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# El-Rufai speaks out after Atiku, others visit Buhari in Kaduna

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**F**ormer Kaduna State Governor, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, has downplayed speculation surrounding his recent visit, alongside prominent political figures including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, to former President Muhammadu Buhari.

The high-profile gathering, which took place in Kaduna on Friday, has ignited political chatter, especially as it featured opposition stalwarts such as Atiku, former Sokoto State Governor Aminu Tambuwal, and ex-Benue Governor Gabriel Suswam. The visit comes amid talks of a potential coalition forming ahead of the 2027 presidential election, with Atiku and Labour Party's Peter Obi reportedly working behind the scenes to unseat President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Atiku, in a post following the visit, expressed joy over reuniting with Buhari, praising the former leader's characteristic humour. "Today, I had the opportunity to pay a post-Sallah visit to His Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari... As usual, he cracked me up (to the extent that my ribs were hurting) with his peculiar humour," Atiku wrote. The former vice president also explained that he had remained in Adamawa during the Sallah festivities to represent the Lamido Fombina in various celebratory duties.



The visit has since been interpreted by political analysts as a calculated move ahead of the 2027 elections, potentially marking the beginning of a formidable opposition alliance. Reports also suggest that Atiku and Obi are in talks to join the Social Democratic Party (SDP), with former SDP presidential candidate Prince Adewole Adebayo confirming ongoing discussions.

Reacting to the swirling rumors, El-Rufai took to social media to dismiss claims that the meeting was politically motivated. In a tweet that raised eyebrows, he subtly addressed perceived tensions with the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

"We joined over [a] hundred faithful for Jumaat prayers at the Yahaya Road Mosque and had a sumptuous lunch at the Buhari Residence. By the way, our

adversaries should not lose any sleep. It is not about politics. It is about unity and brotherhood," El-Rufai stated.

He added wryly, "Since we are all politically irrelevant, we just prayed and enjoyed lunch with our mentor."

Observers have noted that while El-Rufai claims the visit was strictly fraternal, his use of the term "adversaries" may be a veiled jab at President Tinubu, the APC, and Governor Uba Sani of Kaduna State.

As Nigeria's political landscape braces for another intense election cycle, the Kaduna gathering signal that 2027 might just be the year of unexpected alliances and political realignments. Whether symbolic or strategic, one thing is clear: the game has begun.



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## EFFECTIVE FROM DECEMBER 1, 2024

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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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
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9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
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10X5	192,305.50
10X4	142,787.50
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10X4	149,440.00
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9X5	169,050.00
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
5X2	32,916.50
4X4	52,666.50
4X3	39,499.50
4X2	26,333.50
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10X5	162,222.445
10X4	103,963.00
10X3	N/A
9X6	162,222.445
9X5	168,191.50
9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
7X4	72,676.00
6X4	65,000.00
6X3	41,124.50
6X2	29,858.00
5X6	71,378.00
5X4	42,825.00
5X3	29,858.00
5X2	22,841.00
4x4	N/A
4X3	N/A
4X2	17,737.50
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3X2	14,923.00
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PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
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## CONTACT US

**Correspondent Address:**  
Real Group Plaza, No.1 Junaid Dosumu  
Street, CBD, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos  
**Call the Editor on: 07025014298, 09014323792**

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# Uromi Killings: FG, Edo govt establish fact-finding committee

By Friday Omosola

In response to the recent killings of several hunters in Uromi, Edo State, Governor Monday Okpebholo has announced the establishment of a fact-finding committee by the federal government (FG), in collaboration with the state government, to investigate the incident.

Fred Itua, the governor's Chief Press Secretary, disclosed this in a statement, noting that Okpebholo made the announcement yesterday while receiving a high-level delegation from Kano State, led by the Deputy Governor, Abdulsalam Gwarzo, at the Government House in Benin City.

According to the governor, President Bola Tinubu is deeply concerned about the events in Uromi and is committed to ensuring that both the state and the nation remain safe for all citizens and residents to live and conduct business.

"This incident has been an eye-opener, and we are determined to address many of the pressing issues affecting our country, especially those that compromise our safety and well-being.

"The President is disheartened by what transpired and has mandated us to pursue justice to its logical conclusion," he said.

"The President is personally invested in resolving this matter. I would also like to inform you that both the Federal and Edo State



Governments have constituted a committee to uncover the root causes of this unfortunate event and to develop long-lasting solutions.

"The report you have presented will greatly assist us, so we do not need to trouble you further. Much will be done, and the public will be duly informed of the committee's progress and findings.

"We in Edo State are peace-loving people. We value all who live among us. Edo and Kano States have enjoyed a longstanding partnership, particularly in the areas of commerce and industry," he added.

Deputy Governor Gwarzo expressed gratitude to Governor Okpebholo for his earlier visit to Kano, stating that their delegation was in Edo to appreciate the governor's conciliatory approach following the Uromi incident.

"The Governor of Kano State established a committee to screen

and verify the identities of those affected—to determine names, numbers, next of kin, and survivors. We have completed this process and compiled a report, which we are here to present to Your Excellency.

"You gave us your word that justice would be served, and we trust in your commitment, Mr Governor. We seek a transparent and credible process in resolving this matter. Sixteen people from five local government areas in Kano State lost their lives in the attack," he said.

In attendance during the visit were the Deputy Governor of Edo State, Dennis Idahosa; the Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Blessing Agbebaku; heads of security agencies in the state; senior government officials from both Kano and Edo States, among others.

Governor Okpebholo and the Kano delegation also visited Uromi, where they met with members of the Hausa community in the area.

# Nigeria woos French investors with pro-business reforms

By Friday Omosola

The Nigerian Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has made a compelling pitch to French investors.

He highlighted Nigeria's ongoing economic reforms, vast market potential, and pro-business environment as part of the government's push to attract foreign direct investment.

Idris addressed over 200 French companies at the Nigeria Business Forum in Paris yesterday, organised by Business France.

The event, which brought together key stakeholders from sectors such as energy, infrastructure, agriculture, and healthcare, underscored Nigeria's commitment to strengthening its economic ties with France.

Idris praised longstanding French partners in Nigeria, including TotalEnergies, Lafarge, Peugeot, Danone, Alstom, and Schneider Electric, for their contributions to the country's key sectors.

Under the leadership of President Bola Tinubu, Idris highlighted the nation's reform-driven path, referring to it as an 'unprecedented journey of reform' under the Renewed Hope Agenda.

The eight-point strategic plan aims to unlock Nigeria's vast economic potential and position it as a gateway to Africa's growing consumer market, bolstered by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

"These historic reforms are creating a more competitive, transparent, and investor-friendly economy," Idris said. "Nigeria is set to become the gateway to Africa's booming consumer market."

Key reforms, according to the Minister, include the unification and stabilization of



the foreign exchange regime, the phasing out of fuel subsidies to curb leakages, and the introduction of cost-reflective electricity tariffs.

Additionally, tax reforms, legislative measures, and digital reforms are all aimed at fostering a private-sector-led economy.

Idris also pointed to Nigeria's unique investment appeal: Africa's largest economy, a population of over 220 million people, with more than 70% of the population under 35 years old, and over 26 years of uninterrupted democratic governance, which has ensured political stability.

The minister reassured investors of Nigeria's well-regulated, rule-of-law-based economy, supported by robust institutions such as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Recalling the significant achievements of the Tinubu administration, Idris noted that in just 20 months, Nigeria's fiscal trajectory had reversed, with the country recording a 3.84% GDP growth in Q1 2024, a 20% increase in revenue, and a

reduction in the proportion of revenue spent on debt servicing.

"The government is acting as a catalyst for private sector growth through initiatives such as the Renewed Hope Infrastructure Development Fund (RHIDF), the Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation (CrediCorp), and the Presidential CNG Initiative," he said.

"These initiatives are creating opportunities for trillions of naira in private sector investments."

