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Appeal court upholds Aiyedatiwa, Adelami's election victory **Pg 8**



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Akpabio seeks court order against Natasha over satirical apology

By **Damilola Olufemi**

Senate President Godswill Akpabio has approached the Federal High Court in Abuja, requesting a judicial order compelling suspended Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan (Kogi Central) to remove a satirical video apology posted on her social media platforms.

The video, published on April 27, 2025, features Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan issuing a sarcastic apology in which she alleges she was being penalised for “maintaining dignity and self-respect” and for rejecting what she described as inappropriate advances from the Senate President. The content implies that Akpabio expected his authority to be unquestioned, particularly by female colleagues.

The dispute reportedly originated from a disagreement on seating arrangements in the Senate chamber, which later escalated into a broader conflict. Subsequently, Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan filed a suit seeking to restrain the Senate from investigating her for alleged misconduct. She specifically requested the court to bar the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions—chaired by Senator Neda Imasuen—from initiating disciplinary proceedings.



Despite her legal move, Akpoti-Uduaghan was suspended from Senate activities after making public accusations of sexual harassment against the Senate President.

Justice Binta Nyako, who presides over the matter, had earlier issued an order on April 4, 2025, instructing all involved parties to refrain from making public statements regarding the ongoing litigation.

Akpabio request video deletion

In a new legal filing, Akpabio's counsel, Kehinde Ogunwumiju, requested the court to direct Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan to delete the video from all her social media channels, citing the court's earlier gag order. Furthermore, the application asks that she be compelled to issue a written apology, to be published in at least two national newspapers, and submit an affidavit confirming her compliance with the court's directive.

Senate passes two tax reform bills, comes hard on tax violators

By **Helen Okechukwu**

Two tax reform bills out of the four proposed by President Bola Tinubu were passed by the Senate on Wednesday.

The remaining two bills—the Nigeria Tax Bill 2024 and the Tax Administration Bill—will be passed on Thursday.

An ad hoc committee made up of senators presided over the bills to deliberate on the proposed legislation before passage.

After reviewing the report chaired by Senator Sani Musa, representing Niger East, the Nigeria Revenue Service Establishment Bill and the Joint Revenue Board Establishment Bill were passed.



Meanwhile, during the committee deliberation, clauses of the bills were debated and considered at the Committee of the Whole.

The bill passed after senators supported it in a voice vote conducted by Senate President Godswill Akpabio.

The Senate president acknowledged that a committee would be established to harmonise its decision with the version passed by the House of Representatives in March.

Upon conclusion, the bills will be transmitted to President Tinubu for assent.

The Senate also oversaw the introduction of strict penalties for tax violators, stating that failure to register or file returns will attract a fine, as well as up to three years' imprisonment for serious violations.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

**EFFECTIVE FROM
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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	372,500.00
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14X2	118,000.00
10X6	261,585.50
10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	8,600.00
1X1	4,400.00

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HALF PAGE	192,500.00
QUARTER PAGE	100,000.00
14X2	109,500.00
10X6	242,500.00
10X5	237,500.00
10X4	192,500.00
10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
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8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
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POLITICAL COLOUR

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POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

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QUARTER PAGE	95,222.50

CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

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HALF PAGE	142,787.50
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PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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9X4	137,875.00
9X3	112,875.00
8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
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3X2	19,750.00
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10X4	103,963.00
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9X6	162,222.445
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9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
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3X2	14,923.00
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PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
PRESS RELEASE (4X4)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
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Tinubu congratulate Pope Leo XIV, rejoices with Catholic church

By Oluwatosin Ologun

President Bola Tinubu has rejoiced with the Roman Catholic Church on the emergence of Pope Leo XIV as the 267th occupant of the throne of St Peter, and the new leader of the church.

In a statement on Thursday, presidential spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, said his Tinubu also prayed for the successful tenure of the new Pope and Bishop of Rome.

“The President felicitates the Conclave for electing the American Robert Francis Cardinal Prevost as the 267th Bishop of Rome. President Tinubu rejoices with the leadership of and congregants of the Catholic Church in Nigeria on the historic election of the new Pontiff, whose message of faith and hope already resonates across the globe, with a reassurance from the scriptures of a more peaceful world,” the statement partly read.

Tinubu said Nigeria and the Holy See have shared values over many years.

He also acknowledged the rewarding partnership with the Catholic Church in peacebuilding, education, healthcare, infrastructure, and, more recently, the promotion of technology in advancing human capacity and is confident that the election of Pope Leo XIV opens a new chapter in the history of the Catholic Church and



the values of love, humanity and charity, particularly to the underprivileged, that it has consistently projected.

The President, therefore, prayed that the Almighty God will continuously shed his light of glory over the new leader of the Catholic Church and grant him good health and wisdom so that he can reach the world with the message of peace and love.

Robert Francis Prevost became Pope Leo XIV on Thursday after cardinals from around the globe chose him to be the first leader of the world’s 1.4 billion Catholics to hail from the United States.

Tens of thousands of well-wishers cheered as Leo, successor to the late Pope Francis, appeared on the balcony of St Peter’s Basilica to deliver the first address of his ministry.

“To all people, wherever they are, to all peoples, to the whole Earth,

peace be with you,” a smiling Leo told the crowd.

“Help us, and each other, to build bridges through dialogue, through encounter, to come together as one people, always in peace.”

Leo’s speech drew warm applause, especially a section where the prelate — who spent many years in Peru — broke into Spanish, and also when he paid tribute to his popular predecessor Francis, who died last month.

“We still keep in our ears that weak, but always courageous, voice of Pope Francis blessing Rome,” he said, referring to the ailing Argentine’s Easter Sunday address, a day before his death.

“We must seek together how to be a missionary Church, a Church that builds bridges, which hold dialogues, which is always open,” he said.

Conference of Speakers rejects Reps summons of colleagues

By Alade Adisa



The Conference of Speakers of State Legislatures of Nigeria has rejected the recent summons issued by the House of Representatives Committee on Public Petitions, targeting the Speakers of the Benue and Zamfara State Houses of Assembly.

The summons, allegedly based on petitions from the civil society group Guardians of Democracy and the Rule of Law, is seen by the conference as an overreach of constitutional authority and a direct challenge to Nigeria's federal structure, which it said undermined the autonomy of State Legislatures as guaranteed under the 1999 Constitution.

In a formal letter sent to the

Committee, by the Chairman of the Conference, Adebo Ogundoyin, who is also the Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, the conference articulated that the investigative and oversight powers of the National Assembly, as defined in Sections 88 and 89 of the Constitution, are confined to federal matters.

It emphasised that state legislatures are constitutionally independent arms of government, asserting that their presiding officers cannot be summoned over internal legislative issues unless a clear constitutional or federal matter is involved.

In solidarity with this position, the Speakers of Benue and Zamfara State Houses of Assembly have independently voiced strong

constitutional objections to the summons, stating that the concerns raised are purely domestic and fall outside the oversight jurisdiction of the National Assembly.

