, brought by Britain, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway at the Human Rights Council, also encourages greater support for countries hosting refugees from Sudan and condemns "all forms of external interference" in the war, among other things.

China, Cuba, Egypt and Pakistan, however, dissociated

themselves from any consensus on the measure, with some expressing concerns about references to a fact-finding mission that the council has already set up to focus on rights abuses in Sudan's war.

On Friday, U.N. human rights chief Volker Türk sounded a "red alert" about possible atrocity crimes in and near el-Obeid, a strate-

gic city in central Sudan, and called on world leaders to do more to help stop the bloodshed in the country's ongoing war.

His comments came as the council held an urgent debate on the situation in el-Obeid about concerns expressed by diplomats, advocacy groups and others that another wave of atrocities may loom against

civilians in Sudan's war.

The war erupted in April 2023 out of long-simmering tensions between the army and RSF. The conflict has killed at least 59,000 people, displaced some 13 million and pushed many parts of Sudan into famine.

More than 30 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

UNICEF: More than 300 children killed in Sudan in last six months

Children in Sudan are caught "in a relentless cycle of violence, displacement and deprivation," the UN's children's agency said on Monday.

More than 300 children have been killed or injured in the last six months, mostly from drone strikes the UNICEF Representative for Sudan told the United Nations' Human Rights Council.

Sudan has been mired in a war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces since April 2023.

The fighting is now concentrated in the Kordofan, Darfur and Blue Nile states, with drone warfare responsible for 60 percent of casualties, UNICEF said.

The UN called on parties "to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, facilitate humanitarian access, and take all possible measures to protect children from harm."

The UN, US, UK and others

have expressed alarm about potential atrocities as the RSF and the military fight for control of the strategic city of el-Obeid, in North Kordofan.

The Council approved a measure condemning the escalating violence by the RSF and its allies in and around el-Obeid.

The measure also encourages greater support for countries hosting refugees from Sudan and condemns "all forms of external interference" in the war.

The conflict has killed at least 59,000 people, displaced some 13 million and pushed many parts of Sudan into famine. More than 30 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Drone strikes and shelling have targeted civilian infrastructure including schools, markets, fuel and water stations putting over 500,000 people at risk. Civilians have faced almost siegelike conditions for over a year.

Sports

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

Super Falcons Captain Ajibade gives back to NIS, inspires next generation through Coaching Scholarship

Super Falcons captain Rashheedat Ajibade has reaffirmed her commitment to the development of Nigerian sports by partnering with the National Institute for Sports (NIS), Lagos, to expand oppor-

tunities for grassroots coaches and young talents through her foundation.

Ajibade, who is a proud product of the National Institute for Sports, continues to demonstrate that investing in education

and professional training remains a vital pathway to success in sports. Her latest intervention is expected to inspire young athletes and coaches to embrace learning and capacity building as they pursue excellence.

The Rasheedat Ajibade Foundation paid a courtesy visit to the Institute, where discussions centred on strengthening collaboration in sports development, coaching education, and grassroots football across the country.

The Foundation's delegation was received on behalf of the Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the National Institute for Sports, His Excellency Comrade Philip Shaibu, by the

Registrar of the Institute, Mr. Belmond Benson, and members of the management team.

A key outcome of the meeting was the unveiling of the Rasheedat Ajibade Foundation-NIS Coaching Education Scholarship, an initiative designed to provide aspiring and grassroots coaches with access to professional coaching education at the National Institute for Sports.

Speaking during the visit, the Registrar, Mr. Belmond Benson, commended Ajibade for remembering the institution that contributed to her growth and for choosing to invest in the development of future sports professionals.



SUPER FALCONS CAPTAIN RASHEEDAT AJIBADE (LEFT)

Enugu Rangers set to unveil new players ahead of new season

The Rangers International Football club of Enugu says it has begun preparations for the commencement of the 2026/27 football season.

The flying antelopes will feature both in the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Champions league and the Nigerian Premier Football League (NPFL).

Speaking yesterday in Enugu, Amobi Ezeaku, Rangers General Manager, said the team had signed a few players to prosecute the CAF champions league and the NPFL.

"We have some new players that have joined us; as usual we have a way of unveiling our new players in line with our rules.

"When the time comes we will announce them and present our new players to the public," he said.