Idris also emphasised the growing presence of Nigerian banks in Europe, with new offices in Paris, and expressed optimism about increased Nigerian participation in France's creative industries, media, and technology sectors.

He invited French companies, particularly in agribusiness, to explore new opportunities in Nigeria's livestock sector, citing the newly established Ministry for Livestock Development as an avenue for partnership.

He highlighted Danone's leadership in dairy products as an example of potential collaboration in this space.

Reaffirming Nigeria's commitment to its reform agenda, Idris echoed President Tinubu's statement during his 2024 visit to France: "We must brace up for the future with commitment, optimism, and the courage of our founding fathers."

During his visit to Paris, Minister Idris is also scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with prominent French media and cultural institutions, including France Médias Monde, the French Regulatory Authority for Audiovisual and Digital Communication (ARCOM), and Thomson Broadcast, to enhance cooperation between Nigeria and France in the information and broadcast sectors.



# FG denies lopsided appointments, reaffirms commitment to fairness

By Friday Omosola



**T**he federal government (FG) has dismissed recent claims circulating on social media alleging lopsidedness in federal appointments, reaffirming its commitment to equity, justice, and national unity.

In a statement signed by Segun Imohiosen, Director of Information and Public Relations of the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (OSGF) described the claims as ‘unfounded speculations’.

OSGF emphasised that all appointments are made per the federal character principle as

outlined in Section 14 of the 1999 Constitution (as altered).

“The government categorically refutes claims of lopsidedness and emphasises its unwavering commitment to the principles of fairness, equity, and national unity,” the statement read.

OSGF noted that President Bola Tinubu remains deeply committed to Nigeria’s unity and is guided by fairness and justice in all matters of governance, including appointments into key positions.

“This administration is dedicated to ensuring that all regions and

demographics of the country are adequately represented in its institutions and agencies,” the release stated.

OSGF also urged Nigerians to disregard divisive narratives being pushed by what it described as ‘pokers of embers of hate and disunity’ and advised citizens to rely on official government channels for accurate information.

“All inquiries relating to federal appointments should be directed to the OSGF, which is the official custodian of such matters,” the statement added.

# PETROAN backs Naira-for-crude plan, predicts drop in petrol prices

By Friday Omosola

The Petroleum Products Retail Outlets Owners Association of Nigeria (PETROAN) has thrown its weight behind the federal government's renewed commitment to the Naira-for-Crude initiative.

PETROAN described it as a policy that could significantly lower petrol prices across the country.

Speaking in Abuja, PETROAN's National PRO, Joseph Obele, welcomed the decision of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) to uphold the Naira-for-crude arrangement.

Obele called it a forward-thinking approach to revitalising the energy sector.

"This move is not only timely but necessary," Obele said.

"By enabling local refineries to purchase crude oil in Naira, we reduce our overdependence on foreign exchange and take meaningful steps towards a more resilient downstream sector."

The policy allows domestic refineries—such as the Dangote Refinery and others—to acquire crude oil using Nigeria's local currency rather than the U.S. dollar.

PETROAN argued that this change will ease FX pressure, encourage industrial investment, and bolster the country's refining capability.

Obele also attributed the potential for falling petrol prices to the recent downward trend in global crude oil markets.

He stated that the combination of



lower international prices and the Naira-based policy presents a unique opportunity to pass savings onto Nigerian consumers.

"Let's commend President Bola Tinubu and relevant ministers for championing this approach," he said, referencing key officials including Senator Heineken Lokpobiri (Petroleum Resources), Wale Edun (Finance), Farouk Ahmed (NMDPRA), and Gbenga Komolafe (NUPRC).

"This policy puts Nigerians first. When crude is refined locally using our own currency, the overall cost of fuel drops significantly. That's the relief we've all been waiting for."

Obele noted that the global oil market is currently under pressure, with oversupply and reduced demand leading to price slumps.

He cited increasing output from non-OPEC nations and sluggish economic growth in major economies as reasons behind the

fall.

He also reflected on long-term global policy shifts, saying, "Some of these trends were triggered years ago by policies like the U.S. tariff strategies under former President Trump. The ripple effects are still being felt, and they've contributed to a softer crude market."

Despite the volatility abroad, Obele said Nigeria is well-positioned to cushion itself from global oil shocks—if it continues along the path of strategic self-reliance.

"With this policy firmly in place, we foresee improvements not only in pricing but in fuel availability and supply chain stability," he added.

PETROAN reaffirmed its support for initiatives that encourage domestic refining, protect foreign reserves, and provide long-term relief for fuel users across Nigeria.



# Court dismisses Nnamdi Kanu's N50bn suit against Nigerian government

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

**T**he Federal High Court in Abuja yesterday struck out a ₦50 billion lawsuit filed by the leader of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, against the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Presiding over the matter, Justice Inyang Ekwo ruled that the case lacked diligent prosecution. When the matter was called in court, neither Kanu nor legal representatives from either side were present.

Justice Ekwo noted that on the previous adjourned date, while the Federal Government had legal representation, no counsel appeared on behalf of the IPOB leader.

He observed that the matter had suffered three consecutive adjournments due to non-appearance by parties involved. Consequently, the judge struck out the suit.

The case, filed under suit number FHC/ABJ/CS/462/2022, listed the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) as the first and second defendants respectively. Kanu had accused the defendants of violating his fundamental human rights, alleging that he was abducted from Kenya and forcibly returned to Nigeria to face trial.



Igbo Organisations Unite for Landmark Diaspora Convention in the U.S.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the World Igbo Congress (WIC), Dr Festus Okere, and his executive team have reached a formal agreement with the Igbo Organisation of New England (IONE) regarding the highly anticipated 2025 convention, scheduled to take place on 29 August.

The event, which is set to be hosted at the Marriott Boston Quincy in Massachusetts, promises to be the largest assembly of Ndigbo in the North-East of the United States in recent years. IONE, known as a formidable Igbo body in the Diaspora, is leading the initiative to foster global advocacy for the Igbo cause.

President of IONE, Mr Bonny Chibueze, alongside Vice President Dr Ubiem and the organisation's executive council, has appointed a team of experienced administrators to steer the convention's planning and execution. The team is led by Dr Joyce Nwosu and Dr Ejike Eze.

The multi-venue convention centre will feature a variety of amenities, including direct flight access and airport shuttle services. Reservations are available on a first-come, first-served basis, with "WIC 2025" designated as the official promo code for bookings.

The convention is expected to attract notable figures and stakeholders from across the Igbo community, as discussions on development, cultural heritage, and political engagement take centre stage.



# Amnesty condemns ban on Eedris Abdulkareem's protest song

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

**H**uman rights watchdog Amnesty International has strongly criticised the National Broadcasting Commission's (NBC) recent decision to ban Nigerian rapper Eedris Abdulkareem's latest protest song, Tell Your Papa, calling it a "clear violation" of fundamental rights to freedom of expression and access to information.

In a press statement released on Thursday, April 10, the organisation described the ban as "unlawful, arbitrary, and deeply worrying," and warned that it reflects an escalating pattern of censorship and intolerance under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration.

"The National Broadcasting Commission's blatant ban of broadcasting Eedris Abdulkareem's song Tell Your Papa is a clear violation of freedom of expression, which includes the right to obtain information," Amnesty International said.

The song, which openly criticises the current government and draws attention to widespread social and economic challenges, was classified by NBC as "Not To Be Broadcast," citing provisions in the Nigerian Broadcasting Code.

However, Amnesty International condemned the move as lacking any legal or moral justification.

"Categorising the song as 'Not To Be Broadcast' solely for being critical of the government and those in power is an abuse of authority and is unacceptable. It is entirely inconsistent and incompatible with the right to access information and



media freedom in Nigeria," the group said.

Amnesty further urged President Tinubu to intervene, calling on him to "immediately direct the NBC to withdraw the bizarre ban which violates a range of human rights."