The Conference cautioned that any attempts to undermine the constitutional independence of state assemblies could set a troubling precedent, potentially jeopardising democracy at the sub-national level.

The conference called on the National Assembly to respect the principles of separation of powers and mutual institutional respect, assuring Nigerians of its steadfast commitment to transparency, accountability, and the rule of law across all levels of governance.

African country lost N1.3bn lost to 'Tomato Ebola'

By Helen Okechukwu

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security in Nigeria, Senator Abubakar Kyari, said Nigeria has lost over N1.3 billion to the outbreak of Tuta absoluta in Kano, Katsina, and Kaduna, leading to a significant increase in the price of tomatoes.

"Tomato Ebola," nicknamed by farmers, is a tomato-destroying pest.

This development was disclosed on Wednesday during the ongoing four-day capacity-building workshop for financial institutions organised by HortiNigeria in collaboration with the Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL) Plc in Abuja.

Senator Kyari further emphasised that the outcome of the virus has worsened and triggered food inflation and impacted household budgets, stating that previously, a 50kg basket cost N5,000, but due to the attack, it has increased to between N10,000 and N30,000.

He highlighted the effect on tomatoes, stating that the damage can surface within 48 hours.

He stressed the need to implement strategic pest control measures, invest in resilient crop varieties, and support farmers with preventive and safety measures.

In 2024, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) noted that tomatoes led the food price index with a staggering 320 per cent year-on-year



increase, followed by peppers and other produce.

"Tomatoes and pepper, essential ingredients in virtually every Nigerian kitchen, serve as baseline commodities for daily cooking."

To improve Nigerian agriculture, the minister declared horticulture as the solution-driven initiative to revive the system, as it tends to improve rural areas, provide jobs, enhance nutrition, and support trade diversification.

Horticulture involves the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, flowers, and ornamentals.

Unveiling horticulture as a dynamic sector that promotes climate resilience, he said, "The sector also promotes climate resilience through

protected cultivation and irrigation systems and improves urban food access through peri-urban farming and integrated logistics."

While explaining the benefits of horticultural crops, which contain rich nutrients, Kyari noted, "Crops like tomatoes, pineapples, cucumbers, citrus, and plantains have enormous domestic demand and are increasingly becoming key commercial crops."

"Scaling up the production and affordability of these crops is crucial to ending malnutrition in all its forms."

He called for the improvement of the horticulture value chain in the country to enable profit and value using the recommended fit-for-purpose instruments.

Lagos APC schedules LG primaries for Saturday

By Friday Omosola



The All Progressives Congress (APC) has announced that its local government primary elections will take place on Saturday, 10th May 2025.

In anticipation of the exercise, the Lagos State Government has issued a traffic advisory to ensure the smooth flow of movement across affected areas.

The Commissioner for Transportation, Oluwaseun Osiyemi, stated in a press release that motorists would not be able to access ACME Road from the Adeniyi Jones, Lateef Jakande, and ACME Crescent ends.

He added that the entire stretch of ACME Road would be closed to vehicular traffic for the duration of the primaries.

Consequently, motorists have been advised to make use of alternative routes.

Osiyemi explained that those approaching from Adeniyi Jones should connect through Aromire to access Allen Junction and continue their journeys.

He also advised motorists coming from Allen to use Aromire to link Ladipo Oluwole and then connect to Guinness to reach their intended destinations.

Road will also be able to connect to Wemco Road, link to Lateef Jakande, or continue onto Omole to complete their journeys.

“Members of the public are kindly advised to plan their movements ahead of Saturday. If you do not have any urgent or necessary business around the ACME Road axis, please consider avoiding the area to ease movement and reduce congestion.

“Officials of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) will be on the ground to manage vehicular movement along the affected corridors”, said Osiyemi.

“Motorists coming from Akilo

Appeal court upholds Aiyedatiwa, Adelami's election victory

By Friday Omosola



The Court of Appeal in Akure, Ondo State, has upheld the election of Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa and his deputy, Olayide Adelami.

Aiyedatiwa was declared the winner of the Ondo State governorship election by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in November 2024 and was sworn in February 2025.

The court dismissed a challenge brought against the legitimacy of the APC primary that produced their candidacies.

Delivering a unanimous decision, Justice Oyeibisi Omoleye affirmed the earlier verdict of the Federal High Court, which threw out a suit filed by New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) candidate, Olugbenga Edema, on procedural grounds.

Justice Toyin Bolaji Adegoke of the lower court previously ruled that

Edema no longer had legal standing after the NNPP officially withdrew from the case, rendering the suit defective.

Edema, represented by his lawyer Abayomi Ojo, had petitioned the court to compel the INEC to cancel the nomination of Aiyedatiwa and Adelami, alleging irregularities in the APC's primary process.

He had also urged the court to interpret Section 15 of the Third Schedule to the 1999 Constitution (as amended) in his favour.

After the Federal High Court rejected his claims, Edema took the matter to the Court of Appeal.

However, all respondents, including INEC, the APC, and the two elected officials— maintained that the appeal was baseless and an abuse of judicial process.

The appellate panel agreed, ruling

unanimously against Edema and imposing a fine of ₦1 million on him for each of the respondents.

Reacting to the outcome, Remi Olatubora, counsel to the deputy governor, described the case as a misuse of court time.

“It's astonishing that someone who ran under a different party would challenge the victory of APC candidates. Thankfully, justice has been served,” he said.

Ondo State's Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Kayode Ajulo, also welcomed the judgment, applauding the judiciary's commitment and reiterating that the verdict reflected the will of the people.

He added, “The electorate has spoken. What the state needs now is unity and progress, not endless court battles.”

Kwara records lowest child mortality rate in Nigeria despite challenges in skilled attendance

By **Helen Okechukwu**



Despite grappling with challenges in skilled birth attendance across Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Kwara State has recorded the lowest child mortality rate in Nigeria, according to the latest data from the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS).

Speaking during the first quarterly meeting of the Kwara State Task Force on Immunization and PHC in Ilorin, the Executive Secretary of the Kwara State PHC Development Agency, Professor Nasirat Elelu, disclosed that the state had achieved a milestone figure of two child deaths per 1,000 live births — the lowest in the country.

“For the child mortality data, Kwara recorded two out of 1,000 live births, which is the least in Nigeria,” Prof Elelu said. “The indicators show that some of

the activities we’re implementing are actually working, especially in improving public confidence in our health system.”

She noted that access to skilled birth attendants at PHCs in the state played a significant role in the improved health outcomes.

“Kwara has one of the best numbers of skilled birth attendants in PHCs within the North Central zone. That has also translated into lives being saved,” she added.

In an effort to further reduce maternal and child mortality, the state government has introduced free Mama Kits for pregnant women who deliver in PHCs.

Additionally, a toll-free line has been set

up to report any unauthorized charges beyond the basic registration card.

Professor Elelu expressed concern over cultural barriers that hinder health access, especially the reluctance of some husbands to allow their wives to take children for immunization.

