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Shettima urges national unity, support for Tinubu

By Friday Omosola



Vice President Kashim Shettima has called on Nigerians to embrace unity, collective sacrifice, and continued support for President Bola Tinubu's administration as the country works towards lasting peace and development.

Speaking during the Eid al-Adha prayers at the National Eid Ground along Airport Road in Abuja, Shettima described the festival as a time for sober reflection, compassion, and nation-building, rooted in the legacy of Prophet Abraham's obedience and sacrifice.

"This is a period of sober reflection, a season of reaching out

to the indigent among us, of building bridges of brotherhood and sisterhood," he said.

"Life is a marathon, and as individuals, we can run faster, but we can wear out easily. But as a family, as a collective, as a nation, we can gain greater traction and reach our desired destination."

He urged citizens to look beyond ethnic and religious divisions, emphasising that unity of purpose and shared sacrifice were essential to overcoming challenges such as insecurity and poverty.

"What binds us together supersedes whatever that divides us," Shettima said.

"I wish to thank all Nigerians for their support and empathy, and call on all of us to coalesce into a single purse to confront all of our common challenges of insecurity, destitution, and so many other challenges."

He added that the country was on the right track, assuring Nigerians that current hardships would give way to progress.

"No matter how long the night is, it must give way to the light of the dawn. We have crossed the Rubicon, and we are on the path to sustained peace and development," he stated.

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8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
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Tinubu, Atiku, Obi, others mourn legendary Mike Ejeagha

By New Daily Prime

President Bola Tinubu headlined the dignitaries and governments who have paid tribute to the legendary folklorist and highlife musician, Mike Ejeagha.

Ejeagha died on Friday at the age of 95.

In a statement issued on Saturday by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, President Tinubu expressed his deep condolences to Ejeagha's family, fans, and the entire nation, hailing the late artist as "one of Nigeria's greatest folklorists, songwriters, and musicians in the Igbo language."

"Mike Ejeagha used his music and distinctive storytelling style to preserve and project Igbo culture and customs, inspiring generations.

"May the spirit and values of Gentleman Mike Ejeagha's music continue to remind us that music has the power to revive, heal, and redirect energy towards worthy causes that help build our nation," the President noted.

The President also commended the Enugu State Government, led by Governor Peter Mbah, for recognising the musician's contributions while he was still alive. He prayed for the repose of Ejeagha's soul and comfort for those mourning his loss.

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar also joined the longlist of dignitaries who paid tribute to the singer, highlighting the resurgence of one of Ejeagha's classic songs, *Ka Esi Le Onye Isi Oche*, which recently went viral on social media.

"It is heartwarming to note that thanks to Brain Jotter, highlife maestro Mike Ejeagha had his 'Gwo gwo gwo ngwo' encore dance before the curtain was drawn. Rest in music, Gentleman Mike Ejeagha," Atiku wrote on X.



On his part, Labour Party's Peter Obi lauded the late musician's six-decade legacy in a heartfelt message.

"His transition marks the end of an era, but not the end of his voice – his songs will continue to echo through generations as testaments to wisdom, culture, and truth," Obi posted.

"Pa Ejeagha used music not merely as art, but as a medium for teaching, healing, and preserving the moral and philosophical wealth of the people. His lyrics, rich with proverbs and folk wisdom, were moral compasses for both young and old," he added.

Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State described the late icon as "a legend, a cultural ambassador, and a revered son of Enugu State."

"He was one of the finest musicians of his generation with an easygoing personality and humility that belied his towering celebrity status," Mbah said.

"His death leaves a huge void that will be difficult to fill. But the legacies he has left behind will last a lifetime."

Governor Mbah had honoured Ejeagha during his lifetime by reconstructing the road leading to his residence in Abakpa

Nike, renaming it Chief Mike Ejeagha Road—an unfulfilled wish from past administrations.

Comedian Brain Jotter, who revived the classic song, paid tribute on Instagram, sharing a video of the late musician with the caption that read, "39 years ago, he made magic. 39 years later, we danced to it again. Now, he rests — but his melody lives forever. Rest in peace, legend."

Until his death, Ejeagha's name resonated with a younger audience earlier in 2024 when his 1983 song *Ka Esi Le Onye Isi Oche* unexpectedly became the soundtrack for a viral dance challenge.

The track, part of his *Akuko Na Egwu Vol. 1* album, narrates a humorous Igbo folktale involving a cunning tortoise tricking an elephant into attending a marriage ceremony under false pretences.

Forty-one years after its release, the song was rediscovered by comedian Chukwuebuka Amuzie, popularly known as Brain Jotter, who used it in a skit.

The dance accompanying the skit, dubbed the "Gwo gwo gwo ngwo" challenge, mimics the elephant's thunderous footsteps as he chases the tortoise.

Why FG is linking Nigeria to Niger by rail – Official

By New Daily Prime



The Managing Director of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, Kayode Opeifa, has said that the Kano-Maradi Railway project is key to improving food security in Nigeria.

Opeifa, who stated this on Saturday on Channels Television's Sunrise, said the rail connection between Niger and the Niger Republic was important because mobility could not be removed from the food supply chain as it was at the centre of food security.

"According to AU 2063, African countries are encouraged to link with landlocked countries because there is potential in those countries. By the way, from the literature I've read, the food security for Nigeria and West Africa in cereal and livestock is tied to Maradi. So, you can see the reasoning

linking Kano to Maradi.

"Beyond that, if you take mobility out of the equation, you won't have food security. When you take mobility out of logistics and supply chain, you are just joking, and that's what Nigerian managers of our food security should understand."

"Mobility is at the center of food security, and that's what the Kano-Maradi, which will now be Kano to Kaduna, Kaduna to Abuja, Abuja to Lagos, will represent," he added.

Opeifa, however, said that the government was committed to making sure major cities are connected through a new infrastructure map of rail.

He said there were plans by the Federal Government to introduce

new rail lines across cities.

However, he said that the rail system, having been moved to the concurrent list, has created opportunities for states to get grants to develop their rail lines.

The government now decided to do a new infrastructure map of rail, and that is to make sure major cities are connected," he added.

The NRC MD also said locals were involved in protecting rail infrastructure.

He said, "Now, the government is also aggressively pursuing. The Kano-Maradi, a lot of people don't understand what that really is; what they hear is Maradi."

Barau Jibrin urges Kano defectors: Back APC, Tinubu

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



Kano, Nigeria — Senate Deputy President Barau Jibrin has called on newly defected members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) to rally behind President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and help consolidate the party's recent political gains across Kano State and the wider region.

Speaking at a high-profile reception for the defectors, Barau described the political movement they left behind as “kwan-kwa-tsiya” — a Hausa phrase meaning “generating poverty.” He urged the new APC members to align with the administration's development agenda and work towards improving the lives of ordinary Nigerians.

“We must unite to build a stronger APC and support President Tinubu's vision for economic growth and

national progress,” Barau said. “The era of politics that brings hardship to the people must be left behind. Our goal is to deliver prosperity and good governance.”

The reception, held in Kano, was attended by a large gathering of APC stakeholders, local leaders, and party supporters. Senior APC figures welcomed the defectors, who formally pledged loyalty to the ruling party and its leadership.

The wave of defections is seen as a significant boost for the APC in Kano — a key battleground state — as the party seeks to strengthen its base ahead of future electoral contests.

Party leaders at the event hailed the new members' decision to join what they described as a “movement of progress,” calling it a clear rejection

of divisive politics and policies that have failed to deliver for the people.

“We welcome our brothers and sisters into the APC family,” said one local party leader. “Together, we will work to bring positive change to our communities.”

The defectors, speaking at the reception, expressed confidence in President Tinubu's leadership and the APC's ability to deliver on its promises. “We have joined a party of progress and accountability,” one former opposition member said. “We believe this is the best path forward for the people of Kano.”

The event marks the latest in a series of political realignments across the country, as parties position themselves ahead of the next political cycle.

Makinde proposes six year single-term tenure for politicians

By Damilola Olufemi

Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, has reacted to the deliberation of a single-term tenure for political office holders in Nigeria, proposing a five- or six-year term in place of the current two-term limit of four years each.

Makinde, who is now in his second term, argued that a single, longer term would allow leaders to focus fully on governance without the distractions of re-election campaigns.

The governor made these remarks on Friday at his Ikolaba residence in Ibadan while receiving Muslim leaders and political stakeholders after Eid-el-Kabir prayers.

“I’ve spent six years in office, but when you think about it, 2020 was essentially lost to the COVID-19 pandemic. Then we spent a whole year campaigning for a second term,” the governor said. “Now, even just a year into the new term, people are already talking about what comes next. If you cut out all these distractions, I believe five or six years is enough to make a real impact.”

The Engineer emphasised that his proposal is a constitutional issue, but insisted it’s a model worth considering seriously.

“It’s not about me. If they say I should step down at any point, that’s fine. What matters is doing what’s best for the country. This model has been raised before, even at the National Assembly, and I think it’s time we take a closer look at it,” he added.

Makinde: What you should know about a five- or six-year term

Makinde’s comments come amid renewed calls across Nigeria to reform the structure of political tenure.

Notably, in October 2024, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar proposed a six-year single term with a rotational presidency between the North and South. He submitted his suggestions to the



Deputy Senate President, Jibrin Barau, as part of the ongoing constitutional amendment discussions.

Atiku recommended changes to Section 130 and Section 135 of the 1999 Constitution to institutionalise the six-year, single-term arrangement and ensure balanced regional representation.

However, in November 2024, the House of Representatives voted down a bill pushing for this same model. The bill, sponsored by Ikenga Ugochinyere, had aimed to restructure the presidency, governorships, and local government leadership along geopolitical zones and to synchronise all elections to take place on the same day. It was not the first time such a bill had failed—similar proposals were also rejected in 2019.

Other high-profile Nigerian leaders have echoed Makinde’s concerns. Anambra State Governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, recently expressed his support for a single-term system, saying it could liberate leaders from the pressure of re-election politics.

“Sometimes, these single-term ideas begin to make more sense,” Soludo said. “You focus on governance, not just the

next election. I face that every day in my state—people say, ‘Don’t start this project, there’s an election ahead,’ and I say, ‘If we get there, we get there. If we lose, so be it.’”

At the Eid gathering in Ibadan, Governor Makinde also extended gratitude to the Muslim community for their continued support over the past six years and urged them to keep praying for his administration’s success.