The organisation also warned of the broader implications such a move could have on artistic freedom and the media landscape in Nigeria.

"The arbitrary and unlawful ban by the NBC would have a disproportionate and chilling effect on the work of radio and television stations in Nigeria, this clampdown on artistic freedom is an appalling reminder that artists are at risk of being silenced. Nothing can justify suffocating creativity," the statement read.

The group also highlighted Nigeria's obligations under international and regional human rights frameworks, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, both of which protect free expression and artistic freedom.

"Citing the deeply flawed and problematic Nigerian Broadcasting Code to justify the ban shows a new level of intolerance towards dissenting voices," Amnesty added.

In its concluding remarks, Amnesty reiterated the urgent need for reforms to NBC's regulatory framework, which it claims has long been used to suppress dissent and stifle press freedom.

"The ban underscores the need to urgently repeal heavy censorship regulations of NBC that have been used to curb freedom of expression in the country," the organisation stated.

Amnesty warned that failure to reverse the ban could set a dangerous precedent for further government censorship and repression.

"It is not too late for President Bola Tinubu's government to withdraw the ban, which will have the sad repercussion of promoting censorship and generating a new wave of fear of repression," the group concluded.

# New NNPC boss urged to shun Kyari's 'Dollar-Driven' legacy, embrace transparency

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

A coalition of energy rights campaigners under the banner of the Energy Justice Forum (EJF) has called on the newly appointed Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), Bayo Ojulari, to steer clear of what it labelled “the dubious, dollar-chasing reforms” of his predecessor, Mele Kyari.



In a statement released on Friday, April 11, by Dr Godknows Manager, National President of the coalition, the group emphasised that Nigerians deserve transparency and warned that secrecy and elitist policies cannot form the foundation of a sustainable energy future.

“It would be a fatal mistake for the new leadership at NNPC to continue on the path orchestrated by Kyari — a path that nearly collapsed our economy, undermined local refining, and exposed the country to foreign exchange shocks,” the statement read.

The group demanded a full audit of Kyari’s tenure, including all contracts, swap deals, and transactions executed under the guise of liberalisation.

“We are watching closely. Nigerians are watching. And we will not hesitate to mobilise civil society resistance if old habits creep back in through the back door,” the forum warned.

“Nigerians deserve transparency, not tokenism; energy justice, not backdoor deals. There must be a clear audit of Kyari’s tenure — all contracts, all swaps, and all the shady transactions disguised as ‘liberalisation’. We are demanding full disclosure and accountability,” the statement continued.

The EJF also praised the executive arm of government for reinstating the naira-for-crude policy, describing it as a vital move that supports local refineries and serves the broader Nigerian populace.

According to Dr Manager, the shift away from a dollar-denominated model is not solely about supporting the Dangote Refinery, but rather about rejuvenating domestic refining capacities in Warri, Port Harcourt, and Kaduna, and relieving ordinary Nigerians of the burden of an import-dependent energy system.

He called the policy “the most patriotic intervention in Nigeria’s petroleum sector in recent history” and urged the new NNPC leadership to align with President Bola Tinubu’s reformist agenda.

“We must be clear — this policy is not about Dangote alone. It is about returning value to Nigerians, enabling our local refineries to thrive, and ensuring that Nigerians are not perpetually held hostage to dollar-based fuel pricing,” Manager said.

He further encouraged the NNPC board to strengthen collaboration with local investors and engineers, stressing that a sustainable energy future must be built on openness and national inclusion.

“This is a new dawn. The new NNPC must walk in light, not shadows,” he concluded.



# Rivers women call for reinstatement of Fubara, demand justice

By Helen Okechukwu

In large numbers, women in Rivers State on Friday stormed the major Aba Road area of Port Harcourt, protesting with placards and calling for the reinstatement of suspended Governor Siminalayi Fubara and his deputy, Prof. Ngozi Odu.

Before marching along Aba Road, the women held prayers at Isaac Boro Park.

As the protesters advanced toward the State Government House from Aba Road, they were seen with placards boldly inscribed with “Bring back Fubara,” “Save our democracy,” “Is the law different for Rivers State?” and “God of justice, arise for Rivers State.”

The protesters, who identified themselves as mothers and wives, chanted songs and called on President Bola Tinubu to reinstate Fubara and allow democracy to prevail.

The women condemned the state



of emergency, describing military rule as unconstitutional, and insisted that the people deserve better than the current political situation.

Some protesters expressed concern and frustration over the ongoing crisis in the state. They praised Governor Fubara for continuing his duties despite the challenges.

“We are a peaceful people and do not deserve this kind of injustice. The governor has been doing his job despite the distractions. What is happening now is not democracy,” a protester said.

The peaceful protest included

women of all ages. Leaders stressed that the movement was not political but a stand for democracy.

“We are here to defend our votes and the sanctity of our democracy,” one of the leaders stated. “This is beyond Fubara; it’s about justice and the future of Rivers State.”

Fubara, his deputy, and members of the Rivers House of Assembly were suspended after President Tinubu declared a state of emergency, which was seconded by both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

# Activist VeryDarkMan to sponsor new video for banned protest song 'Tell Your Papa'

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



**C**ontroversial activist VeryDarkMan has pledged to fund the production of a new video for Nigerian rapper Eedris Abdulkareem's protest song, Tell Your Papa, which was recently banned by the Nigerian government.

The Federal Government, through the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), prohibited the song on Thursday, April 10, deeming it "inappropriate and offensive."

The track, which addresses issues of national hardship and insecurity, gained significant attention following the ban, sparking discussions across social media platforms.

In response to the government's action, VeryDarkMan criticised the ban, asserting that the song's message highlights the prevailing challenges faced by Nigerians.

He questioned the rationale behind suppressing content that reflects the country's realities, stating, "Isn't there hardship in the country? Ain't people dying from insecurity?"

VeryDarkMan announced plans to collaborate with Abdulkareem on a new video for Tell Your Papa, aiming to amplify its reach beyond traditional media channels.

He proposed featuring a lookalike of

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the video, given the challenges of involving the President himself. The activist emphasized the importance of utilizing social media to disseminate the song, highlighting, "We are going to take it over by social media."

This initiative underscores VeryDarkMan's commitment to supporting artistic expressions that address societal issues, despite governmental restrictions. His involvement aims to ensure that the song's message continues to resonate with the public, fostering awareness and dialogue about the nation's pressing concerns.



# Drama as soldier clings to moving vehicle during clash with civilian driver

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

In a bizarre and chaotic incident that has set social media abuzz, a Nigerian driver was caught on camera speeding off with a soldier desperately clinging to the bonnet of his vehicle. The event, which has since gone viral on X (formerly Twitter), has sparked widespread debate on professionalism, civilian-military relations, and public conduct.

The footage shows the uniformed soldier attempting to stop the vehicle for unknown reasons. Rather than complying, the driver accelerates, prompting the soldier to leap onto the bonnet in a bid to halt the car. The soldier remains sprawled across the moving vehicle as voices from inside the car hurl taunts and defiance at him.

One passenger is heard saying, “You no wan hear word, we go show you. If we reach a far place, we go drop you and see what you’ll do, because you be soldier, abi?”

The incident has prompted mixed reactions online. While some condemned the driver’s recklessness, others criticized the soldier’s unprofessional behavior, questioning his decision to endanger himself in such a dramatic fashion.

Reacting to the video, social media user @Dailygistz quipped, “Make dem just drive out of town, this



soldier go drop attitude.”

@THE\_CRAFT3R questioned the logic behind the stunt, writing, “Why would anyone hang on the hood of a speeding vehicle?”

@Samvicck\_ didn’t hold back: “When Nigeria Soldiers start to dey dey useless like this???”

Meanwhile, @fineboyrealtor0 offered a darker take: “If na me and my guys we go carry am go lonely place go shi am well well. Him mind go deh.”