Ezeaku disclosed that the team had commenced training ahead of the season schedule.

On where Rangers will be playing due to the ongoing renovation at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, he said they everything was under control.

"We have to assess the level of work done at the stadium before deciding what next to do.

"I know that work is progressing fast but we cannot say for now what will happen until the time comes.

"We will see how it goes; nobody holds the key to the future; we will do our best in any way it comes," Ezeaku said.

He thanked Gov. Peter Mbah for the ongoing renovation of the stadium to meet international standard, saying "it is a big boost to Rangers quest for more glories".

The general manager said he was optimistic that the team

would do the state proud well in both this year's CAF champions league and the NPFL in spite of any challenges.

"We know what is at stake; we will always fight to represent the badge of the club, no matter the situation.

"I can assure our fans that there is no cause for alarm," he said.

Recalled that Rangers are currently the defending champion of the NPFL, hence they will represent Nigeria alongside Rivers United in the CAF champions league.



NLO launches investigation into alleged match compromise: Flight FC VS. Junior Mighty Jet FC

The Nationwide League One (NLO) has launched a full-scale investigation into the promotion play-off match between Flight FC and Junior Mighty Jet FC following the controversial 8-3 result recorded on Sunday at the Lafia Township Stadium.

In a statement issued by the league's Secretariat, the

NLO described the scoreline as "scandalous" and said it had raised serious concerns about the integrity of the fixture. The match, played as part of the ongoing promotion play-offs, has now come under official scrutiny over allegations of possible match compromise.

According to the league, a preliminary assessment of both

clubs' performances throughout the 2026 season, including the round-robin group stages, showed that neither Flight FC nor Junior Mighty Jet FC had previously recorded such an extraordinary scoreline or displayed a comparable defensive collapse.

The Secretariat stated that the pattern of goals scored and the overall conduct of the game had triggered significant suspicions of unsporting behaviour, adding that such incidents undermine fair competition and tarnish the image of the league.

As part of its immediate response, the NLO announced that the result of the match has been suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.

The league also directed the technical staff and captains of both clubs to appear before the NLO Integrity Unit and Disciplinary Committee on July 9, 2026, at the NLO Secretariat to assist with the.

TEAMS	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS	POS
Mighty Jets Feeders	3	2	0	1	10	6	+4	6	1 st
Bida Lions Fc	3	2	0	1	7	5	+2	6	2 nd
La Planet Fc	3	2	0	1	5	3	+2	6	3 rd
Flight Fc	3	0	0	3	7	15	-8	0	4 th

MATCH DAY THREE RESULTS
La Planet Fc 2-0 Bida Lions
Flight Fc 3-8 Mighty Jets Feeders Fc

Nigeria sweep Beach volleyball Zone 3 titles

Team Nigeria staged a remarkable comeback on Monday to defeat Ghana 2-1 and win the men's gold medal at the 2026 African Nations Cup Beach Volleyball Zone 3 Championship.

The tournament, held in Badagry, Lagos State, also saw Nigeria's women's team claim the gold medal after an unbeaten campaign throughout the competition.

Nigeria recovered after Ghana captured the opening set 22-20 in a fiercely contested men's final.

Roared on by enthusiastic home supporters, Team Nigeria I responded brilliantly, dominating the second set 21-14 to force a decisive Golden Set.

Nigeria maintained its composure in the winner-takes-all Golden Set, edging Ghana 15-13 to secure the championship and complete a dramatic turnaround.

The victory crowned an outstanding campaign for the hosts, who remained unbeaten throughout the six-nation championship despite their final scare against Ghana.

Team Nigeria II, however, endured disappointment after suffering a straight-sets defeat to Ghana II in another men's contest.

Ghana II secured the victory with scores of 21-16 and 23-21, denying Nigeria's second team a place among the medal winners.

Niger Republic secured the bronze medal after defeating Benin Republic 15-7 in the Golden Set of the third-place play-off.

In the women's competition, Team Nigeria also emerged champions to complete a memorable double for the host nation.

Ghana finished with the silver medal in the women's event, while Côte d'Ivoire claimed the bronze medal.

Gold Cup pre-season tournament gets August 13 kickoff date

Sporting Lagos will defend their Gold Cup title as Nigeria's top off-season football tournament begins in Ikenne and Apele-Sagamu from Thursday, 13th August, to 22nd.