She called on ministries, agencies, and community leaders to intensify efforts in educating men about the importance of maternal and child healthcare.

Supporting her stance, the chairman of the state task force and Deputy Governor, Mr. Kayode Alabi, announced that a stakeholders’ meeting would soon be convened to tackle the issue of parents preventing their children from receiving vital vaccinations.

Health Officer encourages expectant mothers to take advantage of antenatal care

By Helen Okechukwu



The Officer in Charge of the Antenatal Clinic (ANC) at Miri Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) in Bauchi, Mrs. Umul-Khairi Musa, has encouraged pregnant mothers to take advantage of and participate in maternal and child health programmes as they enrol in antenatal care.

Musa, who facilitated the cohort learning in maternal and child health, while speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Thursday, highlighted the importance of the organized training exercise aimed at reducing complications and improving child health.

While explaining the structure of

the learning approach, she disclosed that the outcomes of these educative exercises for expectant mothers cut across major health issues such as nutrition, danger signs during pregnancy, and newborn care has been impactful.

“We introduced the cohort learning model to ensure that pregnant women receive focused, continuous education,” she said while acknowledging that since its implementation, there have been noticeable decline in complications during pregnancy.

She further explained the benefits, stating that “Babies brought in for immunisation are generally healthy and developing well for their age.”

“This is because the learning process is interactive, organised, and allows for better engagement.”

During the training, pictorial materials were used to aid better understanding and retain attention.

“Every woman in our care is placed in a cohort based on her pregnancy stage. As some give birth, new ones are enrolled, it’s a continuous process,” she said.

She urged all pregnant women who were part of the programme to apply the knowledge gained.

Firm donates multimillion-naira medical equipment, drugs to RSUTH

By Helen Okechukwu



For effective service delivery, Renaissance Africa Energy Company Limited, in collaboration with its Joint Venture (JV) partners — NNPC, Total Energies, and Eni — donated seven life-saving pieces of equipment, including drugs, to the Rivers State University Teaching Hospital (RSUTH).

The donation exercise took place on Wednesday during a brief ceremony held in Port Harcourt.

The multimillion-naira items were donated by Mr. Igo Weli, General Manager, Relations and Sustainable Development of the company.

The donated equipment includes four VG70 Aeonmed ventilators, a laser therapy machine, and an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

Another piece of equipment donated is a 7A-233D electronic suction apparatus, as well as an assortment of seed stock

drugs, said to be for the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of RSUTH.

RSUTH reacts to donation

The donation includes ventilators originally acquired during the COVID-19 pandemic but unused.

According to Renaissance's General Manager, Weli, the equipment will now serve critical patients, addressing the hospital's shortage of functional ventilators despite its nine-bed ICU capacity.

"The demand for critical care has far outpaced the hospital's equipment capacity, often forcing clinicians to make difficult choices on which patient receives ventilation support," Weli noted. "Rather than allowing them to remain idle and depreciate."

Responding to RSUTH's request, the company expanded its support to include a laser therapy machine and thousands of

essential drugs to support the hospital's drug revolving fund, aiming to end the chronic "out-of-stock" syndrome in healthcare centres.

Weli urged the hospital to ensure proper maintenance of the equipment to guarantee long-term use.

Receiving the donation, RSUTH Chief Medical Director, Prof. Chizindu Alikor, expressed gratitude, saying it would significantly ease the strain on their ICU, which has seen increased pressure since opening to the public in September 2023.

Permanent Secretary of the Rivers State Ministry of Health, Dr. Mekele Igwe, also praised Renaissance for its intervention.

The donation comes after Renaissance's acquisition of Shell Petroleum Development Company's onshore assets in March, marking the company's expanded commitment to local development.

Patients with Down Syndrome suffer high risk of heart disease, stroke

By **Helen Okechukwu**



A study says patients with Down syndrome are prone to a higher risk of having heart disease, including stroke, with a 4.41 times higher risk of ischemic stroke and a 5.14 times higher risk of hemorrhagic stroke.

This research, published in the *Journal of Internal Medicine* on May 7, shared that the 5.14 times risk of stroke is caused by brain bleed.

While the study revealed that both those with and without Down syndrome have the same risk factors, the risk factors are significantly higher among young people with Down syndrome.

The group of researchers says individuals with Down syndrome have a higher risk compared to people who do not suffer from genetic disorders.

Down syndrome is caused by a partial

or complete triplication of chromosome 21, and the life expectancy of people living with it has increased dramatically from 25 years in 1983 to 60 years in 2020.

With this recent study, researchers urged for large population-based studies on aging people with Down syndrome to improve detection, prevention, and treatment of age-related comorbidities in this unique population.

Although the scientists noted that, in early childhood, the extra chromosome 21 begins to manifest along with the presence of congenital heart defects and intellectual disability, including autoimmune and hematological disorders such as leukemia, at a later stage of life, early-onset Alzheimer's disease will be witnessed.

The scientists suggested that the risk factors are linked to cardiovascular

risk factors, with a prevalence of obesity, sedentary lifestyle, and dyslipidemia, but a remarkably low prevalence of hypertension.

Dr. Anne Pedersen, of Sweden's University of Gothenburg, said in a statement that, "Our results show that individuals with Down syndrome are at increased risk of some age-related cardiovascular outcomes, and indicate, in line with results from previous studies, that their cardiovascular risk factor profile differs from the general population."

It is noted that those with Down syndrome age faster, with the immune system failing earlier than in the general population.

More than 5,155 people with Down syndrome born in Sweden between 1946 and 2000 health were studied and compared to those living without Down syndrome.

Fame built on clout won't last, says IK Ogbonna

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian actor IK Ogbonna has voiced concerns over the growing obsession with fame in today's digital age. In a recent post on his Instagram story, the Nollywood star described "clout" as the new form of currency that many people are desperate to spend.

Ogbonna, known for his roles in several Nigerian films, shared his thoughts on how fame is pursued in modern society. He believes many people now chase attention by any means necessary, even if it means sacrificing truth or integrity.

The rise of clout as currency

"Clout is the new currency, and many people are desperate to spend it," Ogbonna wrote. He explained that some individuals use money to buy attention. Others go as far as tearing down respected figures just to be seen. Then, there are those who simply become loud and outrageous to attract the spotlight.

According to him, this strategy might work in the short term, but it comes with a heavy price. "Forced fame might get you quick recognition and momentary hype, but it rarely lasts," he stated.

Fame without substance is empty

Ogbonna stressed that fame built on lies or noise is unstable. It doesn't have a firm base and often crumbles under pressure. "There's no solid foundation, just mine," he said, describing the risk of building popularity on shaky ground.



He emphasized the need for truth, talent, and consistency. Without these qualities, fame fades. "Fame without purpose fades. But fame built on truth, talent, and consistency, that's legacy," he wrote.