Not everyone was unsympathetic toward the soldier. @onlyymayor wrote, “Soldier then wetin happen? Una too dey gaz this people. They no be human being e be.”

Another user, MaziSteven, echoed similar sentiments: “Soldier no be human being? Some of them nuisance too much, especially those recruit.”

@MuminAbdulmalik took a comedic

route: “James Bond no do stunt pass this. Make the soldier man leave military, start @HomeOfNollywood action movies. He’s got real money-making potential. And forgive the driver — the country is hard already. Ppl no dey smile again.”

On a more cautionary note, @\_Ekezie warned, “You dey play with soldier? You go chop sand no worry.”

As of press time, neither the Nigerian Army nor relevant law enforcement agencies have released an official statement regarding the incident. However, the episode has once again brought to light growing tensions between security operatives and civilians, especially in a climate where frustration, hardship, and distrust are on the rise.

# Police to begin training for 10,000 new recruits

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

**T**he Nigeria Police Force has announced that the training for the 10,000 newly recruited police officers across the country will begin on 12 April.

Adejobi Olumuyiwa, the police spokesperson, in a statement, said the nationwide training programme, which will take place in various police colleges and training institutions, is part of the efforts to equip recruits with the skills, discipline, and knowledge necessary for effective policing and public service.

Ahead of the resumption, the police held an orientation ceremony on Friday, April 11, for Commandants and Directing Staff of the training institutions.

The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Kayode Egbetokun was represented virtually at the event by the Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Department of Training and Development (DTD), Frank



Mba.

Addressing the training officials, the IGP emphasised the importance of embracing the ongoing police reforms.

He maintained the highest ethical standards and demonstrated unwavering professionalism throughout the training process.

He also reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the welfare of the recruits, promising adequate provisions for feeding, accommodation, and a conducive learning environment.

The IGP further charged the new recruits to uphold the ethics of policing and to conduct themselves with discipline and integrity throughout their training and professional careers.

The IGP expressed appreciation to President Bola Tinubu for his continued support towards strengthening the operational capacity of the police.

He described the recruitment and training of 10,000 officers as a major step towards enhancing national security and improving public safety.



# NAFDAC urges pharmaceutical firms, healthcare providers to prioritise approved generic drugs

By Helen Okechukwu

The Director General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Prof. Moji Adeyeye, has charged all pharmaceutical firms and healthcare providers to prioritise the use of approved generic drugs.

During a press briefing held on Thursday in Lagos, the NAFDAC boss, Adeyeye, reiterated the commitment of the anti-drug agency to ensuring the efficacy of generic medicines in Nigeria, which aligns with protecting lives.

According to her, the aim of the initiative is to prevent the circulation of substandard drugs and enhance the quality of medicines.



She said, "By mandating bioequivalence studies, NAFDAC is strengthening its regulatory framework to safeguard public health.

"This measure not only enhances trust in the pharmaceutical industry but also encourages rational prescribing practices."

She said the agency has set out a clear

roadmap, including new guidelines and a "Note to Industry" available on NAFDAC's website.

The note outlines requirements for Contract Research Organisations (CROs).

To support implementation, NAFDAC is training its staff and key industry players, including healthcare workers and researchers, on bioequivalence studies.

Adeyeye reaffirmed the agency's commitment to high scientific standards and urged stakeholders to support its efforts.

She said the briefing is part of wider engagement to strengthen Nigeria's drug regulation system.

# Sokoto records 300 meningitis cases, 16 undergoing recovery

By Helen Okechukwu

After the state experienced an outbreak in February, the Sokoto State Government announced the recording of 300 meningitis cases, with 16 persons currently undergoing treatment.

While speaking at a one-day sensitization campaign held recently, the Commissioner of Health, Dr. Farouk Abubakar, revealed this data, stating that others has been discharged.

When the outbreak was first reported in February, the number of contacts was not made public.

The campaign was organized by the State Ward Development Committee (WDC) Forum in collaboration with the State Ministry of Health and the State Primary



Healthcare Development Agency.

Muhammad Marnona, Special Adviser on the State Primary Healthcare Development Agency, and the Executive Secretary of the agency, Dr. Larai Tambuwal, explained that despite the

severe strain on people, the disease is preventable.

The two health experts encouraged residents to visit a nearby hospital immediately whenever they notice symptoms such as high fever, vomiting, or neck stiffness.

Also, the Sultan of Sokoto, who was represented by the District Head of Gagi, along with traditional leaders and stakeholders, hailed the administrative efforts of Governor Ahmed Aliyu toward health initiatives.

Describing the initiative as the first of its kind, the WDC Chairman, Bala Sokoto, explained that the response was due to the recent outbreak witnessed in some Local Government Areas (LGAs).

# Hidden heart risk: hearing loss linked to heart failure, study warns

By Helen Okechukwu

**A** groundbreaking new study has revealed a surprising connection between hearing loss and heart failure, urging people not to dismiss hearing difficulties as a minor issue.

Researchers in China, analyzing data from 164,431 participants in the UK Biobank study, found that individuals with hearing impairment face a significantly higher risk of developing heart failure—particularly those not using hearing aids.

Over a follow-up period of more than 11 years, 4,449 participants developed heart failure, a chronic condition in which the heart struggles to pump blood effectively.

Symptoms include breathlessness, fatigue, and swelling in the legs or ankles, with over a million people in the UK currently living with the illness.

Participants were grouped based on their results from a digit triplet test (DTT), which measures how well a person can identify spoken numbers against background noise.

Those with a higher speech reception threshold (SRT)—indicating they required louder sounds to understand speech—were at notably higher risk.

“Compared with those with normal hearing, participants with insufficient hearing, poor hearing, or hearing aid use had higher heart

failure risks,” the study authors reported.

Even more concerning, the study identified that those with hearing difficulties, especially individuals who did not wear hearing aids, experienced elevated levels of psychological distress, social isolation, and neuroticism.

“We have been the first to demonstrate that poor hearing ability is significantly associated with a higher risk of incident heart failure in the general population,” the researchers wrote. “Psychological factors, especially psychological distress, play a significant mediating role in this association.”

They stress that hearing health should not be overlooked in

cardiovascular care, suggesting routine hearing checks could become part of heart disease risk assessments.

“If further confirmed, hearing impairment may be a potential risk factor or marker for incident heart failure in the general population, highlighting the importance of integrating hearing health assessments into broader cardiovascular risk evaluation frameworks,” the researchers stated.

“Moreover, strengthening psychological intervention in people with hearing impairment may be an important path and strategy to reduce the risk of heart failure.”





# Woman who give birth to strangers baby in Australia sparks controversy after embryo mix-up

By Helen Okechukwu

Following the confirmation of a mixed-up embryo birthed by a woman in Australia at the Monash IVF clinic in Brisbane, it is said that legal action could follow over parental birth rights, sparking controversy.

