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Lagos govt warns landlords, agents against unjustified rent hikes **Pg 5**



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Citizens' welfare a true measure of national greatness — Osinbajo

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Former Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has described service-oriented leadership in politics and governance as both imperative and a privilege, adding that a nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens.

Osinbajo made this call while delivering the keynote address at the Rotary International District 9141 Conference in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, on the topic "The Magic of Connection: The Imperative and Privilege of Service."

He stressed that politics should be centered on providing essential services such as quality education, accessible healthcare, and a robust social security system, which he described as basic rights of every citizen.

"This privilege that we have as the elite in our societies is not a badge of superiority. It is a debt that we owe to our societies. It comes with enormous responsibility and the only honest way to repay it is through service."

"There is no great nation that at one point in time or the other in its history has not had to have leaders and elites that say we must put service to our country over our personal agendas and well-being."

The former Vice President referenced Chief Obafemi Awolowo's introduction of free basic education in Western Nigeria as a historical example of impactful and selfless governance, noting that the policy was implemented



despite its high financial cost.

Recalling their role in drafting the All Progressives Congress (APC) manifesto in 2014, Professor Osinbajo said one of the key debates was around embedding a strong social investment programme, which eventually led to initiatives like the national school feeding scheme, TraderMoni, among others.

The former vice president supports the view that a nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens.

"It is this idea that politics or governance must be for the common good that led to many nations establishing human capital development programs, education for all, health care, insurance, social housing, etc. Social security schemes.

"So free education, for example,

universal health care are not just policy choices. They are reflections of selfless and visionary leadership. And in many countries, these systems were built by leaders who saw governance not merely as a tool for power but as a moral obligation to uplift society, especially the most vulnerable."

He further decried the pervasive level of corruption on the continent of Africa and stressed that the continent is not lacking in talent but rather suffers from the underutilization of its human resources.

Addressing the elite, Osinbajo issued a challenge for self-reflection, urging them to consider whether their achievements were borne out of genuine service to others.

He also called for better budget prioritization and fiscal policies aimed at improving the lives of the nation's most vulnerable populations.

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2025 Hajj: 64,188 Nigerians set for pilgrimage as FG flags off airlift in Imo

By Friday Omosola

The Federal Government (FG) has flagged off the inaugural airlift of Nigerian pilgrims for the 2025 Hajj at the Sam Mbakwe International Cargo Airport in Owerri, Imo State.

Vice President Kashim Shettima, who presided over the historic ceremony, urged the intending pilgrims to uphold Nigerian values and represent the country with dignity during their spiritual journey to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The event marked the first international departure from the airport, which was built over 40 years ago through communal efforts.

A total of 64,188 Nigerians are scheduled to participate in this year's Hajj, with 315 pilgrims from Imo, Abia, and Bayelsa States departing on Friday aboard an Air Peace flight.

Shettima commended Governor Hope Uzodimma for fostering religious tolerance, mutual respect, and inclusion in the state.

He stated that the hosting of the inaugural Hajj airlift in the South East was symbolic of a nation coming into harmony with itself.

He conveyed President Bola Tinubu's goodwill to the pilgrims and affirmed the administration's commitment to supporting all Nigerians in their religious obligations.

"The President, in his characteristic foresight, has made all necessary



resources available to ensure the success of the 2025 Hajj," Shettima said.

He reminded the pilgrims of their roles as ambassadors of Nigeria. "You are more than spiritual travellers. You carry with you not only your faith, but also the pride and dignity of this nation," he said.

He warned both pilgrims and logistical personnel against negligence, emphasising that "there is no room for error where lives, hopes, and sacred obligations converge."

However, Uzodimma described the event as a milestone in the state's aviation history, expressing gratitude to Tinubu for the approvals that made the inaugural flight possible.

He highlighted the economic benefits of the development and

revealed plans to also airlift Christian pilgrims from the same airport next month, reinforcing his administration's commitment to religious inclusion.

The Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Mohammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, praised Uzodimma for promoting religious harmony in a region with a Christian majority.

"This is a strong message that unity and mutual respect are still possible in our nation," he said.

Chairman of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), Saleh Usman, described the flight as a historic first in the region and a testament to the governor's commitment to religious inclusivity.

Lagos govt warns landlords, agents against unjustified rent hikes

By Friday Omosola



The Lagos State Government has issued a stern warning to landlords and real estate agents who arbitrarily hike rents across the state, particularly in response to new infrastructure or for vague reasons not backed by law.

Barakat Odunuga-Bakare, Special Adviser on Housing to the Lagos State Real Estate Regulatory Authority (LASRERA), made this known during a live interview on 'Your View', aired on TVC.

She said the government would no longer tolerate the exploitation of tenants under any guise.

Odunuga-Bakare explained that many residents are being unfairly burdened by unjustifiable increases in rent, and that the state government is reviewing its tenancy laws to address such practices.

Among the proposed changes is the inclusion of provisions such as caution fees, which are currently unregulated.

"The Lagos State Government will not sit back and watch residents suffer due to arbitrary and exploitative rent practices. Tenants must be protected," she stated.

She also drew a clear line between the responsibilities of house agents and legal practitioners in property dealings, highlighting that lawyers often exceed their roles in tenancy matters.

To protect themselves, residents were advised to report violations directly to LASRERA through physical visits or via the agency's online platforms.

She urged the public to verify the registration status of agents and

developers with LASRERA before engaging in any property transactions.

Odunuga-Bakare reaffirmed Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's commitment to easing housing challenges in the state.

According to her, the government is actively collaborating with property developers, associations, and landlords to regulate housing costs and ensure fairness.

She added that state-owned housing schemes are allocated through a transparent and equitable process, urging real estate practitioners to register with LASRERA in compliance with state regulations.

The call comes amid rising concerns about the affordability of housing in Lagos, Africa's most populous city.

Dangote pledges N15bn to transform Kano-based ADUSTECH into leading global institution

By Friday Omosola



Billionaire industrialist Aliko Dangote has committed N15 billion towards a five-year development initiative aimed at transforming the Aliko Dangote University of Science and Technology (ADUSTECH) in Wudil, Kano State, into a globally competitive institution.