The delegation that visited him included Deputy Governor Abdulraheem Lawal, former Governor Rashidi Ladoja, PDP Deputy National Chairman Taofeek Arapaja, and other prominent figures like former deputy governors Hazeem Gbolarumi and Hamid Gbadamosi.

In his remarks, Lawal emphasised the values of sacrifice and faith as central lessons of Eid and commended Makinde’s consistent prioritisation of workers’ welfare, particularly the prompt payment of salaries.

Special prayers were offered by Islamic clerics present at the event, who also expressed appreciation for the governor’s ongoing support of the Muslim community.

Democracy in danger as Nigeria edges towards one-party rule — Ozekhome warns

By Friday Omosola



Prominent constitutional lawyer and human rights defender, Mike Ozekhome, has expressed deep concern over Nigeria's political trajectory.

Appearing on Channels Television's 'Hard Copy' yesterday, he warned that the country may be heading, perhaps unknowingly, towards a de facto one-party system.

Ozekhome criticised the increasing trend of political defections, describing it as the height of sycophancy and a clear sign that Nigerian politicians lack firm ideological principles.

He drew a satirical comparison between the country's political

parties and popular local dishes, saying they are indistinguishable from one another—like “beans, akara, and moi-moi”, underscoring the diminishing differences between party platforms.

“We are inching towards a one-party arrangement without even realising it. It's a perilous development,” Ozekhome stated.

“When only one party holds sway, democracy suffers. The legislature becomes subservient, the judiciary loses its independence, and everyone echoes the same tune. That's how dictatorship thrives—unchecked and corrupt.”

Reflecting on past events, he pointed

to the fall of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) after 16 years in power, despite earlier claims that it would govern for six decades.

Ozekhome also voiced concern about President Bola Tinubu's increasing grip on various arms of government, warning that without a strong and united opposition, the President might face no real challenge in the 2027 general election.

Calling on Nigerians not to surrender to apathy, he reminded citizens that democratic power lies with the people, urging them to remain vigilant and engaged in the political process.

Bawa: Nigeria lost \$450m to petrol subsidy fraud

By **Damilola Olufemi**



Former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Abdulrasheed Bawa, has revealed that Nigeria lost approximately \$450 million to petroleum subsidy fraud under the Petroleum Support Fund (PSF) between 2006 and 2012.

In his new book, *The Shadow of Loot & Losses: Uncovering Nigeria's Petroleum Subsidy Fraud*, Bawa chronicles the extensive corruption that plagued the subsidy regime.

He was a central figure in the EFCC team that investigated the fraud before becoming the agency's chairman in February 2021. He served in that role until June 2023, when he was suspended by President Bola Tinubu.

"Our investigations revealed that, as admitted by the oil marketing companies involved, fraud related to petroleum subsidies exceeded N68 billion, which translates to over \$450 million in direct

fraudulent activities," Bawa wrote. "This fraud involved 59 out of the 141 companies that participated in the PSF scheme from 2006 to 2011."

He also disclosed that N19.6 billion in bogus subsidy claims was traced to issues with traders, which many oil marketers denied knowing about. In another case, N9.4 billion worth of attempted fraud was uncovered where marketers altered shipping documents to inflate claims. Fortunately, those falsified claims were not processed due to existing safeguards in the system.

According to Bawa, no major fraud was reported in 2006 and 2007. But by 2008, the scheme became a hotbed of corruption: "We uncovered significant fraud totalling N11.5 billion in 2008, N4.88 billion in 2009, and N10.3 billion in 2010. The year 2011 was the peak, with fraudulent claims amounting to N41.7 billion."

He added that roughly 80% of the stolen

funds have been recovered, while the rest are tied to ongoing court cases or the deaths of those involved.

Bawa decries scandal's effects

Bawa lamented the consequences of the scandal, saying, "These direct losses in revenue, alongside many additional undisclosed amounts and indirect revenue losses, could have been used to finance essential public services, infrastructural development, and social welfare initiatives." Instead, he said, Nigeria's fiscal deficit widened, and sectors like education and healthcare suffered from budget cuts.

His book also examines how deeply the subsidy payments have drained national resources. "Over the last 25 years of democratic governance, Nigeria has expended a staggering N16.5 trillion on subsidies," Bawa wrote, adding that a "substantial portion of the expenditure" was lost to fraudulent claims and theft from public coffers.

Okpebholo: Eno's defection will boost opportunities for South-South

By Friday Omosola



Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State has described Akwa Ibom Governor Umo Eno's defection from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC) as one likely to attract increased investment to the South-South region.

The New Daily Prime reported that Eno announced his defection from PDP to APC on Friday after months of speculation.

Okpebholo, who congratulated Eno in a statement released on Saturday, praised his boldness and courage in embracing the "progressive ideals" and national vision championed by the APC.

He said the move reflects a "profound" commitment to advancing Akwa Ibom State's development and ensuring its full inclusion within the federal government's agenda under President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope initiative.

Okpebholo stated, "The decision by Governor Umo Eno to join the APC shows his foresight and dedication to the welfare of his people.

"It signifies a strategic alignment that will undoubtedly unlock greater opportunities, foster stronger collaborations, and accelerate the delivery of democratic dividends to the good people of Akwa Ibom State."

He further highlighted the vital role of unity and cooperation between the states and the federal government in driving progress.

He expressed optimism that Eno's defection would bolster the APC's influence in the South-South and play a key role in enhancing national unity and development.

The Edo governor assured his Akwa Ibom counterpart of the Edo State Government's and APC's full support.

He expressed eagerness to collaborate closely with Eno to advance good governance, economic growth, and the well-being of Nigerians.

Lagos targets 35 million green jobs with Africa's largest eco-credit project

By Friday Omosola

The Lagos State Government has launched a landmark green initiative—the 80 Million Credit Float Project, aimed at addressing climate change, reducing poverty, and creating jobs across Nigeria.

Announced during a media briefing at the Bagauda Kaltho Press Centre, Alausa, the project was unveiled by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget in collaboration with environmental consultancy firm GreenPlinthAfrica.

The scheme is expected to create 35 million green jobs, expand access to clean cooking technologies, and provide economic opportunities for millions, particularly women and children.

Described as the largest green credit initiative on the continent, the project will issue 80 million eco-friendly loans and generate 1.2 million carbon credits, estimated to bring in over \$1 billion in revenue over the next 15 years.

At the event, Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, Ope George, said the initiative aligns with the state's THEMES Plus Agenda, demonstrating Lagos' leadership in climate-resilient and people-centred development.

"This programme serves as an economic catalyst with projections of over 35 million green jobs and the upcoming launch of Africa's first subnational carbon exchange in Lagos," said Mr George.

"Together with GreenPlinth Africa, we are not just implementing a project—we are shaping the future of climate and economic resilience in Nigeria."

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu chairs the Project Advisory Board, with Governor Umar Bago of Niger State serving as Deputy Chairman.

They are supported by six vice-



chairpersons from Nigeria's six geopolitical zones as well as private sector, NGO, and CSO leaders.

In her address, Titi Oshodi, Special Adviser to Sanwo-Olu on Climate Change and Circular Economy, revealed that the first batch of six million clean cookstoves would be distributed free of charge beginning June 2025, starting in Makoko.

She added that the project would promote clean cooking to reduce indoor air pollution, while also establishing free clean food stores for vulnerable families, supporting renewable energy access for small businesses, and offering health insurance to households that adopt clean cooking methods.

"The project will provide ₦10,000 annually to households using clean cooking methods through a 'Pay-to-Cook' programme," she said.

"It will also empower local green businesses, deploy five sustainable projects per year across 1,000 communities, and create 400 million economic trees to combat food insecurity and deforestation."

The Lagos Carbon Exchange (LCX)—the first subnational carbon

trading platform in Africa and the second globally after California—is also set to launch as part of the initiative.

The platform will allow Lagos to generate revenue from carbon trading and reinvest in infrastructure, clean energy, healthcare, and employment programmes.

During the launch, the State Working Group (SWG) and Internal Working Group (IWG) were formally inaugurated.

Present at the briefing were several key officials, including Commissioners Cecilia Dada (Women Affairs & Poverty Alleviation), Folashade Bada Ambrose (Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade & Investment), Biodun Ogunleye (Energy & Mineral Resources), and Prof. Akin Abayomi (Health), as well as Special Adviser on the Environment, Mr. Olakunle Rotimi-Akodu, and Dr. Olawale Akinwunmi, President of GreenPlinthAfrica.

Also in attendance were the Chief Transformation Officer and Project Manager, Adebola Odunsi, and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Olayinka Ojo.

5 men remanded in Kirikiri for dumping waste in Lagos canal

By Friday Omosola



In a firm stand against indiscriminate waste disposal, five men accused of dumping refuse in a canal along the Igando-Iba Road Link Bridge were arraigned and remanded at Kirikiri prison.

The accused appeared before a Magistrate Court in Oshodi, facing charges of illegal waste dumping. Their case was adjourned to 9 July.

The defendants were identified as Quassim Jamiu, 44, and Ayo Jamiu, 18, both from Kwara State; Alexander Innocent, 40, from Akwa Ibom; Oparinde Taiwo, 55, from Ogun State; and Moses Adelowokan, 76, from

Osun State.

The men were caught in the act by a combined team from the Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) and security operatives while attempting to dump waste transported by lorry into the canal.

This arrest comes less than 48 hours after the Lagos State Government issued a stern warning to all offenders violating environmental laws, emphasizing that prosecutions would follow any breaches.

Speaking on the arrests, Tokunbo Wahab, Commissioner for the

Environment and Water Resources, reaffirmed the government's commitment to tackling illegal dumping decisively.

He assured that those caught would face rigorous prosecution to deter others, reminding the public that offenders risk a prison term of up to three months and a fine of ₦250,000.

Mr Wahab further highlighted that the state has empowered Public-Private Sector Partnership (PSP) waste operators in all wards to provide waste collection services to households and neighbourhoods for a fee.

Bishop David Abioye: A legacy of loyalty, commitment to Winners' Chapel

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



When you hear the word Winners Chapel, the first name that comes to most people's minds is that of the founder of the church, Bishop David Oyedepo, followed by Bishop David Olatunji Abioye, the first Vice Chairman of Living Faith Church Worldwide (Winners Chapel). He was also the Senior Pastor of Living Faith Church in Goshen City. In this report, we focus extensively on Bishop Abioye's life, his steadfast commitment to his calling, and the new path he has embarked after his retirement from the winner's chapel, offering insights into servant leadership and the evolution of ministry in contemporary times.