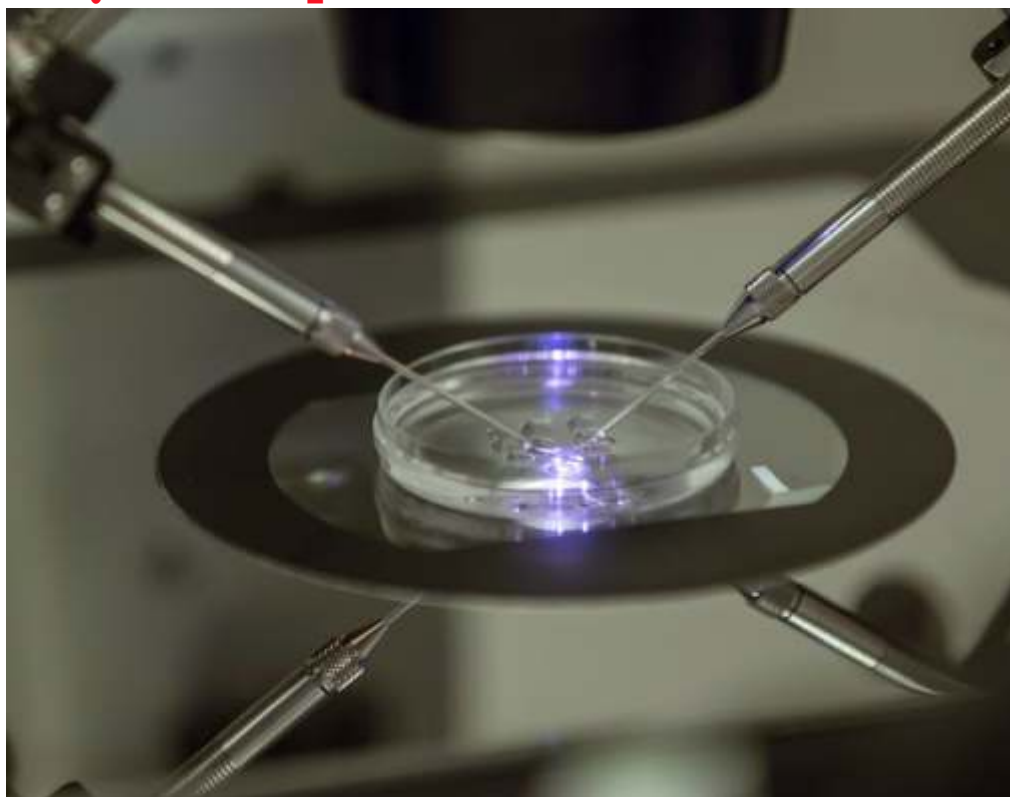
Monash IVF, a fertility clinic in Australia that primarily deals with embryo implantation from donors to intended parents, blamed the incident on human error.

In vitro fertilization (IVF) is a fertility process in which eggs and sperm are combined outside the body in a laboratory, and the fertilized embryo is implanted into the woman's uterus.

Although the cost is exorbitantly high, IVF is not always successful.

Of the 111,253 ART treatment cycles conducted in 2021, over 20,690 babies were born through IVF in Australia and New Zealand.

Explaining that humans make mistakes, Family Creation Lawyer Sarah Jefford said, "There are presumptions in Australia about the birth parents being the legal parents of the child, but whether the genetic parents want



to come forward and start a discussion about that, then we'll have to wait and see."

Professor Gab Kovacs, an IVF pioneer and former director of Monash IVF, while speaking to ABC Radio Melbourne, described the situation as "sad and terrible."

"I've got no idea what the legal situation in Australia would decide, I don't think it's been tested before.

I don't think there's much more that can be done, we just have to accept that human beings make mistakes."

As of last year, Monash IVF agreed to pay a \$56 million settlement to more than 700

patients across the country.

Earlier, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Monash IVF, Michael Knaap, confirmed that a woman in Australia accidentally gave birth to another couple's child after an embryo mix-up.

Knaap, who apologized on behalf of Monash IVF, shared that the mistake has left everyone in devastating shock, stating that an investigation is ongoing.

The mistake was discovered in February after the parents requested to transfer frozen embryos to another provider, but reports revealed that the implantation occurred in 2023.

# Don't marry a man who says he can't cook - Michelle Obama

By Oluwatosin Ologun

**M**ichelle Obama, former First Lady of the United States, recently shared some candid and valuable advice for singles looking for a life partner.

In a conversation with a podcast that sparked plenty of thought, she encouraged individuals to think beyond mere romance and focus on practical compatibility when choosing a spouse.

Drawing an interesting parallel between marriage and building a sports team, Michelle highlighted the importance of balance, teamwork, and versatility. She explained, "Everybody has to be able to do it all. Each person in a couple has to be able and willing to do it all."

"Using the metaphor of a basketball team, Michelle explained that picking a partner should be much like selecting players who are versatile and can perform a variety of roles, not just one."

"You don't want to marry a man who is like 'I don't cook.' It's like, well, what happens if I



can't cook?" she said, emphasising that marriage requires mutual support and flexibility, particularly during unpredictable times.

She further underscored the unpredictable nature of life and the need for both partners to be capable of handling challenges as they arise.

She stressed that both individuals should be equipped to contribute to the household, whether it's dealing with pregnancy, illness, or unforeseen circumstances. "Life is just so unpredictable," she said, highlighting the necessity of shared responsibility within a relationship.

Michelle also advised women to be financially literate and

not rely solely on their partners to manage finances. "Or if you're the woman and you can't balance the checkbook because you've left that to him. Life is too complicated for two partners not to be real equals in it."

"In a powerful conclusion, Michelle encapsulated her advice in a heartfelt message.

"Find a partner who isn't just willing to divide and conquer, but who's capable of covering for you during life's unpredictable moments."

"This advice serves as a reminder that in relationships, true partnership requires flexibility, shared responsibility, and a mutual commitment to handling life's challenges together."



# Trump to undergo medical check-up but won't release health records

By Dr Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

**D**onald Trump is set to undergo a routine medical examination on Friday at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington DC — though there's no guarantee the public will learn much from it.

At 78, Trump was the oldest president in U.S. history at the time of his swearing-in, yet he continues to offer little transparency about his health. Despite promising last August that he would “very gladly” release his medical records, no such disclosure has been made.

In a post on his social media platform ahead of the check-up, Trump wrote: “I have never felt better, but nevertheless, these things must be done!” His upbeat tone follows a longstanding pattern of optimistic — and often vague — assessments of his health.

Observers note that previous medical reports from Trump's camp have tended to be flattering but lacking in detail. In November 2023, a brief letter from his doctor claimed Trump was in “excellent” health, with “exceptional” cognitive exam results — but failed to provide basic information such as weight, blood pressure, cholesterol levels, or the outcomes of any tests.



This latest check-up marks the first formal opportunity to assess Trump's condition since the assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania last July. At that time, Dr. Ronny Jackson, Trump's former White House physician and loyal supporter, described a gunshot wound to Trump's right ear. Jackson once joked that Trump could live to 200 if he improved his diet.

Medical transparency has become a flashpoint in American politics. While President Biden's health reports have typically included comprehensive data — from cholesterol readings to neurological assessments — Trump's records have often been partial or released selectively. During his presidency, he was reported to be technically obese and taking medication for high cholesterol, and he once made headlines for taking anti-baldness pills.

In contrast, Trump has repeatedly questioned the physical and mental fitness of his predecessor, Joe Biden, who is three years older. Yet Trump himself has faced criticism for keeping the public in the dark about his own condition — particularly during his bout with COVID-19 in 2020, which turned out to be more serious than initially acknowledged.

Back in 2015, before his first presidential run, Trump's personal physician famously declared him “the healthiest individual ever elected to the presidency.” That same doctor later admitted Trump had dictated the statement himself.

With another election looming, this latest check-up will likely raise fresh questions about how much — if anything — voters will be told about Trump's true state of health.

# China hits back at US tariffs, curbs Hollywood film imports

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

**C**hina has said it would immediately restrict imports of Hollywood films in retaliation for President Donald Trump's escalation of U.S. tariffs on imported Chinese goods, targeting one of the most high-profile American exports.

Industry analysts said the financial impact was likely to be minimal, however, because Hollywood's box office returns in China have declined significantly in recent years.

After three decades during which China imported 10 Hollywood movies per year, Beijing's National Film Administration (NFA) said Trump's tariff actions would further sour domestic demand for U.S. cinema in China.

"We will follow market rules, respect the audience's choices, and moderately reduce the number of American films imported," the NFA said on its website.

Hollywood studios once looked to China, the world's second-largest film market, to help boost box office performance of movies. But domestic movies increasingly have outperformed Hollywood's fare in China, with "Ne Zha 2" this year eclipsing Pixar's "Inside Out 2" to become the highest-grossing animated film of all time.