Speaking during the university's fifth combined convocation ceremony on Saturday, Dangote, who serves as Chancellor of the state-owned university, outlined a comprehensive investment plan designed to elevate the institution's academic infrastructure and global standing.

The proposed funding, to be delivered through the Dangote Foundation, will support the construction of additional student hostels and lecture halls, a

state-of-the-art multipurpose ICT centre with full internet access.

It'll also support a mini solar power plant to provide stable electricity, a modern Senate building, and employment support for top-performing engineering graduates through NYSC and job placements.

"Our goal is to position ADUSTECH among the top three universities in Nigeria. This five-year strategic plan will be implemented in collaboration with the university's Governing Council, supported by a structured project management framework to ensure timely and cost-effective delivery," Dangote stated.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Musa Tukur Yakasai disclosed that he assumed

office with an inherited debt of N3 billion, of which the Kano State Government under Governor Abba Yusuf has already cleared over N2 billion.

Yakasai also revealed that more than 30 out of the 40 academic programmes offered at ADUSTECH have now achieved full accreditation.

Governor Yusuf, present at the convocation, reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the university's growth.

He announced that construction of internal road networks and drainage systems has been approved to enhance the institution's infrastructure.

Old-fashioned: JAMB's once-a-year exam inefficient — Expert By Guest Writer

The recent release of the 2025 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) results has, once again, sparked widespread concern. Out of approximately two million candidates who sat for the exam, over 1.5 million failed to attain the benchmark score of 200 out of 400, which is 50% of the total.

This outcome has sparked further debates about the difficulty of the examination, the declining standards of education in Nigeria, and the perceived lack of seriousness among students.

However, while these discussions are important, they overlook a fundamental structural flaw in the system—the rigidity of JAMB's once-a-year examination model. In an era where global educational practices prioritise flexibility and multiple opportunities for success, JAMB's adherence to a high-stakes, single-sitting examination is not only outdated but also unjust.

The current system places an enormous burden on candidates, leaving no room for contingencies. A student who falls ill on the exam day, faces logistical challenges, or encounters technical glitches during the Computer-Based Test (CBT) has no recourse but to wait an entire year for another attempt. Financial constraints may also prevent some candidates from registering on time, effectively shutting them out of that year's admission cycle.

Even for those who do sit for the exam, the pressure to perform



optimally in a single sitting is immense, as falling short of their desired cut-off mark means either settling for less competitive courses or institutions or losing an entire academic year. This all-or-nothing approach is at odds with global best practices, where standardised tests such as the SAT, GRE, and ACT allow multiple sittings within a year, reducing undue pressure on candidates and providing a fairer assessment of their abilities.

Beyond the individual hardships imposed on the students by this system, the logistical strain on

JAMB itself is undeniable. Coordinating an examination for nearly two million candidates in a single sitting is a herculean task, fraught with operational challenges.

Reports of technical failures, or inadequate facilities are common, further complicating an already stressful experience for candidates.

**Continue reading
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Many students are forced to travel long distances to their assigned centres, sometimes at great personal risk—navigating unsafe roads or waking as early as 5 a.m. to arrive on time. If JAMB were to adopt a multiple-sitting model; for example, administer exams in March, August, and November, the administrative burden would be significantly reduced. Smaller, staggered batches would allow for better resource management, minimise logistical errors, and enhance overall efficiency.

Critics of this proposal may argue that frequent examinations could compromise standards or encourage loose preparation among students. However, this concern is unfounded. Other major examination bodies, such as WAEC and NECO, already conduct multiple sittings annually without any significant decline in quality and delivery.

The key factor lies in maintaining rigorous oversight, ensuring that each sitting adheres to the same high standards of integrity. Furthermore, multiple sittings could actually raise educational standards by allowing institutions to maintain their desired cut-off marks rather than lowering them to fill admission quotas; and allowing students good study time to prepare for the next diet, without losing touch of the syllabus.

Under the current system, many universities are compelled to accept students with scores as low as 120, far below their preferred benchmarks, simply because the pool of eligible candidates is limited by the once-a-year examination bottleneck. If students had more opportunities to retake the UTME within the same year,

institutions could afford to be more selective, thereby preserving academic standards.

From an economic perspective, a multiple-sitting system would also be financially beneficial for JAMB. Candidates who wish to improve their scores would register for subsequent sittings, increasing the board's revenue. Rather than treating the UTME as a once-in-a-year event with overwhelming demand, JAMB could operate as a continuous assessment body, spreading its operations, and income more evenly across the year.

This would also ease the financial pressure on parents and guardians, who often struggle to gather registration fees under tight deadlines. After all, there would be another opportunity to register their wards for another diet of the test within the same year without wasting their time.

Most importantly, transitioning to an annual multiple-examination system aligns with the principles of equity and accessibility that should underpin any credible educational framework. Nigerian students should not have to gamble their futures on a single day's

performance. One day. One sitting. One chance. Education is a right, not a privilege contingent on perfect conditions.

By global practice, testing systems are designed to accommodate human variables, stress, health, unforeseen circumstances, by offering flexibility. Nigeria must move in the same direction if it hopes to produce globally competitive graduates.

The argument for reforming JAMB's examination model is not merely about convenience; it is about fairness, efficiency, and progress. As a nation striving to modernise its education sector, we cannot afford to cling to archaic practices that stifle potential.

The time has come for JAMB to evolve—to offer students more than one shot at their dreams. The stakes are too high for anything less.

Sulaimon Olalekan Okewole is a Ph.D. student of Educational Administration and Planning at the University of Lagos. He is the founder of Cardinal E-School, and a passionate advocate for digital education reform in Nigeria.



West, Central Africa at risk to face worst hunger crisis, UN warns

By Damilola Olufemi

The United Nations World Food Programme (UN-WFP) has issued a stark warning that over 52 million people across West and Central Africa are at risk of acute hunger between June and August, marking one of the most severe food crises in the region's recent history.

In its latest regional assessment, WFP reports that 36 million people are already struggling to meet basic food needs.