Now in its 14th season, the Confederation of African Football (CAF)-certified Remo Stars International Stadium and FC Ebodei Stadium will host the 10-day football festival.

Sporting Lagos, which recently gained promotion back to the Nigeria Premier Football League, has the potential to become the second team, after

Remo Stars, to win consecutive Gold Cup titles.

Tunde Shamsudeen, the pre-season tournament's General Coordinator, shared with Gold Cup Media Channel.

"We're excited to announce the kickoff date. It's always special to see top NPFL teams face each other or battle potential giant killers in thrilling matchups.

"Our goals remain the same: the Gold Cup serves as a competitive platform to prepare teams across Nigeria's three-tier league for the upcoming football season.

Beyond The Numbers: Africa's World Cup upsurge meets toughest test

OLUSEGUN ARIBIKE

African players acknowledge supporters after their World Cup exits. Their applause captured the paradox of Africa's 2026 campaign: unprecedented collective progress, yet the enduring challenge of knockout football.

For two weeks, Africa captured the fancy of the football world. At the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the continent produced its strongest collective performance in history, with nine of its 10 representatives advancing beyond the group stage.

It was a remarkable achievement that reflected years of investment in coaching, youth development and player development.

However, as the knockout rounds unfolded, celebration gradually gave way to disappointment.

One after another, African teams exited the competition.

Some players collapsed on the pitch in disbelief. Others applauded travelling supporters before making the long walk back to the dressing room.

The scenes differed, but the lesson remained the same.

Historical FIFA World Cup records shows that while Africa has never possessed greater depth, its greatest challenge remains overcoming football's traditional powers when every mistake can end a dream.

For the first time, Africa fielded 10 teams at the FIFA World Cup.

Nine progressed beyond the group stage, the highest number ever achieved by the continent.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) President Patrice Motsepe, described the performances as "hard-earned and well-deserved," saying they reflected the "global competitiveness and world-class quality of African football."

Since Morocco became the first African nation to qualify for the knockout stage in 1986, African teams have progressed beyond the group stage at an average rate of 29 per cent.

In 2026, that figure rose dramatically to 90 per cent.

Across the previous seven FIFA World Cups that featured at least five African representatives, the average progression rate stood at just 22.3 per cent.

The latest campaign therefore represents not merely improvement but a significant transformation in Africa's competitiveness. Even Africa's opponents acknowledged the progress.

After Argentina survived Cape Verde following extra time, captain Lionel Messi admitted his side still had "many" things to improve on and cautioned against underestimating African opposition.

Cape Verde, making its FIFA World Cup debut, had earlier drawn with Spain and Uruguay before stretching the defending champions to extra time.

Although their tournament ended, their performances earned widespread respect.

Collectively, Africa has never appeared stronger on football's biggest stage. However, the expanded 48-team FIFA World Cup also requires historical context.

Unlike previous tournaments, which moved directly from the group



stage to the Round of 16, the 2026 edition introduced a Round of 32.

The additional knockout round created another opportunity for qualification but also another hurdle.

Teams now required one extra knockout victory to reach the stage previous generations entered immediately after surviving the group phase.

Africa embraced the opportunity. It then encountered the obstacle with seven African teams exiting in the Round of 32.

Only Morocco and Egypt progressed to the Round of 16, with Morocco subsequently advancing to the quarter-finals.

The eliminated teams lost to established football nations.

Algeria fell 2-0 to Switzerland, DR Congo lost 2-1 to England, Côte d'Ivoire were beaten 2-1 by Norway, Cape Verde lost 3-2 after extra time to Argentina, Ghana suffered a 1-0 defeat to Colombia, Senegal lost 3-2 to Belgium, while South Africa fell 1-0 to Canada.

Consequently, Africa's collective progression declined from a record 90 per cent getting to the Round of 32 to 20 per cent advancing beyond it.

The decline was sharp. It was also revealing.

Nevertheless, historical comparison still places Africa's 2026 campaign among its strongest.

This shows that across previous com-

parable FIFA World Cup tournaments, only 8.08 per cent of African teams get to the second knockout round.

This year, the figure has increased to 20 per cent. The expanded tournament explains part of that improvement.