Bishop David Abioye Early Life and Calling

Born on 11 March 1961, in Erin Ile, Oyun Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria, David Abioye pursued mechanical engineering at

the University of Ilorin. His initial career as a lecturer at Open Cast Polytechnic in Auchu was promising, yet a pivotal encounter with Bishop David Oyedepo at a Christian Students' Fellowship in the 1980s redirected his path. This meeting ignited a passion for ministry, leading him to abandon his engineering aspirations and commit fully to spiritual service. In October 2024, at the age of 63, Bishop Abioye retired from his official duties following a policy revision that set the retirement age for church leaders at 55. Despite stepping down from his administrative role, he emphasized the continuation of his covenant relationship with Bishop Oyedepo and the church community.

Launching a New Ministry

Contrary to initial statements about not starting a new church, Bishop Abioye announced the commencement of his own ministry

in April 2025. The inaugural service was held on 4 May 2025, drawing a massive turnout and signaling a new chapter in his spiritual journey. The ministry, characterized by its non-denominational approach, aims to continue his mission of spreading the gospel and nurturing faith communities.

Core Values and Teachings

Bishop Abioye's ministry is deeply rooted in principles of faith, integrity, and servant leadership. His teachings often emphasize:

Faith and Prayer: Encouraging believers to develop a personal relationship with God through consistent prayer and unwavering faith.

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on next page**

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Integrity: Upholding moral and ethical standards in both personal and public life.

Servant Leadership: Leading by example, with humility and a focus on serving others.

Empowerment: Inspiring individuals to realise their potential and contribute positively to society.

His literary contributions, including books like “The Lifestyle of Faith” and “Stewardship: The Pathway to Honour,” reflect these themes and have been instrumental in guiding many in their spiritual growth.

Family Life: The Foundation of His Ministry

Bishop Abioye married to Pastor Mary Abioye, a devoted partner in both life and ministry. Their union, spanning over 36 years, has been a

testament to mutual respect, shared vision, and unwavering commitment to God’s work.

Together, they have three children: David Jr., Ruth, and Daniel. Each child has embraced the values instilled by their parents, contributing to various facets of ministry and society. Notably, in 2021, all three children got married within a span of 202 days, a milestone that was celebrated widely within their community.

Pastor Mary Abioye’s role extends beyond that of a supportive spouse; she is an accomplished minister in her own right. Her teachings and writings have inspired many, particularly in areas concerning women’s roles in the church and family. The couple’s partnership exemplifies a harmonious blend of shared purpose and individual calling.

Impact and Legacy

Bishop Abioye’s influence extends beyond the pulpit. His commitment to community development, education, and mentorship has left an indelible mark on countless lives. Under his leadership, the Goshen City church became a hub for spiritual nourishment and social empowerment.

His decision to launch a new ministry post-retirement demonstrates a continued dedication to his calling and a desire to adapt to the evolving needs of the faith community. It also underscores the importance of planning for transitions in leadership within religious organisations. As he embarks on this new phase of ministry, his legacy serves as a testament to the enduring impact of servant leadership and the transformative power of unwavering commitment to one’s calling.



NAFDAC alerts public as EU bans Dove soap, deodorant over toxic chemical

By Helen Okechukwu



The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has issued a public warning following a recent ban by the European Union (EU) on the marketing and sale of Dove Hand Soap (100g) and Dove Deodorant in Brussels, Belgium, due to contamination with a prohibited substance.

According to Public Alert No. 018/2025, the banned products were found to contain Butylphenyl Methylpropional (BMHCA), also known as 2-(4-tert-butylbenzyl) propionaldehyde.

Butylphenyl Methylpropional, is a synthetic scent ingredient; associated with allergies and contact dermatitis.

This chemical is banned in cosmetic

products within the EU due to its potential to harm the reproductive system, pose health risks to unborn children, and cause skin sensitization.

NAFDAC emphasized that the importation of soaps is already prohibited in Nigeria, as listed in the country's import prohibition and restricted items.

Additionally, cosmetic products, including soaps, are among the items ineligible for foreign exchange for importation into Nigeria.

Investigations revealed that the implicated Dove products are not listed in the NAFDAC database, further raising concerns about their safety and authenticity in the Nigerian market.

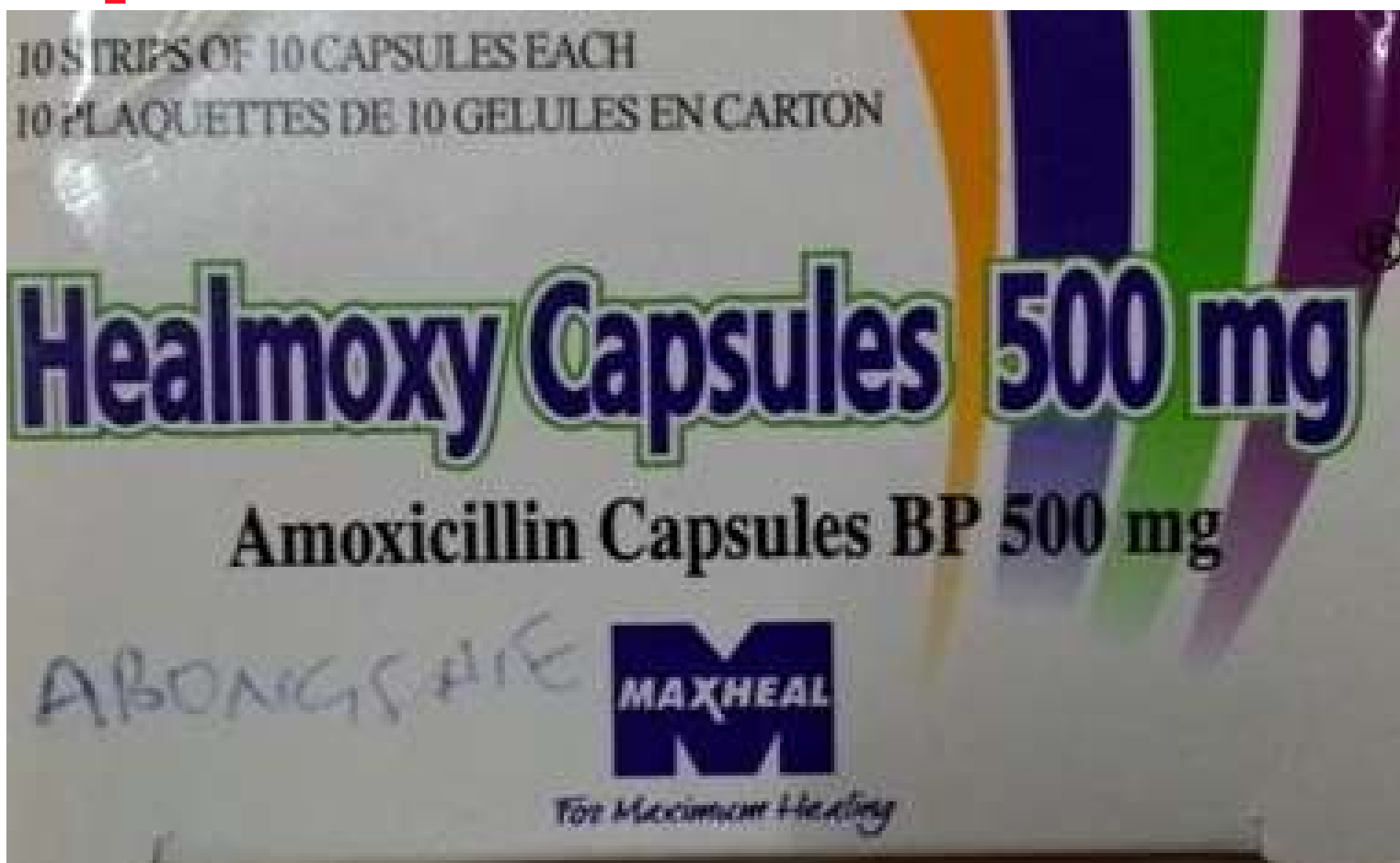
NAFDAC is urging importers, distributors, retailers, and consumers to exercise extreme caution and vigilance to prevent the importation, sale, or use of these potentially harmful products.

The agency advised those in possession of the affected items to discontinue use immediately and submit any remaining stock to the nearest NAFDAC office.

Consumers and healthcare professionals are also encouraged to report any adverse effects experienced from regulated products to NAFDAC through its pharmacovigilance@nafdac.gov.ng email, the Med Safety App (available on Android and iOS), or via the e-Reporting portal at www.nafdac.gov.ng.

NAFDAC warns on fake Healmoxy 500mg Capsules in Cameroon, CAR

By Helen Okechukwu



National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has issued a warning over falsified batches of Healmoxy Capsules 500mg found in Cameroon and the Central African Republic (CAR).

The fake capsules, labelled as made by Maxheal Pharmaceuticals (India), carry batch numbers 023011 and H02605 in Cameroon, and H02605 in CAR.

In a post via its official X handle, NAFDAC revealed that the drug lacks active pharmaceutical ingredients.

“NAFDAC notifies the public of falsified batches of Healmoxy Capsules 500mg manufactured by Maxheal Pharmaceuticals (India), with batch numbers 023011 and H02605, found in Cameroon and H02605 in the Central African Republic.

“The brand is registered and imported

by Nkoyo Chemist, located at 23 Agbonyi Street, Aguda, Surulere, Lagos.

“Laboratory analysis of the samples by WHO revealed the product lacks an active pharmaceutical ingredient and has inconsistent formats for the manufacturing & expiry dates.

“It is a prescription medicine primarily used against various bacterial infections, including those affecting the respiratory tract, urinary tract, skin, and gastrointestinal system.

“Healmoxy contains Amoxicillin Trihydrate, a broad-spectrum antibiotic used to treat bacterial infections of the respiratory tract, urinary tract, skin, and gut.”

World Health Organisation (WHO) tests confirmed the falsified capsules lack the active ingredient and show irregular manufacturing and expiry date formats.

Healmoxy is registered in Nigeria and imported by Nkoyo Chemist Ltd, 23 Agbonyi Street, Aguda, Surulere, Lagos State.

However, NAFDAC’s Lagos Post Marketing Surveillance found no record of these batches entering Nigeria.

NAFDAC urges importers, health workers, and the public to stay alert and report any suspected fake medicines to the nearest NAFDAC office, call 0800-162-3322, or email sf.alert@nafdac.gov.ng.

“Healthcare professionals and consumers are advised to report any suspicion of substandard and falsified medicines to the nearest NAFDAC office, call 0800-162-3322 or send an email to sf.alert@nafdac.gov.ng,” NAFDAC said.