The crisis is being driven by a deadly combination of conflict, mass displacement, economic shocks, rising food and fuel prices, and increasingly extreme weather patterns.

Nearly three million people are already experiencing emergency levels of food insecurity, while 2,600 people in Mali are at risk of catastrophic hunger—the highest classification of food insecurity, typically associated with famine conditions.

WFP officials say that unless immediate funding is secured, food assistance will be drastically reduced.

“We will be forced to scale down even further both in the number of people reached and the size of food rations distributed,” Margot van der Velden warned.

In the Sahel, hunger has exploded from just 4% of the population in 2019 to 30% today. According to



Ollo Sib, a senior WFP research adviser, the situation is “extremely dire.”

In northern Ghana, farmers have been forced to replant multiple times due to persistent drought, made worse by soaring prices of seeds and fertilisers.

Meanwhile, in northern Mali, pastoralist communities face rising food costs—up 50% compared to the five-year average—with no access to markets.

More than 10 million people in the region have been displaced by violence, including two million refugees in Chad, Cameroon, Mauritania, and Niger, and eight million internally displaced—mainly in Nigeria and Cameroon. This massive displacement has shattered livelihoods and access to food.

WFP stated that economic instability

and climate shocks are compounding the devastation.

The WFP is urgently appealing for \$710 million to sustain operations through October 2025, aiming to reach nearly 12 million people across West Africa and the Sahel.

So far, the agency has reached three million of the most vulnerable—including malnourished children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, refugees, and displaced persons—but warns that up to five million people risk being cut off from aid if funding does not materialize soon.

Beyond emergency relief, WFP is calling for long-term investments in food systems and resilience-building. Since 2018, its regional initiatives have rehabilitated over 300,000 hectares of land, supporting four million people across more than 3,400 villages.

LASODA collaborates with LASPPPA to boost disability inclusion in infrastructure development

By Helen Okechukwu



The Lagos State Office for Disability Affairs (LASODA) has partnered with the Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Agency (LASPPPA) to promote inclusivity of People Living with Disability (PWDs) in infrastructure development across the state.

This collaborative discussion was held at the LASPPPA headquarters located in Ikeja during an official visit led by the General Manager of LASODA, Mrs. Adenike Oyetunde-Lawal, recently.

The aim of the visit was to discuss the strategic implementation of

policies specifically designed to enhance accessibility and quality of life for PWDs during the construction of infrastructures in the state.

“While promoting equitable access to services and facilities for all residents, she said it will also ensure that buildings have designated routes, ramps and other features that make them usable by individuals with disabilities,” the report noted.

Furthermore, Oyetunde-Lawal said the partnership with LASPPPA will help make sure that its planning and permit processes follow the laws and rules that support accessibility

and inclusion.

Kehinde Osinaike, the General Manager of LASPPPA, shared his excitement about working with LASODA.

He said the partnership will help include accessibility standards for PWDs in all planning activities.

He also pledged that LASPPPA will keep an eye on building projects to make sure they follow the rules, so that Lagos can become more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

AMVCA 2025: Full list as 'Lisabi', 'Seven Doors' win big at 11th edition

By Oluwatoain Ologun

The Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA) were held in Lagos, Nigeria, on Saturday night at an event that attracted and celebrated talents in the Nollywood movie industry and super-talented stars from across the continent.

"Seven Doors," a historical drama series by Femi Adebayo, triumphed at the 11th AMVCA, winning three major awards, solidifying its standout status in Nollywood.

At the 11th edition of the AMVCA, Lateef Adedimeji's *Lisabi* (The Uprising) won some prizes.

Below is the full list of winners at the 2025 AMVCA:

Best Indigenous Language (West Africa)

Seven Doors

Lisabi: The Uprising WINNER (Adedimeji Lateef for *Lisabi*)

Kaka
Anikulapo: The Rise of the Spectre
Mai Martaba

Best Cinematography

Agemo

Inkabi

Lisabi (The Uprising)

Skeleton Coast



Soft Love

The Legend of The Vagabond (Queen Of Lagos) WINNER (filmmaker Leo Purman)

Yen Ara Asaase Ni

Best Documentary

Mai DùnDùn – Ifeoluwa WINNER

I Will Remember You

On Your Own

Walvis Tale

Best Digital Content Creator

Iyo Prosper Adokiye (WINNER)

Maryam Apakagi-Greene

Elozonam Ogbolu, Hoviare Freedom

and Chiamaka Uzokwe

Jide Pounds Ibitoye

Ariyiikedimples and Brain Jotter

Best Short Film

Brakaci (WINNER)

Sukari

The Incredible Sensational Fiancée of Seyi Ajayi

What Are You Truly Afraid Of?

Best Unscripted M-Net Original

Husband Material

**Continue reading
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Cont from page 11

Nigerian Idol (Season 9) Kassim Suleiman WINNER

Overall Best

Pastor Wants a Wife

Best Scripted M-Net Original

Uriri

All Mine

My Fairytale Wedding (Chinenye Nworah and Taiwo Adebayo) WINNER

Italo

The Caller

Kam U Stay

Best Music/Score

Freedom Way

Inkabi

Seven Doors (Composer- Tolu Obanro) WINNER

Skeleton Coast

Soft Love

Best Supporting Actress

Mercy Aigbe — Farmer's bride (WINNER)

Meg Otanwa — Inside Life

Tina Mba — Suspicion

Ireti Doyle — All's Fair in Love

Ini Dima-Okojie — Skeleton Coast

Omoni Oboli — The Uprising: Wives on Strike 3

Darasimi Nnadi — Aburo

Best Supporting Actor

Gabriel Afolayan — Inside Life (WINNER)

Adedayo Adebawale Macaroni — Lisabi: The Uprising

Aliu Gafar — Seven Doors

Femi Jacobs — Freedom Way

Richard Mofe-Damijo — Christmas In Lagos

Uzor Arukwe — Suspicion

Mike Afolarin — House of Ga'a

Efa Iwara — Princess on a Hill

Trailblazer Award
Kayode Kasum

Industry Merit Award

Nkem 'Osuofia' Okoh and Sani Mu'azu

Best Lead Actress

Chioma Chukwuka (Seven Doors)