It does not explain all of it. History also highlights where Africa's greatest challenge persists.

”
Teams now required one extra knockout victory to reach the stage previous generations entered immediately after surviving the group phase.

Since Morocco first reached the knockout stage in 1986, African teams have played 27 FIFA World Cup knockout matches.

As of July 6, they have recorded only eight victories, three coming via penalty shootouts, while suffering 19 defeats.

That represents a knockout success rate of 29.6 per cent. Another statistic reinforces the challenge.

Since Africa returned to the FIFA World Cup in 1970, its teams have faced former world champions on 24 occasions.

They have won only five matches, drawn seven and lost 12.

These numbers illustrate how often African dreams have ended against football's most experienced nations.

Europe and South America continued to dominate the latter stages because they have spent generations mastering knockout football. Africa is still developing that tradition.

Democratic Republic of Congo Head Coach Sébastien Desabre believes the continent's recent progress reflects years of sustained investment rather than favourable circumstances.

He described Africa's performances as "a source of great pride" and credited improvements in youth development, coaching and football structures.

According to Desabre, Africa's first FIFA World Cup title is "only a matter of time." Available evidence lends support to that optimism.

African teams now defend with greater tactical organisation. Their technical discipline has improved considerably.

More African footballers are competing regularly in Europe's elite leagues than ever before. The performance gap continues to narrow.

The final barrier, however, remains defeating football's traditional powers consistently in knockout competition. That is the defining paradox of Africa's modern FIFA World Cup story.

The continent has never enjoyed greater collective strength. Morocco has once again demonstrated that another historic breakthrough is possible.

Egypt still has an opportunity to write another chapter. Whatever happens next, the images that defined Africa's knockout campaign remain instructive.

The applause. The embraces. The long walk back to the dressing room.

They serve as reminders that progress alone is not the destination. The numbers tell the same story.

Africa produced a record 90 per cent group-stage qualification rate at the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Yet, as of July 6, African teams have won only eight of their 27 World Cup knockout matches, representing a success rate of 29.6 per cent.

Observers say closing that final gap, rather than proving that the continent belongs to football's elite, has become Africa's greatest World Cup challenge.



Late Merino strike ends Ronaldo's World Cup dream as Spain edge Portugal 1-0



MIKEL MERINO CELEBRATE AFTER SCORING A GOAL

Cristiano Ronaldo's FIFA World Cup career ended in heartbreak as Spain defeated Portugal 1-0 in a tense Round of 16 clash on Monday. The narrow victory secured Spain's place in the quarter-finals and eliminated Portugal after a fiercely contested Iberian derby decided in stoppage time.

Both teams began cautiously, prioritising defensive discipline over attacking adventure during a first half that produced few clear-cut opportunities.

Spain enjoyed greater possession and threatened through Lamine Yamal, Dani Olmo and Mikel Oyarzabal, but goalkeeper Diogo Costa produced several important saves.

Portugal relied on quick counter-attacks, with Cristiano Ronaldo, João Félix and Pedro Neto attempting to exploit spaces behind Spain's defence.

Ronaldo tested Unai Simón from distance, while Pedro Neto forced Spain's goalkeeper into another comfortable save as neither side found a breakthrough.

After the interval, the contest became increasingly physical as both managers introduced fresh legs searching for the decisive moment.

Nuno Mendes came closest for Portugal when his powerful effort struck the crossbar after taking a slight deflection, leaving Spanish supporters relieved.

Spain responded by introducing Mikel Merino and Ferran Torres to inject fresh energy into their attack.

The substitutions proved decisive deep into added time as Torres reacted quickly from a cleverly taken free-kick before finding Merino inside the penalty area.

Merino calmly swept his fin-

ish beyond Costa in the 91st minute to spark wild celebrations among Spain's players and supporters.

Portugal threw everyone forward during the remaining minutes, desperately searching for an equaliser to force extra time.

Bernardo Silva squandered

Portugal's best late opportunity, heading narrowly wide before Ronaldo's final attempt failed to trouble Spain's resilient defence.

Spain held firm through the closing moments as referee Anthony Taylor signalled full time, confirming Portugal's elimination from the tournament.

The result also marked Ronaldo's final FIFA World Cup appearance after the 41-year-old confirmed before the match that this tournament would be his last.