Nigerian highlife legend Mike Ejeagha dies at 95

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**



Renowned Nigerian highlife icon, Mike Ejeagha, popularly known as Gentleman Mike Ejeagha, has passed away at the age of 95 after a prolonged battle with prostate cancer. The music legend died on Friday night at 8 p.m. at the 32 Garrison Hospital in Enugu, marking the end of a towering era in Igbo folk music.

His death was confirmed by his eldest son, Emma Ejeagha, who spoke with journalists on Saturday morning.

“My father passed away due to a long-standing ailment,” Emma said. “He died at exactly 8 p.m. on Friday, and his body has been deposited in the morgue. I was with him during his final moments.”

Emma revealed that the highlife maestro was first diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2006. Over the years, he endured several hospitalizations. Though he was recently stabilized and discharged, his condition worsened again last Tuesday, leading to a final admission from which he did not recover.

“Papa was a peace-loving man and a genius,” Emma added, noting that his

father had given strict instructions not to embalm his body or leave it in the morgue for an extended period.

Mike Ejeagha’s name is etched deep into the annals of Nigerian music history. A prolific songwriter, folklorist, and guitarist, he rose to fame in the 1980s with his signature blend of traditional Igbo storytelling and highlife rhythms, captivating audiences across generations.

His songs, often infused with moral lessons and proverbs, were celebrated not just for their melody but for their wisdom. Ejeagha’s discography includes timeless classics that shaped the identity of Igbo highlife, securing him a revered place in Nigeria’s cultural heritage.

In a twist of poetic justice, 2024 saw the revival of one of Ejeagha’s best-known tracks, “Ka Esi Le Onye Isi Oche”, originally released in 1983. The song found new life after being featured in a viral dance skit by comedian Chukwuebuka Emmanuel Amuzie, popularly known as Brain Jotter.

The viral sensation sparked a global

dance challenge, catapulting the aging artist back into the limelight. Fans, young and old, flocked to his Enugu residence to show love and pay tribute. The renewed attention not only brought emotional joy but also tangible rewards, Ejeagha began receiving long-overdue royalties, and a road in Enugu was renamed in his honor.

Ejeagha’s contributions span over six decades, and his influence continues to shape contemporary interpretations of highlife and folk music in Nigeria. His music, rich with parables, wit, and cultural preservation, remains a source of pride for the Igbo people and Nigerians at large.

Emma Ejeagha has pledged to preserve his father’s rich musical legacy, ensuring that the melodies and messages of Gentleman Mike Ejeagha live on.

As the highlife community and the nation at large mourn the passing of a legend, tributes continue to pour in for the man whose songs taught, entertained, and united generations.

May his gentle soul rest in peace.

I wish for better government in Nigeria, Wizkid

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Afrobeats sensation Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun, better known as Wizkid, has voiced a strong desire for better leadership in Nigeria and across Africa.

He made this call during the premiere of his documentary, "Wizkid: Long Live Lagos," at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York on Friday.

Speaking to an international audience, the Grammy-winning artist stressed the need for improved governance across the continent. Wizkid, one of Africa's most influential musicians, said that good leadership is a major step towards unlocking Africa's full potential.

High hopes despite challenges
"I always wish for better government," Wizkid said. "I'm just a very positive human being regardless of anything. I wish the best for everyone making amazing music and amazing art from Africa."

Despite expressing concern about governance, Wizkid made it clear that he has not lost hope. He believes Africa can overcome its problems and rise to greater heights. He highlighted the importance of staying optimistic and supporting one another within the creative space.

"I always wish for more success for the whole culture," he added, "from music to film to sports."

African creatives should tell their stories
Wizkid used the opportunity to call on other African artists to share their personal stories. He said the documentary is more than just about him, it is a chance to shine a light on the journey many African talents face.

"I hope that every artist from Africa gets to tell their story like this," he said. "Because I'm not the only one from that hustle, we all came from there. I feel like everyone deserves the chance to tell their story like this."

His words echoed the experiences of countless creatives from humble



beginnings who now represent Africa on global stages. By telling their stories, he believes artists can inspire the next generation and change global perceptions of the continent.

Documentary celebrates Lagos and legacy

The documentary "Wizkid: Long Live Lagos" offers fans a closer look at the artist's roots and rise to fame. It showcases his love for Lagos, the city where his journey began. Through rare footage and personal interviews, the film explores Wizkid's life, career, and connection to Nigeria's cultural heartbeat.

At the premiere, the crowd responded with cheers and admiration. The documentary not only celebrates Wizkid's success but also spotlights Lagos as a center of creativity, resilience, and hope.

Global star, local pride

Wizkid has become one of Africa's biggest music exports. From hit singles to sold-out shows around the world, he continues to break boundaries. Yet, he remains deeply connected to his Nigerian roots.

His appearance at the Tribeca Film Festival was another sign of how African

artists are gaining recognition globally. But for Wizkid, fame alone is not enough. He wants lasting change, especially in the way African nations are run.

Looking ahead

Wizkid's message is clear: artists should not only aim for personal success but also speak up for progress in their communities. By urging for better leadership, he joins a growing list of public figures using their platforms to demand more for Africa.

His call is timely. Across the continent, young people are demanding accountability, fairness, and opportunity. Wizkid's words add to that chorus of hope.

As the festival continues and his documentary reaches more viewers, it's clear that Wizkid is not just a music icon, he is also a voice for change.

Conclusion

Wizkid's appearance at the Tribeca Film Festival was more than a celebration of music; it was a moment of reflection, unity, and vision. His wish for a better Africa, driven by strong leadership and creativity, struck a chord with many. As his documentary gains global attention, so too does his message: African stories matter, and a brighter future is possible.

Artistes go broke from frivolous spending, says Bella Shmurda

By **Fatimah Idera**

Nigerian Afrobeats star Bella Shmurda has raised concerns over the financial habits of many of his fellow artists.

He believes that reckless spending is leaving many young musicians broke and dependent on record labels to fund their careers.

In a recent episode of the Afrobeats Intelligence podcast, the “Cash App” hitmaker shared personal experiences and offered advice to upcoming artists on how to manage their earnings wisely.

Early mistakes and lessons learned

Bella Shmurda admitted that he once made the same mistakes he now warns others about. At the beginning of his rise to fame, he spent carelessly, trying to keep up with the flashy image that many believed was necessary to succeed in the industry.

“I made that mistake too, but I learnt,” he said. “I feel like we just have to educate ourselves about these things.”

His message was clear: artists must understand how to manage their money and avoid financial traps that come with trying to impress others.

The trap of flashy branding

According to Shmurda, many Nigerian artists are too focused on material things, like expensive jewelry, designer clothes, and luxury cars, in the name of branding. He argued that these things are not necessary to look good or succeed in the industry.

“I don’t think packaging has to be materialistic,” he said. “Having good clothes, looking nice, nice skin, brushing your teeth, and smelling good is okay. If you know how to dress well without chains, that’s enough.”

He added that many successful artists



didn’t start with much but still managed to present themselves well. To him, simplicity is a form of branding that often gets overlooked.

Relying on record labels

Shmurda also pointed out that this focus on looking rich often pushes young artists to take advances from record labels. These advances come with strings attached. In many cases, artists end up in long-term contracts that limit their control over their music.

“It’s because of too much emphasis on expensive packaging that our young artists now run towards advances,” he said. “They end up being indebted to those companies, and the companies have to hold their catalogue for years.”

He warned that these financial decisions could stall an artist’s progress. When the money is gone, and debts pile up, they find themselves unable to fund their next project.

A call for financial discipline

The singer encouraged upcoming talents to rethink what it means to be successful. In his view, managing

money wisely is a bigger achievement than showing off wealth.

“You don’t need to spend the bulk of your earnings on expensive jewelry and cars to build a brand,” he said. “Simplicity works too.”

Bella Shmurda’s message serves as a wake-up call for many in the music industry. As Afrobeats continues to gain global attention, the pressure to keep up appearances has never been higher. But for Shmurda, true success comes from discipline, not display.

Final thoughts

With his growing influence in the Nigerian music scene, Bella Shmurda hopes his story will inspire others to take financial planning seriously. He wants young artists to focus on their craft, avoid unnecessary debts, and build careers that will last.

In an industry where image often takes center stage, his advice is a reminder that smart choices behind the scenes matter just as much as performance on the stage.

Your family made me look weak, Cynthia Morgan blasts Peter Okoye

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular Nigerian singer Peter Okoye, also known as Mr. P, has publicly defended himself in a new social media post.

In a strong statement shared online, Peter claimed that certain people close to him are working hard to damage his image. He said they are trying to make him look like a liar.

He made it clear that he is not someone to be pushed aside or spoken for. "I'm not May D or Cynthia Morgan," he said, referring to artists who had past disputes with his family's music label. "I'm Peter Okoye, the one and only Rock/Okwute of the Okoyes," he added.

He ended his message with strong words: "The truth shall prevail. #UnaThiefAbiUnaNoThief #FamilyDoesNotStealFromFamily."

Cynthia Morgan responds

Cynthia Morgan, one of the artists mentioned by Peter, responded to his post. She shared her thoughts on her Instagram story, revealing that she had mixed feelings about seeing her name mentioned in such a way.

She said, "I'm not a weak person. Certain family members made it look so." She also mentioned Peter directly, saying that he was part of the group that once misunderstood her. "Until you found out what they were doing to you too," she said.

Morgan's final remark hinted at her earlier decision to stay silent: "Na me listen to una sha," meaning she once believed what they told her.

Background of the dispute

The Okoye brothers, Peter, Paul, and Jude, were once united under the music group P-Square and the record label Northside Entertainment. However, over time, the family has faced public fallouts and disagreements.



Cynthia Morgan was formerly signed to Northside Entertainment. Her exit from the label was not smooth. Years ago, she accused the label, managed by Jude Okoye, of limiting her career and controlling her brand. She claimed she lost access to her social media accounts, stage name, and even her royalties.

At the time, the Okoye brothers gave their side of the story. Jude Okoye denied the accusations and said Morgan left on her terms. Paul and Peter, on different occasions, tried to distance themselves from the issue.

Peter has since gone solo as Mr. P, while his brother Paul now performs as Rudeboy.

Old wounds, new words

Peter's new post reopens old wounds. He appears to be pointing fingers at unnamed people around him, possibly family members, who are now treating him the way others were treated in the past.