WINNER

Gbubemi Ejeye (Farmer's Bride)

Uzoamaka Onuoha (Ageo)

Uche Montana (Thinline)

Uzoamaka Aniunoh (Phoenix Fury)

Hilda Dokubo (The Uprising: Wives On Strike 3)

Bimbo Ademoye (Anikulapo: Rise Of The Spectre)

Best Lead Actor

Gideon Okeke (Tokunbo)

Bucci Franklin (The Weekend)

Femi Branch (House of Ga'a)

Thapelo Makoena (Skeleton Coast)

Bimbo Manuel (Princess On A Hill)

Stan Nze (Suspicion)

Femi Adebayo (Seven Doors) WINNER

Adedimeji Lateef (Lisabi — The Uprising)



Visit Nigeria, Ghana before judging Africa, says Tems

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Grammy-winning Nigerian singer Temilade Openiyi, widely known as Tems, has called on the world to look past long-standing stereotypes about Africa.

Instead, she encouraged people to experience the continent firsthand, starting with Nigeria and Ghana.

Speaking during a red-carpet interview with Fashion Bomb Daily at the 2025 Met Gala in New York, the singer used her platform to spotlight the depth and richness of African culture.

Her message was simple but powerful: come and see Africa for yourself before forming opinions.

Visit Lagos and Ghana, Tems says

Tems urged travelers and culture lovers around the world to consider vacationing in Lagos, Nigeria, and cities in Ghana. These places, she said, offer a vibrant introduction to African life.

"I always encourage people to go to Lagos and Ghana for vacation," she said. "Just go and see for yourself before you make an opinion about Africa. See it for yourself and see how you feel."

She believes the best way to understand the continent is to visit, explore, and connect with its people.

Africa's beauty lies in its creativity

For Tems, Africa's real beauty isn't just in its landscapes, it's in its people and what they create every day.

"I think it's in the creativity, the daily efforts, the looks, the songs, the traditions, and the cultures," she said.

Her words highlighted the everyday energy and artistic expression that define African life. From street fashion and local dishes to traditional music and visual art, creativity runs deep across the continent.

Breaking the mold: More than just afrobeats



Tems also addressed common global views about African music. While Afrobeats has gained worldwide popularity, she emphasized that African music includes many other styles. In her view, the world has barely scratched the surface of what the continent has to offer.

"We are not just Afrobeats," she said firmly. "There is Amapiano, Afrosoul, R&B, Afro Jazz. There are so many genres in African music that people are not all the way tapped into yet."

She described African music as a dynamic space, full of different sounds, rhythms, and emotions. Each genre tells its own story and represents the voice of a particular region or culture.

A voice for African identity

Tems has become one of the most recognizable African voices on the global stage. With her unique sound and strong presence, she has helped shift international attention to African artists.

Beyond the awards and hit songs, Tems uses her platform to share her roots and uplift the voices of other African creatives. At the Met Gala, surrounded by celebrities and fashion icons, she stayed grounded in her mission: to challenge outdated views of Africa and highlight its true identity.

Shaping the future through art

The singer believes that music, fashion, and storytelling have the power to shape how the world sees Africa. And artists like her are already leading that change.

In her interview, she called on the international community to explore African talent and creativity in deeper ways, not just through trends, but through real experiences.

"Go beyond the headlines. Travel. Listen. Ask questions. Be open to what you find," her message seemed to say.

A growing global interest in African culture

Tems' comments come at a time when African fashion, music, and cinema are gaining more attention around the world. From Lagos Fashion Week to Nollywood films and Billboard-charting songs, Africa is making its mark.

Still, many African creators feel that the world sees them through a narrow lens. For Tems, the solution is simple: visit, explore, and engage with Africa on its own terms.

Tems remains a cultural ambassador

As one of Nigeria's biggest exports in music today, Tems continues to raise the flag for Africa. Her work blends traditional African sounds with modern styles, creating a sound that's both local and global.

Why I remade 2004 'Ori' movie 20 years after, Muyiwa Ademola reveals

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nigerian actor and filmmaker Muyiwa Ademola has revived one of Nollywood's most iconic films, Ori, two decades after its original release.

The new version, titled Ori: The Rebirth, reimagines the award-winning 2004 movie for a new generation of viewers.

Ademola, who starred in and directed the original, said the decision to remake the film came after years of constant fan requests and personal reflection on the film's lasting impact.

Why he brought "Ori" back

In a recent interview on TVC News, Ademola revealed that Ori was a turning point in his career. Shot in 2003 and released in 2004, the film earned him national and international recognition. It also gave him his first opportunity to travel outside Nigeria and opened doors for him within the entertainment industry.

"Ori was massive," he said. "It was the movie that took me out of the country for the first time. It won several awards, including the Africa Movie Academy Award for Best Indigenous Film. It changed everything for me."

He added that fans have never stopped talking about the film. Everywhere he goes, people still ask him about Ori, urging him to bring it back in some form.

"I tried turning it into a stage play," he said. "I even thought about writing a book. But I realized that people don't read as much anymore. So when the film marked its 20th anniversary, I decided it was time to do something special."

The birth of "Ori: The Rebirth"

With a desire to preserve the story and its message, Muyiwa Ademola began working on Ori: The Rebirth in 2023. He wanted the new film to carry forward the soul of the original while reflecting modern realities.



"I wanted to immortalise the film," he said. "I wanted something that would outlive me. Something that would continue to speak to generations even after I'm gone."

The remake promises a contemporary feel, richer production quality, and a broader appeal. According to Ademola, the goal was to reconnect with older fans while introducing the story to a younger, tech-savvy audience.

A personal financial journey

Muyiwa Ademola also shared that he took on the financial burden of the project himself. Determined to see his vision through, he chose to fund the film without outside investors.

"When I started filming Ori: The Rebirth, I poured everything I had into it," he explained. "I borrowed from friends and family. I raised all the money myself because I didn't want anyone to blame me if it didn't succeed."

