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# Tinubu pledges continued military support as Nigeria inducts new combat helicopters

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has pledged his administration's continued investment in cutting-edge defence technology and commitment to equipping the Nigerian Armed Forces with the resources needed to combat insecurity across the country.

Tinubu made this known on Friday during the induction of two Agusta A-109S Trekker Attack Helicopters into the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) in Abuja.

Tinubu, who was represented by Vice President Kashim Shettima described the acquisition as a strategic boost to Nigeria's military capabilities in confronting security threats at home and across the West African sub-region.

The induction ceremony, held at the Presidential Air Fleet Apron as part of the Nigerian Air Force's 61st anniversary celebrations, also showcased Nigeria's ongoing efforts to modernise its military.

The new aircraft join a growing list of recent procurements, including Diamond-62 surveillance aircraft, T-129 ATAK helicopters, and King Air 360i platforms.

"Despite our budgetary constraints amidst the prevailing economic situation, the acquisition of these aircraft, amongst other military equipment, is an expression of our commitment to enhanced national security," Tinubu said.

"We will continue to invest in cutting-edge defence technologies and provide our military with the resources needed to



counter both conventional and asymmetric threats."

He expressed confidence that the deployment of the new helicopters would strengthen the Air Force's combat power in the ongoing war against terrorism, banditry, and other internal security challenges.

"The deployment of these newly acquired platforms will add impetus to the combat power of the Nigerian Air Force in tackling our contemporary security challenges, not only within the shores of our country but also in the West African sub-region," he stated.

Tinubu tied the government's military investments to his broader economic goals, noting that national security is key to attracting local and foreign investment.

"It is for this reason that strengthening national security for peace and prosperity is a key priority area in the Renewed Hope Agenda," he added.

He urged the Air Force to step up efforts in ending Nigeria's multidimensional security crisis and to maintain high levels of discipline and aircraft maintenance to maximise the benefits of the government's investment.

However, Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Hasan Bala Abubakar, said the induction of the Agusta helicopters reflects the federal government's commitment to enhancing national security and strengthening military capacity.

He said the helicopters were specially designed for demanding operations and would support battlefield missions, training, and emergency response.

Abubakar highlighted the need for a well-equipped and agile air force capable of rapid deployment across Nigeria's diverse terrain.



# THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

## PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

## PRODUCT COLOUR

## EFFECTIVE FROM DECEMBER 1, 2024

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
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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
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10X4	192,500.00
10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
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
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8X4	93,500.00
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6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
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5X4	65,833.00
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10X4	103,963.00
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8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
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# Alaafin of Oyo pays first official visit to Tinubu at Aso rock

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



**P**resident Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Friday welcomed the newly crowned Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Abimbola Owoade, to the Presidential Villa, Abuja, marking the monarch's first official audience with the president since his coronation last month.

Oba Owoade, who ascended the historic Yoruba throne on April 12, 2025, was received at the State House shortly after Jumaat prayers and following President Tinubu's closed-door security briefing with service chiefs and the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu. Sources within the presidency confirmed that the meeting was held behind closed doors, in line with protocol, but highlighted the symbolic importance of the royal visit, which underscores the ongoing engagement between the federal government and traditional institutions.

This meeting also marks the monarch's first formal interaction with Nigeria's Commander-in-Chief since assuming leadership of one of the most revered thrones in the country's traditional hierarchy. The Alaafin of Oyo is not only a cultural figurehead but also a significant voice in Yoruba affairs and a symbol of historical continuity dating back centuries. During Oba Owoade's coronation ceremony in Oyo town, President Tinubu — represented by Minister of Power, Adebayo Adelabu — had charged the new Alaafin to be a unifying force in the Yoruba nation and to play a constructive role in fostering national cohesion.

Observers believe Friday's meeting likely touched on matters relating to regional development, national unity, cultural preservation, and the strengthening of traditional institutions as partners in

governance. Though details of the discussions were not disclosed as of press time, aides to both the presidency and the palace confirmed it was "cordial and forward-looking."

Oba Owoade's visit to Aso Rock reinforces the relevance of monarchs in Nigeria's evolving democratic space and their capacity to influence peacebuilding, community development, and intergovernmental dialogue.