His mention of Cynthia Morgan and May D suggests he now understands their past complaints. Both artists have spoken in the past about how they felt mistreated by the Okoye family's business dealings.

May D, another Nigerian singer, once claimed he was never officially signed by

the label even though he worked closely with them. He also said he was never given proper credit or support.

Fans react

Since Peter shared his post, fans have taken sides. Some believe he is finally speaking the truth. Others think he should not have dragged Morgan's name into the matter, especially after years of silence.

Cynthia Morgan's fans praised her for speaking up. Many said they admired her for staying strong despite her past challenges.

Family tension in the spotlight

This isn't the first time the Okoye family has faced public issues. Years of tension have followed their breakup as a group. Although the brothers reunited briefly in recent times, it's clear that not all wounds have healed.

Peter's message and Cynthia's reply have once again brought family matters into public view. Whether this leads to more revelations or another round of silence remains to be seen.

For now, one thing is clear: the truth, whatever it may be, is still unfolding.

Family reveals cause of 'Gwo gwo ngwo' singer, Mike Ejeagha's death

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The family of legendary Nigerian highlife musician, Mike Ejeagha, has confirmed that the music icon died of prostate cancer.

He passed away peacefully on Friday evening, June 6, at the age of 95.

Speaking to Vanguard on Saturday morning, the musician's eldest son, Emma Ejeagha, said his father died after a long battle with the disease. According to him, the highlife maestro had been living with prostate cancer since 2006.

Emma explained that his father took his last breath at the 32 Garrison Hospital in Enugu. "Papa died on Friday, at 8 p.m. and his body has been deposited in the mortuary. I was with him during his final moments," he said.

A long battle with cancer

For nearly two decades, Mike Ejeagha quietly endured the effects of prostate cancer. Despite his age and health challenges, he remained strong in spirit. According to his son, the illness gradually worsened in recent years. Emma noted that the family had been managing his health privately for a long time.

"He had been dealing with this condition since 2006. We did our best to support him," Emma shared. "He fought hard, but in the end, his body gave in."

Final wish: A simple goodbye

Before his death, Mike Ejeagha made a request to his family: he did not want to be embalmed or kept too long in the mortuary. Emma said his father had always lived a simple life, and he wanted a modest burial.

"He asked us not to embalm his body. He didn't want to stay too long in the morgue. That was one of his last wishes, and we will respect that," Emma said.

This request, according to the family, reflects the kind of person Mike Ejeagha was, simple, humble, and deeply



connected to tradition.

A musical legacy that lives on

Known for his unique storytelling style and deep Igbo lyrics, Mike Ejeagha left a mark on Nigerian music that spans generations. His songs, filled with proverbs and wisdom, continue to influence artists today.

One of his most famous songs, *Gwo gwo ngwo*, was first released in 1983. However, it returned to the spotlight in 2024 after popular Nigerian comedian and skit maker, Brain Jotter, featured the track in a viral global dance challenge. The song quickly gained fresh popularity among younger audiences on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram.

This unexpected comeback introduced Ejeagha's music to a new generation, many of whom were not familiar with his earlier work.

Tributes pour in for a cultural icon

Since news of his passing broke, tributes have poured in from fans, musicians, and cultural leaders. Many have praised Ejeagha for preserving traditional Igbo music and language through his songs. His deep baritone voice, wise lyrics, and



use of folklore set him apart as a true custodian of culture.

"He was more than a musician; he was a teacher," one fan wrote online. "Through his songs, he taught us values and kept our language alive."

Music lovers across Nigeria have expressed their sadness over the loss. Yet, they also celebrate the long and meaningful life he lived.

Looking ahead: Plans for burial

While the family has yet to announce a date for the burial, they have promised to release details soon. Emma Ejeagha said the family would honor his father's legacy with a befitting farewell, one that reflects his contributions to music and culture.

"We will announce plans in the coming days. For now, we are just grateful for the messages of support," he added.

As Nigeria mourns the loss of a musical legend, one thing is certain: Mike Ejeagha's songs and stories will live on. His voice may be gone, but his message remains strong, echoing in every note, lyric, and memory.

British govt says millions more will access test results through NHS app

By Fatimah Idera



The NHS app is set to become the default way for millions of patients in England to receive healthcare information, as part of a government plan to modernise services and reduce costs.

According to the Department of Health and Social Care, this shift is expected to save the NHS £200 million over the next three years.

Backed by a £50 million investment, the move will see more test results, screening invitations, and appointment reminders delivered directly to patients' smartphone reducing reliance on traditional methods like letters. Currently, around 50 million letters are sent to patients each year.

For those unable to use the app, including elderly patients, the system will default to text messages, with letters only used as a final fallback. The government says this will help ease pressure on NHS phone lines.

This financial year, 270 million messages are expected to be sent via the app with an increase of 70 million from the previous year. New features such as push notifications for appointment reminders aim to reduce the number of missed appointments, which totaled around eight million in elective care last year.

Ongoing improvements will also allow patients to add appointments directly to their phone calendars and request assistance from their local GP practices.

Currently, over 11 million people log into the NHS app each month, and nearly 20 million have opted in to receive messages through it.

The app, launched in December 2018, is now in use at 87% of hospitals across England.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting described the changes as a step toward

bringing the NHS into the digital age, making healthcare as accessible as "online banking or ordering a takeaway." He added that reducing paper-based communication could help redirect funds to frontline services.

The Chief executive of the Patient's Association, Rachel Power welcomed the upgrade as a "significant step in modernising how patients receive information."

However, the British Medical Association (BMA) has previously cautioned that an overreliance on digital platforms could exclude patients who lack access to technology.

This initiative follows earlier announcements by the government to expand booking options through the app. Last month, NHS England revealed plans to offer Amazon-style tracking for prescriptions, allowing patients to check delivery status or collection readiness.

Student visas, skilled jobs targeted in immigration crackdown

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

White paper outlines tougher visa restrictions, longer settlement periods, and new controls on universities in bid to cut migration

The Government has set out a wide-ranging package of proposed changes to the UK's immigration system, designed to make it harder to move to and settle in the UK, as part of its pledge to reduce net migration.

In a new white paper published on 12 May 2025, entitled *Restoring Control Over the Immigration System*, ministers propose stricter visa conditions, tougher rules on settlement, and a series of measures affecting international students and their dependants.

Although the white paper does not itself change the law, it signals the Government's intentions for future policy. Many of the proposed measures can be implemented through amendments to the Immigration Rules, while a few will require parliamentary approval.

The white paper also signals broader changes to how the immigration system balances the right to family life under human rights law against public interest in enforcing immigration controls.

Eight Key Proposals

The document outlines eight major proposals detailed enough to be quantified — with civil servants providing indicative estimates of their likely impact on net migration.

1. **Shortening the list of eligible jobs:** The Government proposes reducing the number of occupations for which employers can sponsor overseas workers under the Skilled Worker visa route. In future, jobs deemed to be only medium-skilled (RQF level 3) will be excluded unless the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) recommends an exemption and the sector is actively trying to recruit UK-based workers.
2. **Ending the exemption for social care workers:** Employers will no longer be

allowed to recruit social care workers from overseas under the Skilled Worker visa route, reversing a policy introduced to tackle staff shortages.

3. **Introducing a levy on international student fees:** The Government is exploring the introduction of a levy on income earned by English universities from international student fees. The precise details of the levy will be set out in future legislation.
4. **Tougher compliance for student visa sponsors:** Universities will face stricter requirements to maintain their sponsorship licences for student visas. This will include tighter compliance checks and new obligations to demonstrate that sponsored students are genuine and compliant.
5. **Reducing Graduate visa length:** The standard length of the Graduate visa, which allows international students to stay and work in the UK after graduation, will be reduced from two years to 18 months.
6. **Stricter English language requirements:** Higher English language proficiency standards will be introduced for visa applicants already required to take tests. In addition, partners of people moving to the UK on work visas will be required to meet basic English language standards to qualify for a dependant visa.
7. **Extending settlement period to 10**

years: The standard qualifying period for permanent residence (also known as Indefinite Leave to Remain or settlement) will be increased from five years to ten years, although some people will still be able to qualify earlier through an earned settlement route based on their contribution to the UK economy and society.

8. **Easing entry for highly skilled migrants:** In contrast to the other restrictions, the Government plans to make it easier for people to come to the UK via specific visas targeting highly skilled migrants, such as the Global Talent and High Potential Individual routes — the only measure intended to increase migration.

Scope for Wider Reform

Beyond these eight core proposals, the white paper also signals Government action on:

- Establishing a new Labour Market Evidence Group to inform future decisions about skills shortages.
- Reforming the rules for family and dependant visas.
- Reviewing the application of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which protects the right to family life.



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- Implementing faster procedures for the deportation of foreign national offenders.

Timing and Consultation

No firm timetable has been set for implementing the changes. The accompanying press release states that measures will be introduced “over the course of this Parliament” (up to 2029), with some changes coming into force in the coming weeks.

The most contentious proposal — extending the settlement qualifying period from five to ten years — will be subject to a consultation later this year. The Government has said the change will not take immediate effect.

Earned Settlement: How Will It Work?

Under the proposed earned settlement model, migrants will normally qualify for settlement after ten years, but those making Points-Based contributions to the UK economy and society may qualify earlier.

However, the white paper does not explain how these points would be earned or how much sooner some people might be able to settle. These details will be addressed in the forthcoming consultation.

Impact on Current Visa Categories

Some exemptions are already confirmed:

- Partners of British citizens will continue to qualify for settlement after five years.
- Victims of domestic abuse will also remain eligible for settlement after five years.
- Those with post-Brexit residence rights under the EU Settlement Scheme will retain their right to permanent residence after five years, as guaranteed under the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement.

The Government has not yet confirmed whether other visa routes with current five-year settlement

pathways — such as Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visas — will be included in the new earned settlement scheme.

In a recent Parliamentary answer, the Minister for Migration and Citizenship said:

“We will be consulting on the earned settlement scheme later this year and will provide details of how the scheme will work after that, including which immigration routes it will apply to.”

Impact on Migrants Already in the UK

It remains unclear whether the proposed longer settlement period will apply retroactively to those already on qualifying visa routes or only to future arrivals.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has indicated that this question will be addressed in the forthcoming consultation:

“We will set out further details of the earned settlement and citizenship reforms later this year, and we will consult on them. There will be plenty of opportunity for people to comment on and consider the detail.”

However, the technical annex to the white paper suggests the Government does intend the changes to affect at least some people already in the UK, stating that “a number of those currently in the UK are likely to leave due [to] it taking longer to gain settled status.”