His family also made sacrifices. "We had to cut down on our home spending," he added. "But my wife and children stood by me. They supported me every step of the way."

ori

Chasing realism with bold production

To deliver a believable and visually striking film, Ademola took on ambitious scenes that pushed the limits of independent filmmaking. One of the most striking moments in the film involves a plane crash and instead of relying on computer effects, he went the extra mile.

"I wanted it to feel real," he said. "So we built an entire private jet from scratch just for that scene."

A star-studded cast

Ori: The Rebirth features a lineup of some of Nollywood's finest actors. The cast includes industry heavyweights like Sola Sobowale, Lateef Adedimeji, Omowunmi Dada, Odunlade Adekola, and Toyin Abraham.

Ademola believes their performances, combined with the powerful storyline, will make the new film just as impactful as the original.

Looking ahead

As Ori: The Rebirth prepares to hit screens, Muyiwa Ademola hopes it will spark conversations, inspire audiences, and carry on the legacy of the story that changed his life.

Netflix rejection nearly shattered me, Arese Ugwu opens up

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian author and filmmaker Arese Ugwu has opened up about a painful rejection from Netflix.

The 39-year-old writer revealed that the global streaming platform refused to partner with her to expand her TV series *The Smart Money Woman*, despite its success.

Arese Ugwu said the setback nearly broke her. The show had gained wide attention and strong viewership, but her request for a larger-scale collaboration was turned down.

A dream cut short

In a recent interview with *Afropolitan*, Arese Ugwu spoke about how her dreams to grow the project hit a wall. She explained that after the first season of *The Smart Money Woman* aired successfully, she hoped Netflix would come on board to help her produce a bigger and better second season.

“We were able to produce Season 1 of *The Smart Money Woman*, and we got a fantastic reception,” Ugwu said. “It aired on Africa Magic and also made it to Netflix. We stayed in the top 10 for 13 weeks.”

With that success, she approached Netflix with a proposal. She wanted financial support and a long-term partnership to expand the show’s reach. But the answer shocked her.

“I then approached Netflix for sponsorship to make the project bigger and better,” she said. “And shockingly, they turned me down. That rejection almost broke me.”

More than just a book author

The Smart Money Woman began as a bestselling book by Arese Ugwu. It follows the lives of five Nigerian women as they navigate money, friendship, and



career challenges. The story mixes financial education with relatable drama, offering practical tips on how to make better money decisions.

The book’s popularity led to the creation of a television adaptation. The show quickly gained fans across Africa, and many praised its fresh take on financial literacy and modern African women’s lives.

But for Arese Ugwu, the journey didn’t end with just writing a book. She wants more. She wants to build a career in filmmaking.

“I want to establish myself as a filmmaker,” she said. “I feel like some people still see me as the girl who wrote a book and the book was turned into a TV series.”

Pushing through the setback

Ugwu admitted the rejection was a heavy emotional blow. But she hasn’t allowed it to stop her. Instead, she is using the experience to drive her next move. She’s determined to keep creating, keep growing, and keep telling stories that matter.

Her experience highlights a larger challenge faced by many African creators. Even when they prove themselves with successful projects, getting long-term support from big international platforms can be hard.

Still, Ugwu remains focused. She continues to push for better representation of African stories and talents in the global film and TV space.

Looking ahead

Although Netflix said no, Ugwu isn’t giving up. She hinted that new projects are in the works and that she plans to explore other partnerships. For her, the goal remains clear: to make meaningful content that reflects African voices and experiences.

Her story is a reminder of the struggles behind the scenes, especially for women in the entertainment industry. It also shows the grit required to rise above rejection and continue building something greater.

As Ugwu puts it, “I’m not just a writer anymore. I’m building something bigger.”

China-US trade talks begin in Geneva

By Fatimah Idera



Trade talks between the United States and China have begun in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Ongoing talks began early Saturday between the U.S. Treasury Secretary, Scott Bessent and the Vice Premier He Lifeng leading the talks on the Chinese side.

However, this marks the first formal round of talks between the two nations since former President Donald Trump introduced broad tariffs, escalating trade tensions between the world's two largest economies.

After weeks of escalating tensions that led to tariffs on goods imports between the world's two largest economies soaring well beyond 100%, the two sides finally came together for talks.

President Donald Trump said Saturday there was "great progress made" on trade talks between the United States and China, amid a possible thaw in the trade war sparked by his massive tariffs.

"A very good meeting today with China, in Switzerland. Many things discussed, much agreed to. A total reset negotiated in a friendly, but constructive, manner. We want to see, for the good of both China and the U.S., an opening up of China to American business. GREAT PROGRESS MADE!!!" Trump posted on Truth Social.

It was the first comment from Trump after a day of talks in Geneva between US officials, including Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, and Chinese officials. A source briefed on the meetings told CNN talks will continue Sunday.

Bessent urged the public earlier this week not to expect a major trade deal out of the meetings, but he acknowledged it was an important step in negotiations.

Vice Premier He Lifeng is leading the talks on the Chinese side, state broadcaster CCTV said in a brief report.

Chinese state-run news agency Xinhua called the Switzerland talks "an important step toward resolving the issue."

"However, an ultimate solution requires sufficient strategic patience and determination, as well as the just support of the international community," Xinhua said.

The US has placed a minimum 145% tariff on most Chinese imports, and China has responded with a 125% tariff on most US imports. As a result, trade between the two sides is falling sharply, according to logistics experts.

Even reducing that tariff rate by half might not be enough to change trade levels significantly. Economists have said 50% is the make-or-break threshold for the return of somewhat normal business between the two countries.

European leaders unite in Kyiv to demand ceasefire in Ukraine

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, flanked by European allies in Ukraine's capital, declared a renewed show of unity on Saturday as world leaders demanded an unconditional 30-day ceasefire from Russia amid the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The emergency summit, dubbed the "coalition of the willing," brought together Starmer, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk for high-stakes talks in central Kyiv. It marked the first visit to Ukraine by Chancellor Merz since assuming office earlier this week and Macron's first return since summer 2022.