The internet can make or break

Ogbonna also pointed out the role of the internet in today's fame culture. While social media can make someone famous overnight, it can just as quickly destroy them.

"The same internet that crowned you today can cancel you tomorrow," he warned. With the internet's fast pace, public opinion changes quickly. One wrong move, one misunderstood post, and someone's entire career can be at risk.

The pressure to stay relevant

According to the actor, the constant need to stay relevant online is exhausting. Many feel forced to create content, stir drama, or chase viral moments just to stay in the spotlight.

This pressure can lead people to take extreme steps, such as faking

lifestyles, copying trends, or acting out of character. Ogbonna believes that this kind of fame is not only temporary but harmful in the long run.

Build a legacy, not just hype

In his message, Ogbonna urged people, especially the younger generation—to focus on lasting values. He wants aspiring stars to understand that true success comes from hard work, real skill, and staying true to oneself.

"It's not the fame you gather that matters," he concluded. "It's how you gather it."

Final thoughts

Ogbonna's comments reflect a broader concern in today's world. In the race for followers, likes, and online fame, many are losing sight of what truly matters.

His message is a reminder that while clout might bring attention today, only truth, talent, and consistency will stand the test of time. As he puts it, "That's legacy."

Odumodublvck reacts to misogyny allegations

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian rapper Tochukwu Ojogwu, better known as Odumodublvck, has responded to growing backlash over allegations of misogyny.

The controversy stems from lyrics in his 2023 hit song *Cast*, a collaboration with fellow artist Shallipopi.

In the track, Odumodublvck made a controversial statement suggesting that some women rely on men for luxury items like wigs and designer handbags. This line sparked criticism on social media, with many accusing the rapper of promoting harmful stereotypes about women.

But in a recent interview with The Beat FM, Lagos, the artist dismissed the claims. He called the accusations “fake” and defended his record when it comes to supporting female artists in the Nigerian music industry.

“That’s a fake misogynist”

Speaking to the radio station, Odumodublvck addressed the criticism directly.

“In the last year, I am the artist that has featured the most women in the game,” he said. “What kind of misogynist is that? That’s a fake one.”

He emphasized that his actions speak louder than the lyrics in question. According to him, he has done more to uplift female musicians than many of his peers. “If I hated women, I wouldn’t work with them or share my platform,” he said. “People pick one line from a song and build a whole story. That’s not fair.”

Lyrics spark debate

The line in question, which implies that some women depend on transactional relationships to afford expensive items, quickly caught public attention. While some listeners defended it as a reflection of real-life experiences, others said it was



a damaging generalization.

Critics accused the rapper of using his music to shame women and reinforce negative stereotypes. The backlash was swift, especially on social media, where users called for accountability and a more respectful approach to discussing women in music.

However, some fans have defended Odumodublvck. They argue that the lyric should be seen in the context of the song’s broader message and Nigerian street culture, where bold statements and raw storytelling are common.

A history of collaborating with women

Odumodublvck insists that his record shows a pattern of supporting women in the industry. Over the past year, he has featured multiple female artists in his projects, including rising stars and lesser-known voices.

“I work with women because I respect their talent,” he said during the interview. “They bring something unique to the music. I don’t just talk about supporting women, I actually do it.”

He pointed out that many artists talk about inclusion, but few take real steps to make it happen. “It’s easy to say the right thing in interviews,” he said. “But I put women on my songs, my shows, and I make sure they get the spotlight.”

Artists under scrutiny

The Nigerian music scene, like many others around the world, is facing increasing scrutiny over how artists portray women. As fans demand more accountability, musicians are being held to higher standards, especially when it comes to lyrics and public statements.

For Odumodublvck, the criticism has been a learning moment. But he also made it clear that he will not let false narratives define him.

“I know who I am, and my work speaks for itself,” he said. “I’m not perfect, but I’m not a misogynist.”

Moving forward

Despite the backlash, Odumodublvck remains one of the most talked-about names in Nigerian hip-hop. His unique sound, bold lyrics, and unapologetic personality have won him a loyal fan base.

As the conversation around lyrics and gender sensitivity continues, artists like Odumodublvck will likely face more pressure to choose their words carefully. For now, though, the rapper stands firm, confident that his actions—not one line in a song, should define his character.

'He loves me', Tiwa Savage fuels dating rumours with Usher

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Afrobeats star Tiwa Savage and R&B icon Usher Raymond have sent the internet buzzing with dating rumours after a playful exchange in London went viral.

The two music stars were spotted together during and after Usher's recent show at the O2 Arena in London. The moment that sparked the frenzy? A light-hearted challenge that ended with Tiwa saying, "He loves me," in front of a cheering crowd.

Fans have since flooded social media with questions: Are they more than just friends? Is there a romance brewing between the Nigerian singer and the American superstar?

A surprise performance at the O2 Arena The night began with music, lights, and a packed crowd at the O2 Arena as Usher continued his Past Present Future tour on Wednesday night.

During his set, Usher surprised the audience by bringing out Tiwa Savage as a special guest. The crowd erupted in applause and cheers when the pair performed Somebody's Son, one of Tiwa's biggest hits. The chemistry between the two on stage was undeniable. Their performance was smooth, playful, and full of energy.

This wasn't the first time the pair had shared a stage. Back in 2022, Usher brought Tiwa out to perform during his headline set at the Global Citizen Festival in Accra, Ghana. That appearance also drew praise, but this latest interaction has stirred deeper interest.

Viral freestyle fuels speculation

After the concert, the two were seen together again, this time at an afterparty. It was here that the now-viral moment occurred.

In a popular game known as the "30 Seconds Challenge," Usher dared Tiwa to



freestyle for 30 seconds. She accepted the challenge with confidence and delivered an improvised performance that immediately caught everyone's attention.

"I'm a little drunk! But it's alright. I think I'm drunk enough. I think I'm drunk enough. Are you drunk enough? Usher, are you drunk enough? Listen, he loves me," Tiwa said as the crowd roared with excitement.

The moment was caught on video and quickly spread across social media platforms. Fans took the freestyle seriously, interpreting the "he loves me" line as a hint that something more might be going on between the stars.

Fans react with curiosity and excitement Within hours, the video had gone viral. Fans filled Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok with clips and comments. Many speculated that Tiwa and Usher were in a romantic relationship. Others brushed it off as a joke or part of the performance.

"She said what she said! Tiwa and Usher? We're ready for that power couple," one fan wrote on X (formerly Twitter).

Another joked, "She didn't stutter. That man is in love."

Still, some viewers remained sceptical. "They were probably just having fun. Artists say wild things on stage," a

commenter noted.

Regardless of what people believe, the clip has kept both artists at the centre of online conversations.

A history of musical chemistry

Though the dating rumours remain unconfirmed, it's clear that Tiwa and Usher have developed a strong musical connection over the years.

Their first known collaboration came in 2022 at the Global Citizen Festival in Ghana, where their on-stage energy drew applause. Since then, fans have watched their friendship grow, both online and in public appearances.