Similarly, reports in the BBC and Financial Times, citing government sources, suggest that ministers aim for the new settlement rules to apply to existing migrants, possibly with mitigations for those already close to qualifying.

MPs continue to press the Government on this point, but so far answers have reiterated that it will be resolved through the consultation.

Will MPs Get to Vote?

Most of the proposed changes — particularly adjustments to visa routes and settlement periods — can be implemented via statements of changes to the Immigration Rules, which do not usually require a Parliamentary vote unless either the House of Commons or House of Lords actively objects within 40 days.

Historically, such votes are rare. The Government is under no obligation to make time for a Commons vote, even if MPs table motions of opposition.

However, certain elements of the white paper — notably the proposed levy on international student fees and changes to citizenship rules — will require primary legislation, which must be passed by both Houses of Parliament.

The white paper marks the most ambitious attempt yet by the new Labour Government to bring net migration under control after figures reached record levels under successive Conservative administrations.

The reforms are also intended to ensure that Article 8 rights are interpreted consistently, following mounting public and political concern over human rights challenges blocking deportations of illegal migrants and foreign offenders.

In unveiling the proposals, Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said:

“We want an immigration system that works for our economy and society and that earns public trust. That means taking a common-sense approach, ensuring proper controls are in place, and making sure we strike the right balance between openness and control.”

Further details of the proposed reforms — particularly on the earned settlement scheme — are expected to be published for consultation in the coming months.

US Supreme Court grants DOGE to access Americans' social security information

By **Fatimah Idera**

The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday allowed the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), a central agency in President Donald Trump's initiative to downsize the federal workforce, temporary access to extensive personal data held by the Social Security Administration (SSA), despite ongoing legal challenges.

In a brief, unsigned order, the Court paused a ruling by U.S. District Judge Ellen Hollander, which had blocked DOGE from accessing sensitive records, including medical histories, financial data, Social Security numbers, and immigration files. Judge Hollander had found that unrestricted access likely violated federal privacy laws.

The Court's conservative majority (6-3) granted the emergency request from the Justice Department, with no explanation provided. The three liberal justices dissented, citing privacy risks and a lack of justification from the administration.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, joined by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, sharply criticised the majority's decision, arguing the administration failed to show any compelling need or interest in complying with existing privacy safeguards.

Supreme Court halts lower court mandates on DOGE

In a separate order Friday, the Court also blocked lower court mandates requiring DOGE to release records to a watchdog group investigating its activities.

Established by Trump and tech entrepreneur Elon Musk, DOGE has aggressively sought to reduce



federal employment and overhaul government operations. Although Musk formally exited his government role on May 30, watchdog groups say his influence endures.

Two labour unions and the advocacy group Democracy Forward sued to stop DOGE from accessing the SSA's data, warning that the personal information of over 70 million Americans and many elderly or disabled now at risk.

"This order threatens the privacy of millions," said Democracy Forward in a statement. "Elon Musk may have left Washington, but the consequences of his initiatives remain deeply harmful."

Judge Hollander's April ruling had cited DOGE's failure to justify its need for sweeping access and ordered staffers to delete any improperly obtained data. She

permitted only limited access to de-identified information, contingent on proper training and background checks.

While a majority of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Hollander's injunction in a 9-6 decision, dissenting judges argued the case should follow precedent, allowing DOGE access to data in other federal departments.

However, the majority emphasised that SSA data involves "vastly greater stakes," including confidential records such as family court documents, mental health treatment histories, and children's school files.

As the legal battle continues, the Supreme Court's intervention allows DOGE to access this trove of sensitive information, at least for now.

UK Govt crackdown on Illegal workers sees arrests surge 51%

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



Nearly 30,000 people deported since election as Home Office targets rogue employers

The Home Office has stepped up its battle against illegal working in the UK, making thousands of arrests and deportations in a sweeping crackdown launched since Labour came to power.

New figures reveal that between 5 July 2024—just one day after Labour’s general election win—and 31 May 2025, immigration enforcement officers arrested 6,410 individuals suspected of working illegally in Britain. This represents a staggering 51 per cent rise on the previous year under the Conservative government.

As part of Labour’s flagship Plan for Change, enforcement teams have made 9,000 visits to premises such as restaurants, nail bars and construction sites—a 48 per cent increase on the previous year—as the government intensifies its efforts to root out those working without valid visas.

High-profile raids

One major operation saw 36 people arrested at a construction site in Belfast’s Titanic Quarter, where footage showed

enforcement officers uncovering workers in breach of visa conditions and others who had entered the UK illegally.

In Surrey last month, intelligence led officers to a caravan park used by illegal delivery drivers—resulting in nine arrests. Another nine individuals were detained in Bradford in March after authorities identified a known pick-up point for illegal workers.

The Home Office warns that criminal gangs frequently lure migrants into deadly small boat crossings, promising them jobs that often lead instead to squalid working conditions and exploitation.

Tougher penalties for employers

The government is also targeting rogue employers, who face fines of up to £60,000 per illegal worker, director disqualifications, and up to five years in prison for failing to carry out right-to-work checks on staff from abroad.

Ministers say tougher laws are being introduced to close loopholes, strengthen right-to-work checks, and focus on industries most commonly associated with illegal employment.

No longer tolerated

Speaking on the latest figures, Dame Angela Eagle, Minister for Border Security and Asylum, said:

“For too long, employers have been able to take on and exploit migrants, with people allowed to arrive and work here illegally. This will no longer be tolerated on our watch. That’s why we are ramping up our enforcement activity and introducing tougher laws to finally get a grip of our immigration and asylum system.”

Eddy Montgomery, Director of Enforcement, Compliance and Crime for Immigration Enforcement, added:

“Our work to tackle illegal working is vital not only in bringing the guilty to account, but also in protecting vulnerable people from exploitation. I’m incredibly proud of our enforcement teams across the country for their hard work, skill and cooperation on these often challenging but highly important operations.”

The government has signalled that the crackdown will continue in the coming months as part of its wider efforts to reform the UK’s immigration system and clamp down on exploitation.

Carney defends Modi's G7 invite amid controversy

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Prime Minister Mark Carney is defending his decision to invite Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the upcoming G7 summit in Alberta, despite a deepening diplomatic rift over the murder of a prominent Sikh activist on Canadian soil.

Carney's invitation comes just weeks after the Royal Canadian Mounted Police concluded that the June 2023 assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia, was orchestrated at the "highest levels" of the Indian government. Four Indian nationals residing in Canada have since been arrested and charged with the killing, which shattered bilateral relations and triggered reciprocal diplomatic expulsions last year.

When pressed by reporters on Friday about whether he believes Modi played a role in the plot, Carney remained tight-lipped, citing ongoing legal proceedings.

"There is a legal process that is underway and quite advanced in Canada, and it's never appropriate to make comments concerning those legal processes," Carney said at a press briefing.

The G7 summit, which will bring together leaders from the world's leading industrialised nations, is set to run from June 15 to 17 in Kananaskis, Alberta. India is not a G7 member but has been invited as a guest nation to discuss global issues, including energy, artificial intelligence, and critical mineral supply chains.

Carney defended the invitation by pointing to India's global significance.

"India is the fifth largest economy in the world, the most populous country in the world and central to supply chains," he said. "It is in Canada's interest and the world's interest that India be at the table."

In a statement following the announcement, Modi said he was "glad" to receive a call from Carney and congratulated him on his recent electoral victory. "As vibrant democracies bound by deep people-to-people ties, India and



Canada will work together with renewed vigour, guided by mutual respect and shared interests. Look forward to our meeting at the summit," Modi said.

However, the move has been met with outrage from Sikh advocacy groups in Canada. The World Sikh Organisation condemned the decision, calling it a betrayal of Canadian values.

"For Sikhs in Canada, this is a betrayal, not just of our community, but of core Canadian values," said Danish Singh, president of the WSO. "Prime Minister Carney's decision to invite Narendra Modi, while India continues to deny any role in the assassination of Bhai Hardeep Singh Nijjar and refuses to cooperate with Canadian authorities, is both shameful and dangerous."

Singh added, "We would never welcome leaders from Russia, China, or Iran under such circumstances. Yet India has done far more on Canadian soil in terms of foreign interference and transnational repression, including orchestrating murders, and is being rewarded with a red carpet welcome."

After Carney administration attempts to stabilise relations with several countries The decision comes as Carney's newly elected government attempts to stabilise relations with several countries amid

mounting international tensions. Late Thursday, the prime minister released a summary of a phone call with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, during which both leaders expressed a desire to "regularise channels of communication." The call marks the first high-level contact since Carney took office in March, and follows a prolonged trade dispute that has seen tariffs on seafood, electric vehicles, pork, peas, and canola.

In addition, Carney is reportedly engaged in direct talks with U.S. President Donald Trump to resolve a renewed trade conflict between the North American allies. The dispute, centred around tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminium, has dealt a fresh blow to key sectors of the Canadian economy.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford confirmed Friday that Carney is in "deep, deep discussions" with Trump's team, a development later corroborated by the federal industry minister.

As diplomatic manoeuvring intensifies ahead of the G7 summit, Carney faces increasing scrutiny from domestic and international observers, with critics questioning whether Canada's pursuit of geopolitical pragmatism is coming at the cost of justice and accountability.

Judge's blunder lets Illegal migrant stay in UK

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

An illegal immigrants right to remain in the UK will be reconsidered after a judge issued a contradictory ruling on whether he has a genuine relationship with his daughter.

Andrew Kung'u Gichuhi, a Kenyan national, initially won his appeal to stay in Britain on the grounds that it would be unreasonable to expect his daughter to leave the country. However, in the same judgment, the immigration judge also stated that the father-daughter relationship had broken down, sparking legal confusion.

After the Home Office challenged the decision as "irrational", an upper tribunal has now ordered the case to be reheard.

The case, revealed in court papers, is the latest example of how human rights arguments are being used by illegal migrants and convicted foreign criminals to resist deportation. The situation comes as Home Secretary Yvette Cooper pledges to tighten judicial powers under new "common sense" rules to clarify the interpretation of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which protects the right to family life.

Contradictory judgment

Mr Gichuhi had been living illegally in the UK as the unmarried partner of a British national when he applied for citizenship. The Home Office rejected his application, arguing that there were "no insurmountable obstacles" to continuing family life in Kenya.

Officials also claimed that Mr Gichuhi did not have a genuine or subsisting relationship with his daughter from a previous marriage. He appealed this decision to a lower tribunal.