"This meeting, hosted here in Kyiv, is deeply symbolic," said Starmer during a joint press conference. "It shows the strength of our unity. We are gathered here during the week we marked 80 years since VE Day, the end of the Second World War, a war fought for freedom, democracy, and sovereignty. These are the same values we defend today."

The leaders announced an agreement for an unconditional ceasefire beginning May 12, with backing from U.S. President Donald Trump, who joined the group via a speakerphone call during the summit. The call was described as "fruitful" by Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, who shared a photo of the five leaders gathered around a phone on X (formerly Twitter).

"All of us here, together with the US, are calling Putin out," Starmer



declared. "If he's serious about peace, then he has a chance to show it now. If not, we will respond, ramping up sanctions and increasing military aid alongside President Trump and our partners."

The proposed ceasefire, which would cover land, air, and sea operations, aims to pause hostilities for 30 days as a potential gateway to full peace negotiations. Ukraine and its allies have agreed to the terms, but Russia has not.

The Kremlin has so far rejected the offer, insisting that any ceasefire must be contingent upon a halt to all Western arms supplies to Ukraine, a condition deemed unacceptable by the coalition leaders.

Early signs of Russian resistance emerged online, with former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev mocking the summit. In a post on X, he derided the Western leaders, writing: "Macron, Merz, Starmer, and Tusk were supposed to discuss peace in Kiev.

Instead, they are blurting out threats against Russia ... You think that's smart, eh? Shove these peace plans up your pangender arses."

The blunt language underscored the skepticism in Moscow, raising doubts over whether the ceasefire proposal would hold. Still, the coalition maintained its position: ceasefire or consequences.

"We're not accepting Putin's conditions," said Starmer. "We are offering a real path to peace. If that is rejected, the international community will respond accordingly."

While some analysts see the ceasefire push as a long shot, others view it as a strategic pivot, combining diplomacy with credible threats of economic and military escalation. Trump's backing lends additional pressure, adding a transatlantic dimension to the initiative.

For now, all eyes are on Moscow and whether it will blink.

India and Pakistan agree to US-brokered ceasefire

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

India and Pakistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire following intense U.S.-led diplomatic intervention, ending days of cross-border missile strikes and escalating military conflict between the two nuclear-armed nations.

The ceasefire was announced Saturday afternoon by U.S. President Donald Trump on his Truth Social platform, declaring the deal a success of “Common Sense and Great Intelligence” after 48 hours of backchannel diplomacy spearheaded by Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vice-President JD Vance.

“After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE,” Trump posted. “Congratulations to both countries.”

Confirmation soon followed from Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, who posted on X that the ceasefire would take effect immediately. Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri stated that senior military officials from both sides held a direct conversation and agreed to halt all military action, on land, air, and sea, with another dialogue scheduled for May 12.

Rubio credited “extensive negotiations” with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the breakthrough. “We commend Prime Ministers Modi and Sharif on their wisdom, prudence, and statesmanship in choosing the path of peace,” Rubio said.

The development marks a dramatic turnaround in the U.S. posture; only two days earlier, Vice-President Vance had publicly said that the India-Pakistan conflict was “none of our business.” The



Trump administration’s pivot to active mediation underscores the seriousness of the threat, with the conflict spiraling rapidly in recent days.

The latest hostilities began on Wednesday when Indian missiles struck nine sites in Pakistan, reportedly killing 31 people. India claimed the strikes were in retaliation for a deadly attack in Indian-administered Kashmir that left 25 Hindu tourists and a guide dead, blaming Pakistani-backed extremists.

Pakistan responded with drone strikes and long-range missile attacks on key Indian military infrastructure, including bases in Punjab and Indian-administered Kashmir. India countered with additional drone assaults and precision strikes on Pakistani military targets. Both countries accused each other of firing the first missiles.

At the height of the fighting, Indian Army spokesperson Col. Sofiya Qureshi said Pakistan attacked 26 Indian sites, including airports and airfields, calling the attacks “deplorable and cowardly.” She confirmed that Indian forces neutralized most of the threats but acknowledged damage at four military installations.

Pakistan presented a different account, accusing India of initiating hostilities by targeting key airbases. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said Pakistani defense systems intercepted most of the incoming missiles, and that Pakistan’s counter-strikes, dubbed Operation Bunyan Ul Marsoos, meaning “Wall of Lead”, were necessary and proportionate.

The U.S.-brokered ceasefire was welcomed internationally, especially after mounting fears of a broader regional war. Earlier on Saturday, the G7 had called on both sides to exercise “maximum restraint.”

While both India and Pakistan framed their respective actions as defensive and justified, the ceasefire allows both sides a face-saving off-ramp. Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar reaffirmed India’s “uncompromising stance against terrorism,” while Pakistani Senator Sherry Rehman praised the nation’s military and civil leadership for emerging with “dignity, professionalism, and national resolve.”

Though calm has now been restored, analysts say the deep-rooted tensions that sparked this latest flare-up remain unresolved, raising questions about how long the peace will hold.

Newark Airport outages highlight U.S. air traffic control crisis

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

In the span of just two weeks, communications between air traffic controllers and pilots at Newark Liberty International Airport have failed twice, each time for about 90 seconds. Though no crashes occurred, the breakdowns triggered massive delays, traumatised air traffic staff, and reignited concerns over America's aging and dangerously understaffed air traffic control (ATC) system.

The first outage on April 28 was followed by a radar failure on May 3, underscoring what many experts are calling a full-blown crisis in U.S. aviation infrastructure. With over 50,000 flights managed daily in the United States, even brief disruptions can spiral into chaos.

Senator Charles Schumer of New York slammed the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as "really a mess," while New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy blamed "decades of underinvestment" and delays in modernizing outdated technology.

A report by the Department of Transportation's Inspector General revealed that 20 of the 26 most critical U.S. airports are operating with staffing levels below the FAA's minimum threshold. In Newark, controllers reportedly took "trauma leave" following the incident, worsening already thin personnel numbers.