Whether it's business or something more, their recent interactions have added fuel to the speculation. So far, neither Tiwa Savage nor Usher has addressed the dating rumors publicly.

No official statement yet

Despite the excitement from fans and the growing media coverage, both artists have stayed silent on whether they're dating. No official statements have been made by either camp.

Until then, fans can only guess. But with both stars continuing to share stages and make headlines together, it's safe to say this won't be the last time we see them linked.

Robert Prevost becomes first American Pope

By Friday Omosola



In a historic development, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost of the United States has been chosen as the new pope.

This marks the first time an American has ascended to the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church.

The 69-year-old has adopted the papal name Pope Leo XIV.

A plume of white smoke billowed from the chimney atop the Sistine Chapel on Wednesday evening, signalling to the world that the conclave of 133 cardinals had reached a decisive vote.

The traditional signal was met with jubilation in St Peter's Square, where vast crowds gathered to witness the momentous occasion.

As the smoke appeared on giant screens around the square, the bells of St Peter's Basilica rang out, further confirming the election.

Pilgrims and visitors from across the

globe waved their national flags, their excitement intensifying as they awaited the identity of the new pontiff.

While the name of the newly elected pope had yet to be made public, Vatican officials prepared for the traditional Latin announcement from the central balcony of St Peter's Basilica.

It is widely anticipated that Cardinal Dominique Mamberti—a 73-year-old French-born cleric from Morocco will deliver the declaration unless he's himself chosen as pope.

Following the formal introduction, the new pope is expected to make his first appearance and deliver a brief address to the faithful gathered below.

Anticipation has gripped Rome, particularly along the Via della Conciliazione, where thousands have assembled in expectation of witnessing this once-in-a-generation event.

Earlier in the day, the cardinal electors celebrated Mass in St Peter's Basilica

before retreating into the conclave.

During the secretive process, once a clear majority is achieved, the senior cardinal asks the chosen individual:

"Do you accept your canonical election as Supreme Pontiff?" Upon receiving confirmation, he then inquires, "By what name shall you be called?"

The new pope is then led to the sacristy, where he is robed in the traditional papal garments.

His fellow cardinals each approach to pledge their obedience and offer prayers of thanksgiving.

At last, the declaration rings out in Latin: "Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: Habemus Papam!" "I bring you great joy: We have a pope!"

The new pontiff then steps forward to bless the crowd, beginning his papacy.

Organised crime corrupting UK jails from the inside, says minister

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Organised criminal gangs wield such power over prisons across England and Wales that they are corrupting staff, fuelling violence, and enforcing drug debts behind bars, according to prisons minister James Timpson, who says the scale of the problem is so severe it “keeps me awake at night”.

In a candid interview with The Guardian, Timpson revealed that a “beefed up” counter-corruption unit had prosecuted 37 prison staff members last year alone, with authorities intensifying efforts to sever the growing ties between criminal gangs and prison officers.

“Serious organised crime is a big problem, a huge problem,” Timpson said. “It’s one of the things that keeps me awake at night because of the impact it has on a prison’s environment from drugs, debt, violence, and everything that goes with that.”

His comments come amid growing concern from prison watchdogs that criminal groups are asserting control within jails, a claim Timpson has pushed back on, even as criminologists warn that gangs are increasingly targeting and compromising inexperienced prison officers.

“They corrupt both men and women to bring in drugs,” Timpson said. “A lot of these serious organised criminals are in their cells at night, but they’re actually very wealthy and connected with major illegal operations.”

To combat this, the Ministry of Justice has ramped up cooperation with police forces and the National Crime Agency, with 20 specialist investigators now embedded in HM Prison and Probation Service to track down internal collaborators and intercept contraband.

Beyond corruption, Timpson is also pushing for technological innovation. He revealed that more than 30 companies, including Microsoft and Google, are set to



meet with the government to explore how tech, particularly artificial intelligence, could help manage offenders in the community and reduce violence in prisons.

“Technology can really impact what’s happening in prison, but most importantly in probation,” he said, highlighting how AI might relieve overworked probation officers bogged down by repetitive tasks such as sourcing housing for released inmates.

Timpson, the former chief executive of the family-run Timpson Group, took up his ministerial role in July 2024 during a crisis point in the prison system, which has faced chronic overcrowding. Under his tenure, the government authorised early release schemes to create room for new inmates.

Despite persistent overcrowding, with fewer than 1,000 spare places and more than 88,000 people in custody, Timpson expressed confidence that further emergency measures would not be required this year.

However, infrastructure remains a significant challenge. “We’re spending £500 million at the moment on dilapidations,” he said. “A lot of that is just keeping capacity there.” He cited the

crumbling condition of older Victorian prisons as a particular drain on resources.

UK minister addresses ongoing contract with private security company
In a controversial decision, Timpson also addressed the government’s ongoing contract with private security company Serco, which oversees the tagging of offenders. Despite a recent Channel 4 Dispatches investigation revealing that some released prisoners remained untagged for months, he indicated the contract would not be withdrawn.

“What I’ve learned is that procurement is pretty much what it is. Our job is to keep pressure on, call it out when it’s not right, but work with them to solve the problems,” he said. “Things have improved a lot, but I’m still not happy.”

A sentencing review led by former justice secretary David Gauke is expected to be published next week, likely recommending increased use of tagging and community sentences, a shift designed to ease pressure on the prison estate.

As the justice system navigates this critical juncture, Timpson’s remarks offer a sobering glimpse into the scale of the challenges facing Britain’s prisons and the urgency of reform.

Gates slams Musk over US aid, vows to donate \$200bn by 2045

By Fatimah Idera

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates has pledged to donate nearly all of his wealth by 2045, totalling \$200bn, to enhance the lives of the world's poorest people.

The donation of the billionaire followed Elon Musk's support for sharp U.S. foreign aid cuts. Bill slammed Musk, a key figure in President Donald Trump's administration and accused him of "killing the world's poorest children" with huge cuts to the United States' aid budget.

He added that his foundation would share the massive sum over the next two decades, as part of his plan to "give away virtually all his wealth, hinting that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation would close on December 31, 2045.

"The picture of the world's richest man killing the world's poorest children is not a pretty one," Gates told the Financial Times.

The Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency has led to the decimation of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which has previously provided billions in funding for everything from vaccines for children to emergency food assistance.

Gates and Musk once agreed over the role of the wealthy in giving away money, but have since clashed several times.

Gates said he was speeding up plans to divest his fortune and close the Gates



Foundation on December 31, 2045.

"People will say a lot of things about me when I die, but I am determined that 'he died rich' will not be one of them. There are too many urgent problems to solve for me to hold onto resources that could be used to help people," the 69-year-old billionaire Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist wrote in a post on his website.

In his statement marking the 25th anniversary of the foundation, Bill said he wanted to help stop newborn babies, children and mothers dying of preventable causes, end diseases like polio, malaria and measles, and reduce poverty.