An unnamed immigration judge ruled in his favour, stating that there was a



"genuine and subsisting" parental relationship and that his daughter "could not reasonably be expected to leave the United Kingdom".

However, later in the same ruling, the judge wrote that the relationship had in fact "broken down" and that there was "no contact" between Mr Gichuhi and his daughter.

The Home Office argued on appeal that "a relationship could not be both genuine and subsisting and broken down", and accused the judge of speculating about the potential for future contact between father and daughter.

Lawyers concede inconsistency

Lawyers for Mr Gichuhi argued that the judge had been "entitled" to find the relationship was subsisting, pointing out that Mr Gichuhi voluntarily sent £100 per month to his daughter's bank account—payments which had not been returned.

They further argued that a relationship can be genuine and subsisting even without direct contact—but conceded that subsisting is effectively the opposite of "broken down".

As a result, Mr Gichuhi's legal team admitted that the ruling was "at least contradictory", and that the judge had

not explained how these conflicting findings were reconciled.

Case to be reheard

Upper Tribunal Judges Adrian Seelhoff and Sean O'Brien concluded that the lower tribunal judge had made an error of law by failing to resolve the contradiction:

"The judge's finding that Mr Gichuhi's relationship with his daughter had 'broken down' is inconsistent with her finding later in that paragraph that it was 'subsisting'," they wrote.

"No attempt had been made to reconcile these contradictory findings. It follows that the judge's decision involved the making of an error of law." The upper tribunal ruled that the case must now be reheard in full by a different judge.

The case comes as Home Secretary Yvette Cooper prepares to introduce new rules aimed at limiting the ability of courts to block deportations on family life grounds. The government plans to strengthen the public interest test, requiring judges to grant exceptions only when fully justified.

Ms Cooper said the new measures would bring greater accountability and help prevent the misuse of Article 8 to delay or block deportations.

Home office fails to remove suspected war criminal

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



A Sri Lankan asylum seeker accused of recruiting child soldiers for the Tamil Tigers has won the right to remain in the UK after British judges ruled there was not enough evidence to support the claims.

The man, who cannot be named for legal reasons, had previously been denied asylum in France, where a court found grounds to exclude him under international law due to suspected involvement in war crimes.

In Britain, the Home Office also attempted to block his asylum claim, arguing that he had enlisted children under the age of 15 to fight for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a banned militant group involved in Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war.

However, the UK's Upper Tribunal of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber has now rejected the government's appeal, allowing the

man to remain in the country as a recognised refugee.

The ruling brings an end to a lengthy legal battle in which the Home Office repeatedly sought to deport the asylum seeker based on evidence gathered by French authorities and allegations about his past activities.

During a hearing in London, the tribunal was told that the man had allegedly been involved with the Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO), a refugee charity that reportedly served as a front for supplying information to the LTTE. It was alleged that, in this capacity, he had helped to recruit children to fight for the Tamil Tigers.

Before arriving in the UK, the Cour nationale du droit d'asile in France found that he "ought to be excluded from a grant of asylum under Article 1F of the Refugee Convention" because of his alleged role in the recruitment of child soldiers — a

recognised war crime.

When he later applied for asylum in Britain, the Home Office refused his application on similar grounds. However, in 2023, he successfully appealed to the First-tier Tribunal, which ruled that the government had failed to prove "serious grounds" that he was guilty of conscripting or enlisting children or using them in hostilities.

The Home Office then lodged an appeal, which was dismissed by the Upper Tribunal.

The decision to allow the asylum seeker to remain in Britain has sparked debate about how the UK applies international refugee law in complex cases involving alleged war crimes.

The Home Office declined to comment on the ruling.

Kabul faces total water collapse by 2030, experts warn

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Kabul, Afghanistan's sprawling capital of seven million residents, could become the first modern city to entirely run out of water by the end of this decade, according to a stark new report by international aid agency Mercy Corps.

Years of rapid urbanisation, climate change, poor governance, and over-extraction have pushed Kabul's aquifers to the edge. Water tables have plunged by as much as 30 metres over the past decade, while extraction outpaces natural recharge by an alarming 44 million cubic metres annually.

Mercy Corps warns that if current trends persist, the city's aquifers may be completely depleted by 2030, posing an existential threat to its population.

"There should be a committed effort to document this better and to draw international attention to the need to address the crisis," said Dayne Curry, Mercy Corps' country director in Afghanistan. "No water means people leave their communities, so for the international community to not address the water needs of Afghanistan will only result in more migration and more hardship for the Afghan people."

Kabul's boreholes drying, prices rising
The city's reliance on boreholes, its primary water source, is proving increasingly unsustainable. Nearly half of Kabul's boreholes have dried up, with many households now spending up to 30 per cent of their income on water. Two-thirds of residents are in debt due to water costs.

"We used to pay 500 afghanis every 10 days to fill our cans from the water tankers. Now, that same amount of water costs us 1,000 afghanis," said Nazifa, a teacher in the Khair Khana neighbourhood. "The situation has been getting worse over the past two weeks. We are afraid it will get even more expensive."

Private companies have begun exploiting the crisis, digging deeper wells to extract



public groundwater and reselling it at inflated prices to desperate residents.

Contaminated and Unsafe

The crisis isn't limited to scarcity. As Kabul's groundwater levels dwindle, water quality has deteriorated dramatically. Up to 80% of the city's groundwater is now considered unsafe due to high concentrations of sewage, salinity, and arsenic, according to the report.

"Afghanistan is facing a lot of problems, but this water scarcity is one of the hardest," said Nazifa. "Adequate, good quality, well water just doesn't exist."

Despite the gravity of the crisis, international support remains limited. Earlier this year, the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported receiving only \$8.4 million of the \$264 million required for water and sanitation programs in Afghanistan. Additionally, around \$3 billion in international funding has been frozen since the Taliban took power in 2021. A further blow came with the United States' decision to cut more than 80% of its USAID funding for the country.

"Everything is so aid-dependent," said Curry. "We can throw millions of dollars at short-term water fixes and say we've addressed the need, but that need will continue until there's better investment for longer-term solutions. And that's where foreign governments are stopping short at this point due to political dynamics."

Hope in the Pipeline

One glimmer of hope lies in the Panjshir River pipeline project, which could provide clean drinking water to 2 million Kabul residents. Design work was completed in late 2024, but the project's \$170 million cost still lacks full funding. The Afghan government is currently seeking additional investors.

Dr. Najibullah Sadid, a senior researcher in water resource management, emphasised the urgency of action.

"We don't have time to sit around waiting for budgets," he said. "We are caught in a storm from which there will be no return if we don't act immediately. Those in Kabul are in a situation where they have to decide between food and water. And yet, the locals we've spoken to are still willing to invest what little they have towards a sustainable solution. Whichever project will bring the most immediate impact is the priority. We just need to start somewhere."

Back in Khair Khana, Nazifa reflects on the worsening conditions.

"Water is a human right and a natural resource of Afghanistan. It is not a political issue," she said. "My heart bleeds when I look at the flowers and fruit trees in the garden, all drying up. But what can we do? We are currently living in a military state, so we can't exactly go to the government to report the issue."

As Kabul hurtles toward a potentially irreversible environmental disaster, experts agree that urgent, coordinated, and well-funded action is the only way to prevent the city from going dry

Iran condemns new U.S. traveling ban as 'racist mentality'

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Iran has strongly condemned the United States' newly reinstated travel ban targeting Iranian nationals and citizens of 11 other predominantly Middle Eastern and African countries, calling the policy a sign of "supremacist and racist" ideology in Washington.

The travel ban, signed into effect by U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday, is set to take effect on June 9. The executive order revives sweeping restrictions reminiscent of the administration's first-term travel ban, once again citing national security as justification. The latest measure follows a recent firebomb attack at a pro-Israel rally in Colorado, which injured more than a dozen people. The suspect, an Egyptian man, was reportedly in the U.S. on an expired tourist visa.

Alireza Hashemi-Raja, the country's foreign ministry director general for the affairs of its citizens abroad, denounced the decision in a statement on Saturday, calling it "a clear sign of the dominance of a supremacist and racist mentality among American policymakers."

"The decision indicates the deep hostility of American decision-makers towards the citizens of the country and the Muslim people," Hashemi-Raja added.

The ban applies to nationals from Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. In addition, a partial ban will affect travellers from seven other countries, though those nations were not publicly named in the executive order.

Policy violates international law and infringes – Iran Hashemi-Raja said the policy violates international law and infringes on the rights of "hundreds of millions of people to travel based solely on their nationality or religion." He warned that the discriminatory nature of the ban could carry "international responsibility" for the United States, though he did not provide specific details on potential legal consequences.

The move further strains the already tense relationship between Tehran and

Washington, which have had no formal diplomatic ties since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Despite the political rift, the United States remains home to the largest Iranian diaspora in the world. As of 2020, the foreign ministry estimated there were approximately 1.5 million citizens living in the U.S.

While U.S. officials defend the travel ban as a necessary national security measure, critics argue that the broad restrictions unfairly target Muslim-majority countries and undermine human rights.

The government has not indicated any retaliatory measures but emphasised the emotional and logistical toll the policy will have on families and communities with cross-border ties.

As the implementation date nears, advocacy groups and legal experts are preparing to challenge the ban in U.S. courts, echoing the legal battles that followed the original travel restrictions during Trump's first term.

ICE raids in Los Angeles spark protests and outrage

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Federal immigration raids across Los Angeles on Friday triggered widespread protests and condemnation from community leaders, advocates, and residents. The coordinated sweeps, conducted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), targeted multiple locations including Home Depot stores, a doughnut shop, and the Ambient Apparel headquarters in the Fashion District.

Masked agents in tactical gear, some wearing gas masks, were seen pulling individuals from the premises, while demonstrators clashed with federal officers throughout the day. Videos from the scene showed smoke grenades and pepper spray being deployed, with some officers firing less-lethal weapons into crowds attempting to block armored federal vehicles.

Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, said at a press conference that at least 45 individuals were arrested without warrants.

"Our community is under attack and is being terrorized," said Salas. "These are workers, these are fathers, these are

mothers. Immigration enforcement that is terrorizing our families must stop now."

By 6 p.m., hundreds had gathered outside the federal building in downtown LA, where the detainees were believed to be held. The Los Angeles Fire Department responded to assist injured protesters, including David Huerta, president of SEIU California, who was reportedly harmed during the crackdown.