A Crisis Decades in the Making

The roots of today's chaos can be traced back to 1981, when then-President Ronald Reagan fired over 11,000 striking air traffic controllers. "The system's staffing problems started then," said Sara Nelson, President of the Association of Flight Attendants. "What's happening now is the fruit of that neglect, plus tax cuts, budget cuts, and anti-government sentiment that killed infrastructure and hiring."

The National Air Traffic Controllers



Association reports the system currently has 10,800 certified controllers well below the 14,300 recommended. While over 2,000 trainees are in the pipeline, training can take up to three years for complex airports like Newark and JFK. Many candidates drop out due to the intense demands of the job.

Trump Administration Announces Overhaul

In response to the Newark debacle, Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy on Thursday unveiled an ambitious plan to modernize the U.S. air traffic system. The proposal includes replacing outdated equipment, some of which still uses floppy disks and copper wiring, with fiber, satellite, and wireless technologies across 4,600 sites.

"People have said this is too hard and too expensive," Duffy said. "But we have a president who actually loves to build."

His plan also includes \$5,000 bonuses for new controller recruits who pass training, part of a broader strategy to "supercharge" the workforce. The cost of the plan has not been fully disclosed, though estimates from Congress place it at over \$12.5 billion.

The airline industry and air traffic unions have cautiously welcomed the proposal, but many experts are skeptical. "Unless you fix the root causes, throwing money won't matter," said aviation analyst Robert Mann Jr.

The Stakes Are Sky-High

This year alone has seen troubling signs of system stress. In January, a commercial jet collided with an Army helicopter near Washington's Reagan Airport, killing 67 people, the worst aviation disaster since 2001. On May 1, another Army helicopter disrupted two landings at Reagan. Newark itself has suffered four communications failures since August 2023.

A 2023 New York Times investigation found that serious near-miss incidents in U.S. airspace occur several times weekly. And the FAA's own data show that 51 of its 138 systems are considered "unsustainable."

Yet despite the grim statistics, some industry leaders remain confident in the overall safety of American aviation. "Safety is always first," Mann said. "But yes, your flight might be four hours late."

For Nelson, the flight attendants' union leader, the unsung heroes are clear: "Air traffic controllers are like nurses during Covid. The system's crumbling, but they keep us all safe."

Now, all eyes are on Congress to see if Duffy's plan gets the funding it desperately needs. "What happened in Newark is just a preview," Nelson warned. "Other airports are next if we don't act."

UK Royal Navy Chief suspended amid probe

By Fatimah Idera

The Head of the Royal Navy of Britain has been suspended, pending an ongoing investigation.

Adm Sir Ben Key was asked to step back as first Sea Lord, sources at the Ministry of Defence (MoD) confirmed on Friday.

Key was absent from the lineup of senior military personnel on the Mall on Monday for celebrations to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, and it is understood that second Sea Lord V Adm Martin Connell has taken full charge until a permanent replacement is announced.

Earlier this week, the MoD said Key had departed for private reasons yet to be revealed.

Recall that Key joined the Royal Navy in 1984 as a university cadet and graduated from Royal Holloway, University of London. As a junior officer, he saw service around the world after qualifying as helicopter aircrew and a principal warfare officer.

He was made Vice Admiral in February 2016 before becoming the Royal Navy's fleet commander and later chief of joint operations until he was appointed first sea lord in 2021.

Over his career, he has commanded four ships: the mine hunter HMS Sandown, the frigates HMS Iron Duke and HMS Lancaster, and the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious.



An Iraq war veteran, prior to taking over the Navy Key, was also awarded a US bronze star and oversaw the retreat from Afghanistan.

In his current role, he is also Chief of the Naval Staff and Chair of the Navy Board, where he is responsible to the secretary of state for the fighting "effectiveness, efficiency and morale" of the service.

In 2024, he issued an unreserved apology for intolerable misogyny in the Submarine Service after a series of investigations across the navy

exposed sexual harassment, bullying, and assault of women within its ranks

The Navy Chief said he was truly sorry to the women who had suffered misogyny, bullying, and other unacceptable behaviours while serving their country. "We must be better than this and do better than we have," he said.

The MoD said "An investigation is ongoing, and it would be inappropriate to comment at this time."

Google sued over changing Gulf of Mexico to US name

By Fatimah Idera



Mexico had sued Google for changing the Gulf of Mexico's name to "Gulf of America" for Google Maps users in the United States.

The Mexico's president, Claudia Sheinbaum, said, "The lawsuit has already been filed," Sheinbaum said at her morning news conference, without saying where and when it was submitted.

On Thursday, Republicans in the House of Representatives approved legislation to codify Donald Trump's policy of renaming the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

The measure was sponsored by rightwing Georgia lawmaker Marjorie Taylor Greene and passed nearly along party lines, with all Democrats opposed and almost every

Republican, with the exception of vulnerable Nebraska representative Don Bacon, voting in favor.

The bill would make the name change official for federal agencies, but it's unlikely to attract the Democratic support needed to pass the Senate. Even if it did, other countries have no obligation to use the new name.

Sheinbaum had warned Google, which is part of tech giant Alphabet, in February that she was considering legal action unless the company reversed its decision.

Her government argues that Trump's executive order on the subject only applies to the part of the continental shelf belonging to the United States.

"All we want is for the decree issued by the US government to be

complied with," Sheinbaum said.

"The US government only calls the portion of the US continental shelf the Gulf of America, not the entire gulf, because it wouldn't have the authority to name the entire gulf," she added.

In response to Trump, Sheinbaum has cheekily suggested calling the United States "América Mexicana"

Mexican America, pointing to a map dating back to before 1848, when one-third of her country was seized by the United States.

The neighboring countries are in talks to defuse tensions over Trump's global trade war, which has included a series of tariff announcement targeting Mexico.

U.S. halts surprise deportation attempt to Libya

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Immigrants detained in Texas were loaded onto buses and taken to a military airfield on Wednesday in what appeared to be a covert deportation attempt to Libya, only to be returned hours later to detention without explanation, according to attorneys and immigration advocates.

Among the group was a Vietnamese construction worker from Los Angeles, represented by attorney Tin Thanh Nguyen, who said his client was one of many woken in the early hours at the Pearsall immigration detention center and transported under heavy security to an undisclosed airstrip. A military aircraft reportedly waited on the tarmac.