"It's unclear whether the world's richest countries will continue to stand up for its poorest people," Gates added, noting cuts from major donors including Britain and France alongside the United States, the world's biggest donor.

"I have come a long way since I was just a kid starting a software company with my friend from middle school," he said.

Bill Gates foundation

Since its inception, the foundation has given away \$100 billion, helping to save millions of lives and backing initiatives like the vaccine group Gavi and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Gates, who is valued at around \$108 billion today, expects the foundation to spend around \$200 billion by 2045, with the final figure dependent on markets and inflation.

The foundation is already a huge player in global health, with an annual budget that will reach \$9 billion by 2026.

However, it has faced criticism for its outsize power and influence in the sector without requisite accountability, including at the World Health Organisation, making Gates himself also subject to conspiracy theories, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I hope other wealthy people consider how much they can accelerate progress for the world's poorest if they increase the pace and scale of their giving, because it is such a profoundly impactful way to give back to society," Gates said.

Britain strike first deal to cut Trump tariffs

By Fatimah Idera

The United States and Britain will announce a deal to lower tariffs on some goods on Thursday, the first such agreement since U.S. President Donald Trump sparked a global trade war with universal levies.

In his posts on Truth Social, Trump said he would hold an Oval Office news conference about a full and comprehensive trade agreement with Britain.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who describes the U.S. as an indispensable ally, is due to provide an update later on Thursday. The deal is likely to be narrow, with Britain securing lower tariffs on cars and steel, the two sectors hardest hit.

“Because of our long history and allegiance together, it is a great honour to have the United Kingdom as our FIRST announcement, as many other deals, which are in serious stages of negotiation, to follow,” Trump says

The United States has been under pressure from investors to strike deals to de-escalate its tariff war after Trump’s often chaotic policymaking upended global trade with friends and foes alike, threatening to stoke inflation and start a recession.

Top U.S. officials have engaged in a flurry of meetings with trading partners since the president on April 2 imposed a 10% tariff on most countries, along with higher tariff rates for many trading partners that were then suspended for 90 days.

The U.S. has also imposed 25% tariffs on autos, steel and aluminium, 25% tariffs on Canada and Mexico, and 145% tariffs on China. U.S. and Chinese officials are due to hold talks in Switzerland on Saturday.

Starmer, who has struggled in



government since he was elected last July with his centre-left Labour Party, has struck up a warm relationship with Trump, and his government will celebrate becoming the first country to agree a deal.

Britain’s car industry exports luxury brands to the U.S., and the 25 per cent tariffs have hit the industry hard. Jaguar Land Rover paused shipments of its cars to the U.S. for a month while it considered how to mitigate the impact. Shares in Aston Martin, which said it would split the cost of tariffs with its customers and limit shipments to the U.S., rose 8% on Thursday.

A British official had said that the scope of any agreement was likely to be narrow, with Britain expected to secure lower tariffs on a tranche of steel and auto exports.

In return, Britain is likely to agree to lower its tariffs on U.S. cars and cut a digital sales tax that affects U.S. tech giants.

Read more: UK, US meet over movie tariffs

It had refused to lower its food standards, which are closely aligned with the European Union, however, Britain’s farming trade union has said that some

U.S. producers do meet British standards by not using growth hormones or antimicrobial washes, and could be given greater market access.

Starmer’s government has been walking a tightrope on trade, seeking as an independent country after Brexit to build new ties with the U.S., China and the EU without moving so far towards one bloc that it angers the others.

There are also political threats on the domestic front. Polling shows the government remains deeply unpopular after it cut support for pensioners’ energy bills and hiked taxes on households and companies, making any move to cut taxes on multinational tech companies a big risk.

Britain’s digital service tax

Britain’s digital service tax, levied at 2% of UK revenue for online marketplaces, search engines and social media platforms, was introduced in 2020 in response to an outcry about tax avoidance by big tech.

It was expected to raise about 800 million pounds (\$1.1 billion) this year, with more than 90 per cent coming from five big tech firms, according to a 2023 report by lawmakers.

US Trade Deal touted ahead of BoE

By **Fatimah Idera**

Following reports of a potential trade deal between the US and UK, the pound has remained steady against the dollar while UK mid-cap shares rallied as it coincides with the Bank of England's expected interest rate decision that is likely to result in a quarter-point cut.

Sterling rose as much as 0.5% against the dollar after the New York Times reported the possible trade deal before trimming gains to trade flat on the day at \$1.3288.

Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer will provide an update later on Thursday on trade talks with the United States, a spokesperson for his office said.

A deal would be the second for Britain in a week after it clinched a free trade pact with India.

London's FTSE 250 index of midcap companies, which are more sensitive to the domestic economy, rose 0.5%, beating the large-cap 100 index, which rose just 0.1%.

The globally focused FTSE 100 on Tuesday racked up 16 straight days of gains, its longest winning streak on record, powered by a solid first-quarter earnings season and optimism over a thawing in global trade tensions.

"Given that full trade deals take years to negotiate, this will likely be a framework and it will be interesting to



see whether the 10 per cent baseline tariff stays as that will provide an important template for negotiations with other countries and a good guide to the long-term tariff strategy of the U.S.," Deutsche Bank strategist Jim Reid said.

Unlike many of its major trading partners, the United States has a small trading surplus with Britain to the tune of some \$12 billion. Britain's main U.S. goods exports are in the form of cars, steel and pharmaceuticals.

Shares in energy companies were the prime gainers on the mid-cap index, while the FTSE 100 kept in positive territory thanks to a rally in the aerospace and defence sector, while drugmakers AstraZeneca and GSK proved the biggest drags.

Meanwhile, traders geared up for the BoE's decision on interest rates, which is expected to result in a quarter-point cut later on Thursday. Investors are almost fully priced in

three additional rate cuts by the end of the year, which would take the benchmark rate to 3.5 per cent.

Will Hobbs, who is head of UK Multi-Asset Wealth at Barclays Private Bank and Wealth Management, said UK households have seen wage growth outpace inflation, which has helped boost consumption, for now.

"The uncertainty created by the U.S. tariffs will certainly have some dampening effect. However, there are potential offsets in the form of lower energy prices and the dramatic changes happening in Europe. The latest read on inflation suggests a little more flexibility for the Bank of England ahead of today's decision," Hobbs told clients in a note.

Much has changed since BoE's last monetary policy report in February, including Trump's proposals for global tariffs, embroiling the UK and other major trading partners in a trade war.

Taiwan compares nation to Pre-WWII Europe amid rising tensions with China

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Taiwan's newly inaugurated president, Lai Ching-te, has drawn a bold historical parallel between his island nation and the European democracies that stood on the brink of war with Nazi Germany in the 1930s, warning of the growing threat posed by modern authoritarian regimes.

In a striking speech delivered to foreign dignitaries gathered in Taipei to commemorate the end of the Second World War in Europe, a first-of-its-kind official observance by Taiwan, Lai emphasised the shared values and common challenges faced by Taiwan and democratic nations across the globe.