Chris Fenton, author of "Feeding the Dragon: Inside the Trillion Dollar Dilemma Facing Hollywood, the NBA, and American Business," said limiting U.S.-made films was a "super high-profile way to make a statement of retaliation with almost zero downside for China."

Hollywood films account for only 5% of overall box office receipts in China's market. And Hollywood studios receive only 25% of ticket sales in China,



compared with double that in other markets, Fenton said.

"Such a high-profile punishment of Hollywood is an all-win motion of strength by Beijing that will surely be noticed by Washington," Fenton added.

Trump did not jump to Hollywood's defense. "I think I've heard of worse things," the president said when asked about China's restrictions.

Many Hollywood celebrities supported Trump's Democratic opponent in last year's election.

One entertainment industry source predicted that big Hollywood blockbusters, which continue to attract moviegoers in China, may still reach the big screen. Walt Disney's Marvel superhero movie "Thunderbolts," which kicks off the summer blockbuster season, recently received permission to debut in China on April 30.

It was not clear if China would approve the entry of other major releases this

summer, such as Paramount's

"We continue to expect a strong year for IMAX in China, coming off our highest-grossing first quarter ever in the country," an IMAX spokesperson said in a statement to Reuters.

Seth Shafer, principal analyst at S&P Global Market Intelligence Kagan, predicted the restrictions would have limited impact.

"Only roughly 25% of domestic wide-release films are now released in China and that percentage has dropped steadily over time due to increasing competition from China's local film production industry," Shafer said. "For domestic films that do get a release in China, typically less than 10% of the film's global gross box office revenue comes from China."

"Captain America: Brave New World", a Marvel film released in February, took in \$14.4 million in China out of its \$413 million in global receipts.



# Elon Musk's Tesla unveiled in Saudi Arabia

By Fatimah Idera

**T**esla launched operations in Saudi Arabia on Thursday, a sign that Chief Executive Elon Musk has patched up relations with the kingdom and that the oil capital was moving forward with an ambitious electric-vehicle policy.

A Tesla Cybertruck and a redesigned Model Y sedan dominated a plaza dotted with palm trees, as the EV maker officially opened for business. A small crowd tried out the vehicles as a massive outdoor video screen showed a Cybertruck plowing through a dusky desert, leaving behind plumes of sand.

Tesla needs new customers: globally, it posted a 13% drop in first-quarter sales, its weakest performance in nearly three years, driven by a backlash against Musk's role in the Trump administration, rising competition and an aging product lineup, beyond the refreshed Model Y.

The kingdom, a major investor in Tesla rival Lucid, aims for 30% EV adoption five years from now, up from about 1% last year. Musk engaged in a high-profile feud with the kingdom's sovereign wealth fund over a potential investment nearly a decade ago.

Although relations between Riyadh and Musk have improved since he took a high-profile role in U.S. President Donald Trump's election campaign and administration. Trump is set to visit Saudi Arabia in the coming weeks in



his first foreign trip.

Local Tesla executives at the launch described plans to allow online ordering of vehicles, open pop-up stores in malls and to build Supercharger stations and service centers, but Musk did not show up in person or by video.

Saudi has a long way to go to hit its EV goals. The country's main east-west highway does not have a single charging station in the 900-kilometer (559 mile) stretch linking the financial and religious cities of Riyadh and Mecca.

Saudi Arabia in 2024 had just 101 EV charging stations, compared with 261 in neighboring United Arab Emirates, a country with a third the population, data from Statista based on Electromaps showed. Tesla plans to put its first charging stations in three cities.

Rival EV brands like Zeekr along with the Saudi Public Investment Fund-backed Lucid, already have Saudi beachheads.

The feud between Musk and the governor of the kingdom's sovereign wealth fund began when Musk tweeted in 2018 that he had funding secured to take Tesla private after a meeting with the fund. That led to a lawsuit from investors when a bid failed to materialize.

"You are throwing me under the bus," Musk wrote in a text to fund chief Yasir Al-Rumayyan, according to court documents.

Shortly after the U.S. presidential election, Trump, Rumayyan, and Musk were all pictured together sitting in ringside seats at an Ultimate Fighting Championship event in an early signal that relations had healed.

# UK bolster Ukraine's military support with £450m to deter Russian aggression

By **Fatimah Idera**

**T**he United Kingdom government has announced a further £450m of military support to Kyiv, as the country and Germany prepare to host a meeting of 50 nations in Brussels.

Defence officials are convening to pile pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin and force him to end his invasion of Ukraine, UK Defence Secretary John Healey said.

"We must step up to deter Russian aggression by continuing to bolster Ukraine's defences," he added.

The package includes funding for hundreds of thousands of drones, anti-tank mines, and repairs to military vehicles.

About £350m will be provided by the UK, with extra funding from Norway via the UK-led International Fund for Ukraine.

The package includes £160m to provide repairs and maintenance to vehicles and equipment the UK has already provided to Ukraine.

A close fight military aid package, with funding for radar systems, anti-tank mines, and hundreds of thousands of drones worth more than £250m is also part of the package, the government said.

Healey said the work of the group "is vital to put Ukraine in the strongest possible position."

"We can not jeopardise peace by forgetting the war, which is why today's major package will surge support to Ukraine's frontline fight," he said.



"2025 is the critical year for Ukraine.

spokeswoman Helen Maguire said.

"Our job as defence ministers is to put into the hands of the Ukrainian war fighters what they need."

Meanwhile, the fund follows a series of military pledges to Ukraine from the UK.

Recall that Last month, Sir Keir Starmer announced a £1.6bn missile deal for Ukraine, following a summit of European leaders in London, on top of a £2.2bn loan to provide more military aid backed by profits from frozen Russian assets.

The Lib Dems said the support package announced on Friday was "small change" and called for the government to seize Russian assets in Britain to give Ukraine more funding.

"While we welcome any increase in support for Ukraine, this package is small change compared to what's needed to combat Putin's barbaric war," the party's defence

Healey and his German counterpart, defence minister Boris Pistorius, are co-chairing Friday's meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group, which had traditionally been hosted by the US defence secretary until Donald Trump became president in January.

Since then, in a sign of the US stepping back from European security matters, Healey has taken over as chair.

The meeting follows a similar gathering of defence ministers from 30 countries in the Franco-British-led "coalition of the willing," who met in Brussels to discuss installing a force in Ukraine to ensure enduring peace.

Healey said he did not envisage "a reassurance force that will separate the currently warring sides down the line of contact," but added that bolstering Ukraine's armies would be a key part of the plan.



# Trump rebuffs Netanyahu and gambles on a deal with Iran

By New Daily Prime

**A**T LEAST Binyamin Netanyahu wore a suit. The Israeli prime minister had a few goals when he met Donald Trump at the White House on April 7th. He needed relief from a newly imposed 17% tariff on Israeli goods. He hoped to convince Mr Trump that Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish president, was meddling dangerously in Syria. And he wanted to explain that the time was right to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities: diplomacy would be futile.

The meeting did not go as he had planned. It was not as bad as the humiliation of Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, in February. But it was not much better. The tariffs stayed put. Mr Trump praised Mr Erdogan as a friend. And he announced that America would start "direct" talks with Iran on April 12th. "Trump gave Netanyahu a red line: don't do anything and mess this up," says an Israeli source.

Israel has been feeling bullish. It retaliated against Iran's missile strike in October by destroying most of its air-defence network. "Iran is at its most vulnerable," says an Israeli security official. He notes that in the past Mr Netanyahu hesitated to give the order to strike Iran's nuclear sites, but now he has less reason to hold back—apart from Mr Trump. The prime minister has defied other presidents publicly, while gaining popularity at home, but it is much harder for him to say no to Mr Trump. He has "shackled Israel's foreign policy to him", says an Israeli diplomat.