“They sat on the airfield for hours, not knowing what was happening,” Nguyen told Reuters. “Then around noon, they were bussed back. No explanation, no process.”

Neither the Department of Homeland Security, the Pentagon, nor the State Department responded to multiple requests for comment.

The incident comes amid reports that the Trump administration was preparing to deport non-Libyan immigrants to Libya, an escalation in its hardline immigration crackdown, despite a federal court order that specifically bars such action without adequate legal screenings.

A Boston federal judge ruled on Wednesday that the administration would be in clear violation of a prior



order if it proceeded with deporting non-Libyans to Libya without giving them a legal avenue to express fear of persecution or torture.

According to Nguyen, his client was pressured earlier this week to sign documents agreeing to deportation to Libya, a country with which he has no connection. The man, who struggles to read English, refused to sign after not understanding the form. He was then allegedly placed in solitary confinement and shackled.

“They told him, ‘You’re going to Libya,’ even though he hadn’t signed anything and wasn’t given a chance to say he feared for his life,” Nguyen said.

The Vietnamese national has lived in the United States since the 1990s and was detained earlier this year during a routine Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) check-in, an increasingly risky event for long-term undocumented immigrants.

Because Vietnam often declines to accept deportees or delays the paperwork process, ICE has turned to

alternative countries, including Rwanda, as potential destinations for deportation, sources say.

The bizarre episode has intensified concerns among immigrant rights lawyers who accuse the administration of circumventing due process and international human rights norms.

“There’s no legal or moral justification to deport someone to a country they’re not from, especially without screening them for danger,” said a lawyer involved in an emergency class-action lawsuit filed after the news broke.

As of Friday, U.S. officials confirmed that the flight to Libya never departed, but offered no clarity on whether plans to carry out the deportations were permanently scrapped or merely delayed.

Meanwhile, detainees remain in legal limbo, shaken by the attempted deportation to a war-torn country many have never even set foot in.

Meta blocks prominent Muslim news page in India

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Meta, the parent company of Instagram, has restricted access to a widely-followed Muslim news page, @Muslim, for users in India following a legal request by the Indian government. The move has sparked backlash from free speech advocates and intensified concerns over censorship during a period of growing hostility between India and Pakistan.

Indian Instagram users trying to access the @Muslim account – which boasts 6.7 million followers globally were met with a notification stating: “Account not available in India. This is because we complied with a legal request to restrict this content.”

The page’s founder and editor-in-chief, Ameer Al-Khatahtbeh, condemned the restriction in a statement, calling it an act of “censorship”. “Meta has blocked the @Muslim account by legal request of the Indian government. This is censorship,” he said. “I received hundreds of messages, emails, and comments from our followers in India, that they cannot access our account.”

Meta declined to directly comment on the case. However, a spokesperson pointed to the company’s established policy of complying with government requests when content is deemed to violate local laws.

The development was first reported by Taylor Lorenz’s User Magazine and comes as India and Pakistan engage in the most intense cross-border violence in two decades. Deadly missile strikes by New Delhi, reportedly in response to an attack on tourists in Kashmir, which India blames on Islamabad, have led to at least 43 fatalities. Pakistan has denied involvement and vowed to retaliate.

In the wake of escalating tensions, India



has cracked down on Pakistani media and cultural figures online. The accounts of Pakistani cricketers, including Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, and cricket legends Shahid Afridi and Wasim Akram, are no longer accessible from India. Instagram accounts belonging to singer Atif Aslam and actor Fawad Khan, both well-known in Bollywood, have also been blocked.

Furthermore, India recently banned over a dozen Pakistani YouTube channels, accusing them of spreading “provocative” content.

The @Muslim account, one of the most followed Muslim news sources on Instagram, has long focused on issues affecting Muslim communities worldwide. Khatahtbeh apologized to Indian followers, saying: “When platforms and countries try to silence media, it tells us that we are doing our job in holding those in power accountable. We will continue to document the truth

and stand out firmly for justice.”

Adding to the global concern, U.S. President Donald Trump called on both India and Pakistan to “immediately halt their fighting”, offering to help mediate an end to the conflict.

As the digital crackdown intensifies alongside physical hostilities, experts warn of a growing wave of misinformation online. From deepfakes to recycled war footage, false narratives are circulating widely, complicating public understanding of the ongoing crisis.

The incident highlights the growing entanglement of geopolitics, censorship, and social media, with major tech platforms caught in the crossfire of international disputes. As hostilities continue to rise, so too does the battle over truth, narrative, and control in the digital space.

Southampton holds Man City to shock draw as Aston Villa closes in on Champions League

By Helen Okechukwu



Manchester City's hopes of qualifying for next season's Champions League suffered a surprise setback on Saturday when Pep Guardiola's side was held to a 0-0 draw away to Southampton.

City had Erling Haaland available again, but the Norwegian's presence couldn't help his side break down a Southampton side that may have been relegated to the Championship several weeks ago, but that needed a point to avoid going down with the joint worst ever record.

Omar Marmoush hit the crossbar late on for City, but despite managing 26

shots in the game, the visiting side had just five on target, while Southampton had just two shots, neither of which was on target during the match.

Ollie Watkins' goal in the first injury time saw Aston Villa to a narrow 1-0 win away to Bournemouth.

Villa has moved onto 63 points, while the result probably ends Bournemouth's hopes of playing in Europe next season, even though Andoni Iraola's side created more chances in the game and ended up against 10 men after Jacob Ramsey's 80th-minute red card.

Brighton and Brentford both kept their hopes of playing in Europe alive with Danny Welbeck and Brajan Gruda scoring as Brighton took advantage of a rival that had nothing to play for to claim three vital points.

Kevin Schade's 18th-minute goal saw Brentford to a 1-0 win away to relegated Ipswich, with Brentford now taking 22 points from the last 27 possible away from home to move onto 55 points.

Vitalii Mykolenko, Michael Keane and Beto all scored as Everton won 3-1 away to Fulham, who had opened the scoring through Raul Jimenez.