"Eighty years after the end of the European war, the message of history is clear," Lai declared. "Today, we share the same values and face similar challenges as many of the democracies that participated in the European war."

The event, rich in symbolism, opened with a video montage featuring footage from the D-Day landings and excerpts from Winston Churchill's rousing "We shall fight on the beaches" speech. It also featured addresses from key European representatives, including Ruth Bradley-Jones, the UK's top envoy in Taiwan, and Lutz Güllner from the European Economic and Trade Office.

Lai's remarks come at a time of mounting military and political pressure from China, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has not ruled out the use of force to annexe the self-governing island. The conflict over Taiwan's status remains one of the most volatile flashpoints in global geopolitics.

Referring to China in veiled terms, Lai urged "freedom-loving people and countries" to unite against authoritarianism, warning that "appeasement will only make the invaders more greedy and expand their ambitions."



"Taiwan and Europe are jointly facing the threat of a new totalitarian group," he said.

Analysts interpret Lai's speech as an attempt to reinforce Taiwan's relevance to European security and global democratic resilience. Marcin Jerzewski, head of the Taiwan office of the European Values Centre for Security Policy, noted that the speech was a strategic message aimed at ensuring Europe remains engaged in Indo-Pacific security, even amid anxieties over the reliability of U.S. support under President Donald Trump's administration.

"Lai is trying to send the message that the security and prosperity of Taiwan and Europe are interconnected," Jerzewski said.

Lai's remarks also sought to redefine Taiwan not as a passive recipient of Western support but as a proactive partner. "Taiwan wants to be a partner, not just a recipient, of western largesse," said Wen-Ti Sung, a non-resident fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global China Hub.

Meanwhile, in a symbolic counterpoint, Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Moscow for Russia's World War II victory celebrations, which this year will include Chinese troops in the parade. Xi's visit highlights Beijing's deepening ties with Moscow amid its continued support for Russia's war in Ukraine, a development that has alarmed Western capitals.

In an article published in Russian media ahead of the visit, Xi underscored the historical significance of Taiwan, referring to the commemorations as marking "the 80th anniversary of Taiwan's recovery" by China. He declared that reunification with Taiwan is an "unstoppable" historical trend and praised Russia's backing of China's reunification efforts.

As China continues to ramp up military exercises around Taiwan and deploys greyzone tactics such as disinformation campaigns, Lai's speech signals a sharpened diplomatic stance, an appeal for global solidarity and a clear warning that the echoes of the 20th century are being heard once more in the 21st.

Beckham and Neville lead new Salford City takeover

By **Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**

David Beckham and Gary Neville have completed a full takeover of Salford City as part of a newly formed consortium, marking a significant new chapter in the club's journey. The move sees the duo buy out the remaining members of the Class of '92—Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt, and Phil Neville—who had co-owned the club since their 2014 acquisition of the then-eighth-tier side.

While the quartet will no longer hold shares in the club, they will remain involved across technical, football, and commercial roles, as well as the club's charitable SCFC foundation. Beckham and Neville's takeover is backed by a consortium of nine shareholders, including prominent names such as Lord Mervyn Davies, businessman Declan Kelly, and India-based Dream Sports Group.

Beckham, who turned 50 last week, celebrated the announcement with a heartfelt post on Instagram: "I'm so proud to be part of a new ownership group alongside my mate [Gary Neville] as we begin the next chapter of Salford's journey."

The announcement comes after a mixed 2024-25 season for the Ammies, who finished eighth in League Two, narrowly missing out on the play-offs by a single point. The club had enjoyed a strong first half of the campaign under manager Karl Robinson, climbing as high as third in January. However, their form dipped significantly following a humbling 8-0 FA Cup defeat to Manchester City, with only six wins in their final 22 matches.

Since the Class of '92 takeover in 2014, Salford City have experienced a meteoric rise, achieving four promotions in five seasons and entering the English Football League in 2019. But despite early momentum, they have remained stuck in the fourth tier, reaching the play-offs only once—losing to Stockport County in 2023.



The new consortium has pledged significant investment into the club's infrastructure and playing squad, signalling ambitions to rejuvenate Salford's push for promotion. In a statement, the club said the acquisition "includes a commitment by the new shareholders to invest significantly in the club, the team and its facilities."

Gary Neville, who last year acquired Peter Lim's 50% stake to facilitate a smoother transition to new ownership, said the goal is to make the club sustainable within five years. In a video posted on the club's X (formerly Twitter) account, he said: "Football always will be the priority. Success on the pitch is critical, but we also need to improve our stadium, training ground, and make the club more accessible. You have my word on that."

Beckham first invested in Salford City in 2019, joining five years after the initial takeover. His increased involvement signals a renewed focus on growing the club's profile and operations, both locally and internationally.

In a joint statement, new investors Declan

Kelly and Lord Davies added: "We hope to bring more success to Salford City's wonderful fanbase, players, and everyone associated with the club."

BBC Sport's Simon Stone noted that while the Class of '92 injected considerable funds into Salford, the club's transformation into a modern EFL entity—including significant infrastructure developments—required much deeper financial backing. With key figures now seeking to scale back their involvement, a revised ownership model was needed.

Some full takeover offers were reportedly rejected due to concerns over control and direction. By forming a consortium of smaller but experienced investors, Neville and Beckham retain influence while leveraging broader financial support and expertise.

Saturday's narrow miss on a play-off spot was a blow, but with fresh leadership and committed investment, Salford City hope to once again ignite their ascent through English football. The next chapter is underway at Moor Lane—and the ambitions remain as bold as ever.

Manchester United, Tottenham advance to all-English Europa League final

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur will meet in the Europa League final May 21, after both sides sealed wins in their semifinal ties Thursday.

Spurs beat Bodo/Glimt 2-0 in Norway, and United came from behind for a 4-1 win over Athletic Club in their respective second legs to put further gloss on the final aggregate scorelines after both teams came in with the advantage from the first legs.

The results sets up a final that features two teams from England for the third time in Europa League and UEFA Cup history, after Chelsea beat Arsenal in 2019 and Tottenham prevailed over Wolves in a two-legged affair in 1972.

The final will be played at San Mames, the Basque Country home stadium of Athletic Club where United secured a shock 3-0 win in the first leg of the semifinal.

The deciding match for Europe's second-tier competition will give Man United and Tottenham the chance to end their less-than-stellar seasons -- both teams are in the bottom half of the Premier League -- with a trophy and a spot in the 2025-26 edition of the Champions League.

United came back from 1-0 down against Athletic Club, with Mason Mount coming off the bench to score twice in the second half. Casemiro and Rasmus Hojlund were also on target to end the tie 7-1 on aggregate.



"It was too long [waiting for a night like that]," Mount said. "I carried on going, working hard in training every day and tried to stay positive and when I had an opportunity to try to make an impact.

"Today it paid off and I came on and affected the game. It was a tight game when I came on, I just tried to calm it down."