The negotiations between America and Iran will begin in Oman. Abbas Araghchi, the Iranian foreign minister, will represent Iran, while Steve Witkoff, Mr Trump's Middle East envoy, is expected to lead the American delegation. The format remains unclear. So far Iran has refused direct negotiations. Mr Araghchi said messages would be passed through the Omanis.

The talks could not be more urgent. In 2015 Iran and seven world powers signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). It curbed Iran's nuclear work in



return for sanctions relief. Since Mr Trump abandoned the deal in 2018, however, Iran's uranium enrichment has reached unprecedented levels. The UN's International Atomic Energy Agency said in February that Iran had enriched 275kg of uranium to 60% purity, close to weapons-grade.

That would be enough to produce six nuclear bombs if refined further. Iran's "breakout time", the period it would need to enrich a bomb's worth of uranium, is now a matter of days or at best weeks. Without a deal, it seems probable that America or Israel (or both) will decide to bomb Iran's nuclear sites later this year.

Yet it is far from clear what sort of deal both sides want. Start with America. Mike Waltz, the national security adviser, favours an agreement that dismantles Iran's nuclear facilities. Mr Netanyahu concurs: he called for a deal "the way that it was done in Libya", which agreed in 2003 to break up its fledgling nuclear programme.

His choice of words will have alarmed the Iranians. Muammar Qaddafi, the Libyan dictator, was overthrown and killed eight years later. Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, is keen for his regime to avoid a similar fate. He views the nuclear programme as an insurance policy. The ayatollah may be willing to mothball Iran's centrifuges, but not to destroy

them.

Fortunately for him, Trumpworld contains multitudes. In an interview with Tucker Carlson, an influential pro-Trump podcaster, Mr Witkoff said his aim was a "verification programme so that nobody worries about weaponisation". That seems a more realistic goal. It also seems to have the president's support—and that of isolationist Republicans. "Anyone advocating for conflict with Iran is not an ally of the United States, but an enemy," Mr Carlson wrote on X, a social-media platform.

Even a modest deal would require America to make concessions as well. Mr Trump's advisers have offered few clues on this. They would certainly lift sanctions on Iranian oil, allowing it to sell crude on the open market rather than at a discount through shadowy intermediaries.

Iran will also want guarantees that a new deal would be more durable than the old one. They hope it would be a Senate-ratified treaty; but it is unclear if Mr Trump can find 67 votes for that. "It really depends on what the deal looks like, and whether you can get normalisation between Israel and Saudi Arabia at the same time," says one Republican senator.

# Landlord jailed for raping tenant after visiting nightclub together

By Dr Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

A 62-year-old Cork landlord has been sentenced to seven years in prison in the Republic of Ireland for raping a young woman tenant after plying her with brandy until she passed out.

Michael Paul O'Leary, of Four Winds, Ballyarthur, Fermoy, was convicted by a jury earlier this year at the Central Criminal Court for raping Lorita O'Donoghue at a property she shared with her fiancé, whom she was renting from O'Leary. The attack occurred on May 28, 2022, while her fiancé was away for the weekend.

Ms Justice Siobhán Lankford described the offence as a serious breach of trust, highlighting that O'Leary was both the landlord and a neighbour. She said it was clear Ms O'Donoghue was visibly intoxicated — a state that O'Leary exploited to commit the assault.

Ms O'Donoghue had accepted what she believed was a friendly invitation for a nightcap at O'Leary's nearby home. She recounted how he repeatedly topped up her glass with brandy, causing her to lose consciousness. She later awoke to find O'Leary raping her. Initially disoriented, she thought it might be her fiancé — but quickly realised otherwise and tried to push him off. Despite her resistance, he continued until he was finished.

While O'Leary had no previous



criminal record and maintained his innocence throughout the trial, the judge noted that he was not entitled to any sentencing reduction that a guilty plea might have brought. She set the headline sentence at eight years, reducing it to seven due to his prior good behaviour, but ruled out suspending any part of the term.

In a powerful victim impact statement, Ms O'Donoghue described how the rape had devastated her life:

"Since the night I was raped, my entire world was turned upside down. My life as I knew it was over. For almost three years I have been fighting to get my life back together. What you did to me was an utter violation of my mind, my body, and my soul."

She added that the experience of attending the sexual assault clinic in the hours after the attack left her feeling like "a corpse."

Following the sentencing, Ms O'Donoghue, supported by friends and family, said she felt justice had been served.

"I feel very thankful to the judge. I feel justice has been done."

She encouraged other survivors of sexual violence to speak out, assuring them they will be believed. Ms O'Donoghue also thanked the jury, Det Garda Rachel McGrath of the North Cork Protective Service Unit, Mary Crilly of the Cork Sexual Violence Centre, and her loved ones for their unwavering support.



# China has a weapon that could hurt America: rare-earth exports

By New Daily Prime

**T**O WIN A game of Scrabble, start at the bottom of the periodic table. The 17 “rare earths” that reside there have longish names, such as dysprosium and praseodymium, which are replete with point-worthy letters. They share other traits, too. All are produced and used in minuscule amounts, yet are crucial to a range of high-tech goods, from batteries and renewables to weapons and medical devices. More important still, all are largely supplied to the world by China.

Rare earths are also part of the trade war. On April 4th, responding to Donald Trump’s tariffs, China restricted sales to America of seven rare earths. The move forces producers to apply for export licences. It is not an outright ban, but it could turn into one. China has already imposed such bans on exports of three less rare, but still critical, metals, and tightened controls on others. How damaging would a rare-earth embargo be?

History offers clues. Two years ago China restricted exports of gallium and germanium, which are used in chips, radars and satellites. In December it banned all exports to America of both metals, as well as antimony, a flame retardant. Since then, prices have rocketed and the global market has fractured. Gallium bought in the West is two to three times dearer than that bought in China, according to Jack Bedder of Project Blue, a consultancy. The supply crunch is not yet crippling America. Many buyers had built stocks before the ban; China did not cancel existing supply contracts, which often run for years; and some material has continued to come in via third countries. A source close to America’s defence ministry detects no gallium-related panic in the Pentagon.

Yet China’s latest restrictions could cause more damage, for three reasons. First, the “heavy” rare earths it has picked are the hardest to substitute. Dysprosium and terbium regulate heat in magnets that power offshore wind turbines, jets and spacecraft. “The bigger the motor, the weightier the rare



earth you need,” says Ionut Lazar of CRU, another consultancy. The other five metals are crucial for artificial-intelligence chips. Some are also used in MRI scanners, lasers and fibre optics.

The second problem is that China is even more dominant in the production of heavy rare earths than it is for the lighter types. It controls most of their mining, both at home and in Myanmar. Crucially, it processes 98% of the extracted material. Like most elements, heavy rare earths do not exist in pure form in the Earth’s crust. And unlike gallium or germanium, they are not by-products of smelting mass-produced metals such as aluminium or zinc. They must be separated from the chemical compounds they form with specialist skills and a lot of work, for little reward.

This worsens the third problem: China has powerful tools to enforce a ban. Its government can track every tonne of rare earth mined and processed at home and trace where it ends up, says Ryan Castelloux of Adamas Intelligence, a research firm. It also keeps tabs on demand from companies around the world, allowing officials to spot any outlier that might be importing more to re-export to America. “You could get a lot of collateral damage [if China cracks down], because [it] would be concerned about closing loopholes,” says Melissa Sanderson, a mining veteran formerly of America’s State

Department. Given the risk of being cut off, third countries may not rush to Uncle Sam’s aid.

And so a Chinese ban would hit America hard. Prices would rise fast, as buyers began to stockpile. Neha Mukherjee of Benchmark Minerals, a research firm, reckons dysprosium prices would hit \$300 per kilogram, from \$230 now. Companies have some stock, but it would probably run out in months. After that, civilian industries would suffer first. Offshore wind turbines might become uncompetitive or unavailable. Electric cars might switch to smaller engines. Soon the defence industry would be hampered, too, says Gracelin Baskaran of CSIS, a think-tank.