"I hope tomorrow won't be my last match," Ronaldo had said before kick-off after announcing the tournament would be his final World Cup.

Spain manager Luis de la Fuente praised his players' composure after surviving Portugal's determined resistance.

"We remained patient and believed the opportunity would come," he said after Spain booked their place in the last eight.

Portugal manager Roberto Martínez admitted his side were punished for one costly lapse in spite of an otherwise disciplined defensive display.

"We competed well, but at this level one moment decides everything," Martínez said.

Spain will now face the winners of the United States against Belgium Round of 16 encounter for a place in the semi-finals.

World Cup: Belgium thrash USA 4-1 to reach quarter-finals amid Balogun row



BELGIUM PLAYERS CELEBRATE AFTER WIN

Belgium produced a commanding display to defeat the United States 4-1 and book a FIFA World Cup quarter-final meeting with Spain.

The last-16 encounter in Seattle was overshadowed by controversy surrounding USA striker Folarin Balogun's eligibility after FIFA suspended his one-match ban before kick-off.

Balogun had originally received a red card against Bosnia and Herzegovina before the suspension was lifted, prompting criticism from Belgium and several football officials.

Belgium ignored the off-field distractions and dominated

the opening exchanges with aggressive pressing and swift attacking football.

Goalkeeper Matt Freese denied Timothy Castagne early before Belgium eventually broke the deadlock through Charles De Ketelaere in the ninth minute.

The midfielder calmly converted Nicolas Raskin's cross after the American defence failed to clear their lines.

The United States struggled to establish possession as Belgium controlled midfield through Youri Tielemans, Hans Vanaken and Raskin.

A hydration break briefly halt-

ed Belgium's momentum before Balogun earned the Americans a dangerous free-kick.

Malik Tillman levelled in the 31st minute after his free-kick deflected off Vanaken and wrong-footed Thibaut Courtois.

American celebrations lasted barely a minute as Belgium immediately regained the lead through De Ketelaere.

Leandro Trossard delivered an inviting cross and De Ketelaere headed beyond Freese from close range.

USA manager Mauricio Pochettino admitted his side never recovered after conceding immediately following their equaliser.

"From the beginning, we didn't connect with the game. Even when we scored the goal, we conceded in the next action," Pochettino said.

The Americans improved after the interval and briefly threatened another equaliser with increased attacking intent.

Their hopes collapsed in the 57th minute after Freese made a costly mistake while attempting to play out from the back.

Vanaken intercepted possession and calmly rolled the ball into an unguarded net to make it 3-1.

Stanley Eguma leads race for Bayelsa United Coaching Job

Former Rivers United and Enyimba FC head coach, Stanley Eguma, is the leading contender to become the new head coach of relegated Bayelsa United ahead of the 2026/27 Nigeria National League (NNL) season.

Sources close to the club indicate that Eguma is in pole position ahead of other short-listed candidates being considered by the newly appointed Interim Management Committee, led by former Bayelsa State Head of Service, Dr. Peter Singabele.

Also on the shortlist are former Go Round FC coach Ngozi Elechi and former Bayelsa

United assistant coach George Ederekumoh, who are expected to be interviewed by the committee in the coming days.

The Interim Management Committee is determined to appoint a coach capable of rebuilding the club and guiding Bayelsa United back to the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) after the Yenagoa-based side suffered relegation to the Nigeria National League.

The appointment of a substantive head coach is expected to be one of the committee's first major decisions as it begins the task of restoring the fortunes of the former NPFL campaigners.



STANLEY EGUMA

Oyo State government appoints Fatai Akande as Crown FC Technical Adviser

The Oyo State Government has appointed experienced football tactician Fatai Akande as the new Technical Adviser of Crown FC.

The appointment is part of the government's renewed commitment to strengthening the club ahead of the upcoming season, with expectations that Akande's wealth of coaching experience will help reposition the Ajilete Warriors for

improved performances.

Akande is expected to lead the technical crew as Crown FC intensifies preparations for the new campaign, with the primary objective of building a competitive squad capable of achieving the club's ambitions.

The appointment has been welcomed by football stakeholders, who believe his experience and tactical knowledge will play a key role in the development of the team.



FATAI AKANDE