Dominic Solanke and Pedro Porro struck for Tottenham who finished off Norwegian side Bodo/Glimt by an aggregate score of 5-1.

"In this moment, I am just worried about the next game, trying not to get injuries for the final," said United manager Ruben Amorim after the match. "We need to win it. If we don't win it, it means nothing for us."

Former Celtic manager Ange Postecoglou, now in charge of Spurs, could even make good on his boast earlier this season that he always wins a trophy in his second

season at a club.

"We've given [the fans] some hope, something to dream about, and [an] exciting trip coming up," Postecoglou said. "We'll just keep doing what we're doing."

Tottenham have beaten Man United three times so far this season, twice in the league and also in the Carabao Cup.

Chelsea in Conference League Final

Chelsea will face Real Betis in the Conference League final later this month after sealing a comfortable semi-final triumph against Djurgarden at Stamford Bridge.

Despite 10 changes from Sunday's win over Premier League champions Liverpool and handing a first senior start for 16-year-old Reggie Walsh, the Blues hardly broke a sweat to complete a 5-1 aggregate victory against the visitors.

Clock ticking as Arsenal fall short gain under Arteta

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Arsenal's Champions League dream came to a crushing end in Paris as Mikel Arteta's side were once again left grappling with the pain of "what might have been." A 2-1 semi-final defeat to Paris Saint-Germain sealed their fate, continuing a painful pattern of near-misses under the Spaniard's tenure.

Arteta had boldly declared before the second leg that Arsenal had arrived in the French capital to "make history." Instead, they became another scalp for a rampant PSG side who have ruthlessly dismantled the Premier League's elite in this campaign, having already dispatched Manchester City, Liverpool, and Aston Villa.

Despite a valiant performance at Parc des Princes, Arsenal were undone by a mix of PSG's clinical quality and their own shortcomings. Gianluigi Donnarumma was again the tormentor-in-chief, denying Gabriel Martinelli and Martin Ødegaard with world-class saves that left the Gunners exasperated.

The scoreline was shaped by goals from Fabian Ruiz and Achraf Hakimi, both stemming from costly errors by Thomas Partey. Though Bukayo Saka pulled one back late on, the damage had already been done. As the final whistle blew amid a pyrotechnic celebration from the home fans, the scale of Arsenal's disappointment became stark.

This marks a fourth semi-final exit for Arteta in as many years — alongside failures in the Europa League and two EFL Cup campaigns — and raises legitimate questions about his ability to take Arsenal from nearly-men to champions.



The reality is brutal: Arsenal have now gone five years without a trophy, the last being the FA Cup in 2020. Arteta has built a talented squad with stars like Ødegaard, Declan Rice, and Saka, and young talents like Myles Lewis-Skelly emerging — but trophies remain the only true currency at elite clubs.

Arteta insisted in his post-match comments that "fine margins" and individual brilliance from Donnarumma had been decisive. But beyond that, Arsenal were guilty of their own strategic failures. Chief among them: not signing a proven striker last summer, a flaw that proved decisive in this tie. Makeshift forward Mikel Merino, usually a midfielder, provided effort but little threat.

Former England defender Matthew Upson summed it up: "When PSG attack, you believe they'll score. Arsenal don't give you that feeling."

Even Arteta's pre-match comments

drew scrutiny. He claimed Arsenal had accumulated more points than past Premier League champions, implying that bad luck or timing had held them back. Yet, as critics pointed out, Arsenal have simply failed to deliver when it mattered — this season included.

Now, Arsenal must secure a top-five Premier League finish to ensure Champions League football returns next year. But for all the talk of progress, the pressure is mounting. Arteta is not in immediate danger, but the expectation is clear: Arsenal must start winning.

The club has played more Champions League matches (201) than any team never to win the competition. Another semi-final defeat now adds to the growing list of painful exits.

Close, again. But still not enough. For Arsenal and Arteta, the time to move beyond potential and into the realm of real silverware is now. The clock is ticking.

Kerr & Mewis welcome baby Jagger amid mixed reactions

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

In a heartwarming announcement that has drawn praise from across the women's football community, international football stars Sam Kerr and Kristie Mewis have revealed the arrival of their first child together. The couple, who have been together since 2021 and got engaged in 2023, shared the news on Instagram, posting a touching photo with their newborn son.

"Our little man is here, Jagger Mewis-Kerr," read the caption accompanying the photo on Kerr's Instagram account. The announcement, made just six months after the couple revealed they were expecting, has been met with an outpouring of support from fellow athletes, fans, and public figures across the globe.

The image showed Kerr, the Australian and Chelsea striker, smiling alongside her fiancée Mewis, the American and West Ham United midfielder, cradling their newborn son Jagger. While the post has garnered thousands of likes and congratulatory messages, it has unfortunately also attracted a minority of homophobic comments, which have drawn widespread condemnation within the football world.

Chelsea manager Sonia Bompastor was among those who swiftly addressed the online abuse, labeling it "completely unacceptable" and calling for more robust action from social media platforms. "It's heartbreaking to see such joyful news met with hate. These platforms need to do more to protect our players," Bompastor said in a post-match interview.

Millie Bright, Chelsea captain and a prominent voice in the fight against online abuse, echoed the sentiment. "We're proud of Sam and Kristie. This should be a time of celebration, not harassment. Social media companies must be held accountable for failing to prevent this kind of toxic behavior," Bright stated.



Amid the negativity, the couple have received overwhelming support from teammates and fans alike. Australia internationals Katrina Gorry and Caitlin Foord, both close friends of Kerr, posted congratulatory messages. "So happy for you both. Welcome to the world, little Jagger," Gorry wrote.

Kerr, 31, has not featured for Chelsea this season as she continues her recovery from an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury. The injury, sustained earlier in the year, sidelined her for the 2024-25 Women's Super League campaign and also ruled her out of international duty with the Matildas.

Meanwhile, Mewis, 34, carried the baby and played only one match for West Ham this season before stepping away from football for maternity. The American midfielder has not announced a formal timeline for her return but is expected to take an extended leave to care for their newborn.

Their relationship has frequently drawn media attention, both for their sporting prominence and personal story. Earlier this year, Kerr stood trial for racially aggravated harassment following an altercation with a London police officer. She was found not guilty, with Mewis supporting her partner throughout the

process, attending court daily and testifying on her behalf.

The couple's openness about their relationship and family journey has made them role models for many, particularly within the LGBTQ+ community. Their courage and visibility continue to challenge stereotypes and broaden the conversation around diversity and representation in sport.

As they begin a new chapter as parents, Kerr and Mewis are now receiving praise not just for their talents on the pitch but for their grace under pressure and commitment to building a life together with authenticity and love.

Jagger Mewis-Kerr's arrival marks not just the birth of a new life but a moment of hope and progress in a sporting world still grappling with issues of inclusion. For many, the smiles in the Instagram post represent more than just a happy family—they symbolize a growing shift towards acceptance, both in football and beyond.