"We call for an end to the cruel, destructive, and indiscriminate ICE raids that are tearing apart our communities," said SEIU California executive director Tia Orr. "Immigrant workers are essential to our society."

Despite stating it does not engage in civil immigration enforcement, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) assisted federal officers with crowd control "to ensure public safety."

Outside the targeted sites, advocates used megaphones to broadcast legal rights to workers inside. "The community is here with you," one protester shouted. "Your family is here with you."

City and state leaders denounced the

raids, which are part of a broader crackdown under President Donald Trump's renewed immigration policy directives. Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove called the raids "destabilizing" and urged constituents to reach out for support.

"LA has long been a safe haven for immigrants," she wrote on X. "Trump claims he's targeting criminals, but he's really just tearing families apart."

Mayor Karen Bass expressed "deep anger" in a statement, pledging coordination with immigrant rights organizations.

"These tactics sow terror in our communities," Bass said. "We will not stand for this."

Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez warned residents to remain alert: "These actions are escalating. Agents arrive without warning and leave quickly, aware that our communities mobilize fast."

No official count of detainees has been released by DHS as of Saturday morning.

Escaped ex-police chief 'Devil in the Ozarks' recaptured

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



A former police chief serving time for murder and rape was recaptured Friday, nearly two weeks after a dramatic escape from an Arkansas prison.

Grant Hardin, dubbed the “Devil in the Ozarks,” was apprehended around 3:45 p.m. near Moccasin Creek, just over a mile from the Calico Rock prison where he had been held since 2017. Authorities say Hardin escaped the North Central Unit on May 25 by disguising himself in what appeared to be a law enforcement uniform.

Izard County Sheriff Brandon Long confirmed the arrest in a statement, assuring the public that “there is no longer an active threat to public safety.” Hardin’s identity was verified through fingerprint analysis before the public was notified.

The arrest followed an intensive manhunt led by Arkansas law enforcement and U.S. Border Patrol officers, who located Hardin using tracking dogs that picked up his scent in the rugged terrain of Izard County.

Hardin was serving a 30-year sentence for the 2017 murder of

59-year-old James Appleton, a man with whom he had longstanding conflicts. The killing came shortly after Hardin’s brief stint as police chief in Gateway, Arkansas.

Following his murder conviction, DNA evidence linked Hardin to a 1997 rape of an elementary school teacher in northwestern Arkansas. He later pleaded guilty to two counts of rape and received an additional 50 year sentence.

Authorities say details of the escape and subsequent recapture remain under investigation.

Why Ronaldo 'picks' Dembele over Yamal to win 2025 Ballon d'Or

By Damilola Olufemi



Cristiano Ronaldo has weighed in on the Ballon d'Or debate, suggesting that the prestigious award should go to a player who has helped their team win the UEFA Champions League.

Speaking at a press conference in Munich ahead of the Nations League final between Portugal and Spain, the 40-year-old star emphasised the importance of team success in deciding individual honours.

"In my opinion, whoever wins it should be on a team that has won trophies. The Ballon d'Or winner should be in a team that has won the Champions League," Ronaldo told reporters on Saturday.

The Ballon d'Or, presented by France Football since 1956, is awarded annually to the best-performing player from the

previous season.

Following Paris Saint-Germain's emphatic 5-0 win over Inter Milan in the Champions League final last weekend, momentum has grown behind Ousmane Dembele as a top contender for this year's award.

France coach Didier Deschamps voiced his support for Dembele, saying, "Considering the season Ousmane is having, he deserves it and that's all I wish for him."

Teen sensation Lamine Yamal also entered the conversation after his dazzling performance in Spain's 5-4 extra-time win over France in the Nations League semi-final. At just 17, a Ballon d'Or victory would make him the youngest recipient in history.

But France captain Kylian Mbappe made his preference clear: "Does anyone really need me to explain?

Right now, we're talking about Lamine Yamal and Ousmane Dembele, but I'm voting for Dembele."

Ronaldo speaks further

Ronaldo, while refraining from naming a specific favourite, acknowledged the complexity of the decision. "I cannot tell you who deserves it," he said.

With five Ballon d'Or wins to his name—second only to Lionel Messi's eight—Ronaldo remains one of the most decorated figures in the award's history. The duo famously dominated the accolades between 2008 and 2017.

The current titleholder is Rodri of Spain and Manchester City, who received the honour in October 2024.

What's next for Grealish as Man City exit looms?

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Jack Grealish's Manchester City story looks set to end just four years after it began with a record-breaking £100m move from Aston Villa. The England international, once a centrepiece of Pep Guardiola's attacking puzzle, is now on the fringes — and preparing for a new chapter.

Grealish, now 29, played just 715 Premier League minutes in the 2024–25 season. Plagued by injuries and poor form, he failed to make a sustained impact and was an unused substitute 10 times in the latter half of the campaign. His lack of club action also led to omission from England's Euro 2024 squad.

Although Guardiola and the City hierarchy remain fond of Grealish — praising his attitude and influence in the dressing room — there's a growing sense that a clean break is best. Guardiola's push for a leaner squad and City's recent moves in the transfer market, including the signing of Tijjani Reijnders and interest in Lyon's Rayan Cherki, only confirm Grealish is no longer central to the club's plans.

City are open to offloading the winger, who has two years left on his contract. A permanent move is preferred to reduce their wage bill and recoup some of their initial investment. However, with Grealish earning around £300,000 per week, financial realities make a straightforward transfer unlikely.

A loan deal, while not ideal for player or club, might be the only viable solution unless Grealish accepts a significant wage cut. City may also have to subsidise part of his salary, or accept a reduced transfer fee to facilitate a permanent exit.

Where could Grealish go?

The Premier League remains his most likely destination. Tottenham Hotspur and Newcastle United are both reportedly interested. Spurs can offer Champions League football, but their spending is hampered by more than £330m in outstanding transfer fees. Newcastle may have the wage capacity, but Financial Fair Play constraints could limit a big-money move.



A return to Aston Villa would carry emotional appeal, but it's financially improbable. Despite Champions League qualification, Villa's wage-to-revenue ratio stood at an unsustainable 91% in 2024, and the club is prioritising financial discipline. Additionally, manager Unai Emery may not see Grealish as a tactical fit.

Everton are in no position to meet Grealish's wage demands either. Meanwhile, Manchester United and Liverpool — the only other English clubs with the financial clout — have shown no interest.

Could a move abroad be next? Barcelona once showed interest, but their financial troubles and evolving recruitment focus have cooled any pursuit. Napoli and AC Milan have been linked, though Grealish's wage package is likely too high. Napoli's focus may also shift to completing a deal for Kevin De Bruyne, Grealish's teammate at City.

Borussia Dortmund and Inter Milan remain intriguing options. Both could offer Champions League football and an

environment where Grealish's flair might flourish. Yet again, wages would be a stumbling block.

That leaves Saudi Arabia. A lucrative contract in the Saudi Pro League could preserve Grealish's earnings and offer a fresh start. But it also comes with reputational risks. Critics may view such a move as a step down, potentially ending his England career. Still, as Ivan Toney's recent recall shows, Saudi-based players aren't necessarily out of international contention under Thomas Tuchel.

For now, Grealish remains open to all options. He wants a permanent move and a fresh start, but flexibility — and compromise — may be necessary. If he's willing to sacrifice wages for game time and stature, a Premier League return or European switch remains feasible. Otherwise, Saudi Arabia may become the most realistic escape route.

One thing is clear: Grealish's glittering arrival at City has faded. Whether his next step revitalises his career or marks the start of its wind-down depends on the decisions made in the coming weeks.

Matic banned for covering anti-homophobia symbol

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Lyon midfielder Nemanja Matic has been handed a two-match suspension after concealing an anti-homophobia message on his sleeve during a Ligue 1 fixture. The 36-year-old Serbian veteran was seen covering the rainbow-coloured emblem with tape in Lyon's 2-0 win over Angers on 17 May, in an act that has drawn widespread criticism.

The emblem is part of Ligue 1's annual anti-homophobia campaign, now in its fifth year. The initiative includes players wearing rainbow symbols and banners displayed across stadiums to promote inclusion and support the LGBTQ+ community.

Matic was not alone in his action. Le Havre striker Ahmed Hassan, 32, also covered the sleeve symbol in his match that same weekend. Ligue 1 authorities have responded by issuing both players a two-match ban, with a further two games suspended, signalling their intent to uphold the integrity of the campaign.

While some have defended the players' right to personal beliefs, league officials have emphasized the importance of solidarity and visibility in fighting discrimination. A spokesperson for Ligue 1 said:

"While we understand that individuals may hold differing views, Ligue 1 stands firm in its commitment to equality and inclusivity. Campaigns like this are essential in challenging stigma and fostering unity in our game."

Matic's actions have reignited a broader debate in French football about how far personal beliefs can go in matters of public social responsibility. His decision comes at a time of personal uncertainty, with his contract at Lyon set to expire at the end of June. Negotiations on a possible extension are reportedly stalled.

The controversy is not isolated. In recent years, several players have objected to the campaign, citing religious or cultural



reasons. Nantes forward Mostafa Mohamed, 27, opted out of his team's critical relegation clash against Montpellier, stating that while he supported mutual respect, he could not participate in a cause he believed conflicted with his personal values.

In a post on Instagram, Mohamed explained:

"I believe in mutual respect – the respect we owe others, but also to ourselves and our beliefs. My background and faith make it difficult for me to take part in this initiative."

Last season, then-Monaco midfielder Mohamed Camara received a four-match suspension after similarly taping over the anti-homophobia logo. Toulouse FC faced similar issues in 2023 when a group of players refused to participate in a match, with the club citing their discomfort with being associated with the rainbow symbolism as the reason.

These recurring incidents highlight the tension between collective advocacy efforts and individual beliefs. Critics argue that opting out of campaigns like

this, particularly in such a visible manner, undermines efforts to promote inclusivity in football. Advocates, meanwhile, stress the importance of voluntary participation and respect for diverse perspectives.

Nevertheless, Ligue 1 is expected to maintain the campaign in future seasons, albeit under growing scrutiny about its implementation and the players' willingness to engage.

Matic has yet to publicly comment on the ban or his reasons for covering the symbol. However, the disciplinary measure may influence his standing in the French league and complicate potential contract discussions as Lyon prepares for the 2025–26 season.

As professional football continues to wrestle with issues of social responsibility and freedom of expression, Matic's suspension is likely to spark further debate not only in France but across Europe's top leagues. For now, Ligue 1 remains committed to its stance: football is for everyone, and messages of inclusion must not be hidden.