America would speed up efforts to find alternative supplies. Today the country has only one rare-earth mine, in California. It is developing several more, and sponsoring new mines in Brazil and South Africa. It is also using the Defence Production Act of 1950, a law passed in the Korean War, to fund the first major heavy-rare-earth processing facility outside of China, in Texas. Yet America, like other countries, lacks the expertise to turn rare earths into high-performance magnets—the export of which China has also restricted. Analysts reckon that it would take America three to five years to build a mine-to-magnet supply chain which bypasses China.

Admittedly, banning rare-earth exports would hurt China itself, since it would destroy demand. In 2010, amid a fishing dispute, China stopped rare-earth exports to Japan. Within months Japan made concessions, and exports resumed. In the meantime Japan’s carmakers had designed new vehicles that relied less heavily on rare earths. This time, it is more likely that China would reduce exports to America selectively—unless Mr Trump continues with his aggressive approach. The world’s most consequential Scrabble game might then turn truly nasty.

# Salah turns down £500m Saudi deal to stay at Liverpool

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

In a football world increasingly dominated by money and mega-deals, Mohamed Salah has chosen passion over pounds, loyalty over luxury. The Liverpool talisman has signed a new two-year contract extension, keeping him at Anfield until 2027 — a move that ends months of speculation and caps one of the sport's most talked-about contract sagas.

The Egyptian forward, now 32, turned down a staggering £500 million offer from the Saudi Pro League, opting instead to continue his storied journey with Liverpool, where he has become not just a fan favourite but a symbol of consistency and brilliance.

## A Season of Uncertainty Ends

Speculation around Salah's future hit fever pitch last November when he admitted he was "more out than in." But that statement, far from confirming an exit, was a reflection of the uncertainties that surrounded contract negotiations — not a lack of love for Liverpool.

According to senior sources, a major breakthrough was achieved in late March following intensive talks between Salah's representative Ramy Abbas Issa and Liverpool's sporting director Richard Hughes. The final paperwork was completed just this week, with even teammates like Andy Robertson unaware until the last minute.

## Liverpool's Exception for an Exceptional Player

Salah will now earn close to £400,000 per week — an extraordinary figure, particularly for a player in his thirties. But this isn't just any player. Salah's 54 goal contributions this season alone underscore his irreplaceable role in Jurgen Klopp's system.

For Liverpool, the challenge of replacing Salah would have been



monumental — both in scouting talent and in financing a blockbuster transfer. With Trent Alexander-Arnold's expected move to Real Madrid potentially freeing up funds, the club made keeping Salah a top priority, alongside finalising a new deal for Virgil van Dijk.

## Turning Down the Riches of Saudi Arabia

Make no mistake: Salah was tempted. The Saudi Pro League, eager to bring one of the Arab world's most beloved icons home, put a jaw-dropping £500m deal on the table. The package, which dwarfed even some of the eye-watering offers floated to stars like Kylian Mbappé and Vinicius Jr, was all but irresistible — on paper.

But Salah's decision wasn't driven by numbers.

Sources close to the player say he still feels he's at his peak and is hungry for more silverware in Europe. With dreams of clinching Liverpool's elusive 20th league title, another Champions League crown, and finally breaking into the Ballon d'Or top three, the Anfield legend still has plenty to prove on the world's biggest stages.

## Family, Football, and Future Goals

Salah's decision was also influenced by his family's happiness in Merseyside. His wife, Magi, and daughters, Makka and Kayan, have reportedly grown fond of life in the North West — a factor that, while often overlooked, played a crucial role in his decision to stay.

Moreover, Salah sees this chapter as vital preparation for Egypt's upcoming World Cup and Africa Cup of Nations campaigns. Competing against Europe's elite, rather than in a still-developing Saudi league, gives him the edge he desires.

## Legacy Over Luxury

For Salah, legacy matters. He's not just chasing trophies — he's chasing greatness. By recommitting to Liverpool, he's ensuring that his name will be spoken of alongside club legends like Steven Gerrard and Kenny Dalglish.

And for Liverpool fans, this isn't just a contract signing. It's a statement. One that says ambition still matters, loyalty still counts, and sometimes — just sometimes — the heart still wins.

# War of words: Did Matic's mind games unsettle Onana?

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



In a dramatic twist ahead of Manchester United's Europa League clash with Lyon, ex-Red Devils midfielder Nemanja Matic launched a scathing verbal attack on United goalkeeper André Onana — a move that some now believe may have influenced the Cameroonian's error-strewn performance.

Matic, now at Lyon, didn't mince words in Wednesday's pre-match press conference, branding Onana "one of the worst goalkeepers in Manchester United's history" following the keeper's confident claims that United were "way better" than their French opponents.

Fast forward 24 hours and Onana was at fault for both Lyon goals in a 2-2 draw, sparking speculation that the veteran midfielder's comments may have gotten into his head.

Since joining United in 2023, Onana has now made eight errors leading to goals — more than any other Premier League goalkeeper in that time. Despite manager Ruben Amorim's attempt to deflect blame, insisting he's made more mistakes than his players, scrutiny on Onana has intensified.

Psychologists say such comments, especially coming from a former teammate, can weigh heavily on a player's mind. "Even if you try to ignore it, those words stick," said sports psychologist Dr. Simon Moore. "It creates added pressure to prove people wrong, which can lead to more mistakes."

Matic, for his part, likely feels vindicated. Former England winger Aaron Lennon suggested, "Matic will sleep well tonight," while Lyon's Izzy Christiansen noted that

Onana "looked a bit silly."

Onana responded on social media, insisting his comments weren't disrespectful and pointing out he's won trophies with United — something not all critics can claim.

Experts argue that while mind games can affect performance, top-level athletes are usually equipped to bounce back. "What matters now is how Onana responds," said sports psychologist Matt Shaw. "Rebuilding confidence is about focusing on strengths, not dwelling on criticism."

As United prepare to face Lyon again in the return leg, the spotlight will remain fixed on Onana. Whether he can rise above the noise and regain his form may prove crucial to United's European ambitions — and to silencing the critics.



# Grealish and Foden shaken after derby incidents, says Guardiola

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has revealed that Jack Grealish and Phil Foden are still reeling from unpleasant incidents involving fans during last weekend's Manchester derby — but stressed the issue goes beyond football.

Grealish, who came on as a second-half substitute during the goalless draw at Old Trafford, was allegedly slapped by a spectator while walking into the players' tunnel. A 20-year-old man has since been charged with assault.

Meanwhile, Foden was subjected to offensive chants aimed at his mother from sections of the Manchester United crowd during the first half — a moment Guardiola later criticised as

showing “a lack of class.”

Although Manchester United have privately condemned the chanting, the Football Association has opted not to issue formal charges against the club.

Speaking at a pre-match press conference ahead of Saturday's fixture against Crystal Palace, Guardiola offered an update on the emotional state of his players.

“They don't feel good,” he admitted. “But we move forward. It's a crazy world. Nobody is away from that. It's not just about United or one football club — it's society. It happens everywhere.”

Guardiola's comments point to growing concerns about player safety and the toxic environment sometimes

created by fans at high-stakes matches. The derby, despite ending in a stalemate, has drawn headlines not for the football, but for the incidents that marred it.

City, currently sixth in the Premier League, continue to face challenges on the pitch as well. They remain without several key players, including Erling Haaland, Rodri, John Stones, Manuel Akanji, and Nathan Ake, all ruled out through injury ahead of their clash with Crystal Palace at the Etihad on Saturday.

As the focus shifts back to football this weekend, Guardiola and his squad will be looking to put the derby drama behind them — but the conversation about fan behavior and player protection is far from over.