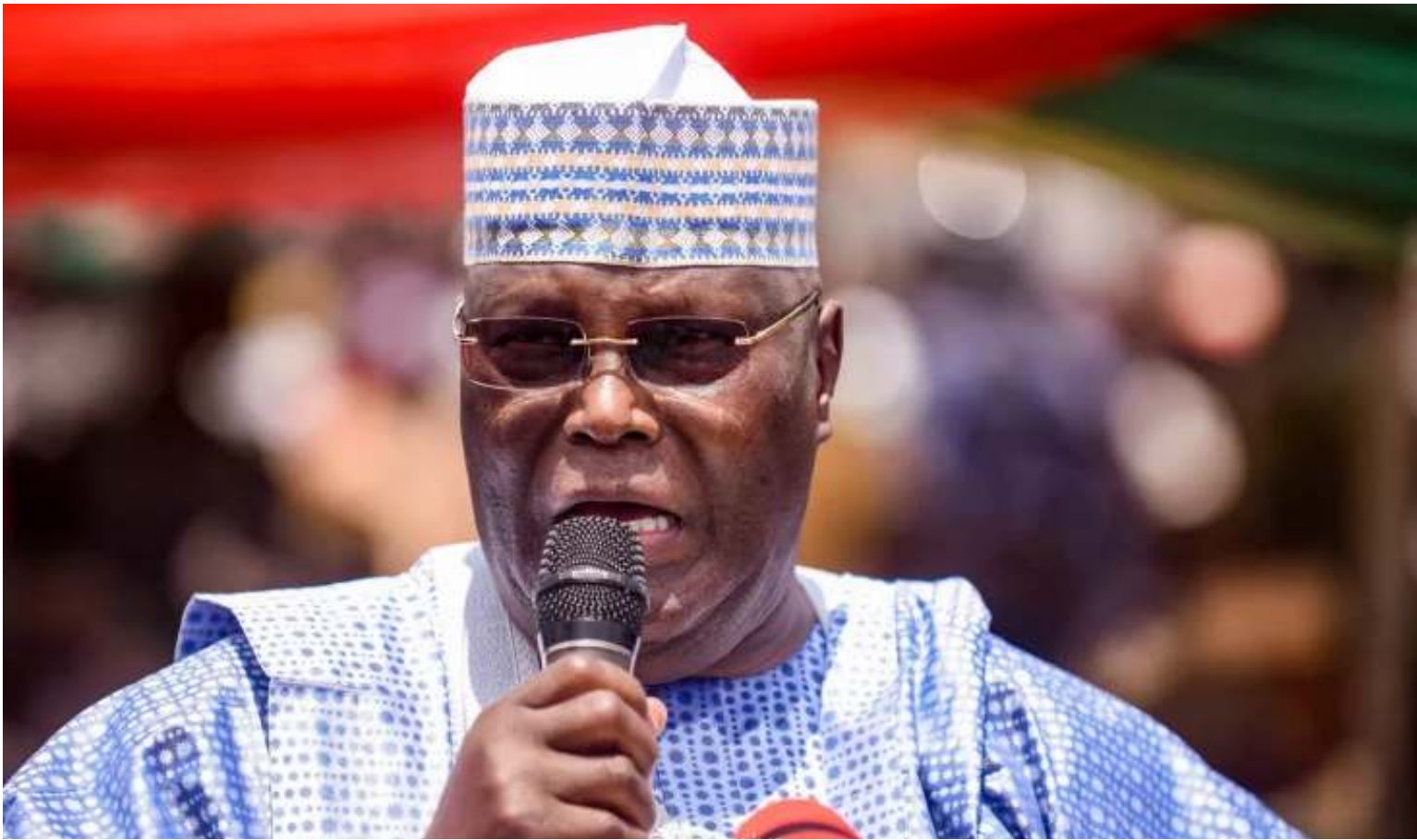
The Alaafin's courtesy call is expected to be the first in a series of nationwide consultations between the presidency and traditional rulers as part of the administration's broader strategy to engage cultural leaders in policy implementation at the grassroots level.

Further updates on the outcome of the meeting are expected in the coming days.



# APC to Atiku: We're not in your coalition

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



**T**he All Progressives Congress (APC) has firmly rejected claims by former Vice President Atiku Abubakar that members of the ruling party are participating in a multi-party coalition aimed at unseating President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the 2027 general election.

Atiku, while speaking in Abuja on Wednesday during a meeting with political stakeholders from Kogi East Senatorial District, led by former Kogi State Deputy Governor Simon Achuba, asserted that individuals from the APC, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Labour Party (LP), and other political platforms are collaborating under a new alliance to, in his words, “rescue Nigeria.”

“We have a coalition. All the major political parties are involved. In this coalition — the APC, PDP, Labour Party — all of us are involved. That is the way to go in confronting such an incompetent and inefficient government,” Atiku stated during the meeting.

The comment reignited political tensions,

especially following earlier reports of a March meeting involving Atiku, Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi, and former Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai, where discussions reportedly began around forming a united political front against the Tinubu administration.

In an attempt to clarify the remarks, Atiku’s media adviser, Paul Ibe, explained that the former Vice President was not referring to the APC as an institution, but rather to disillusioned individuals within the party who have expressed interest in the coalition. “Some APC members, dissatisfied with Tinubu’s governance, have been in contact with Atiku and other coalition leaders,” Ibe was quoted as saying.

However, the APC has strongly rebuffed the claim. Speaking after the interview gained traction, the party’s Director of Publicity, Bala Ibrahim, described Atiku’s assertion as both “misleading and self-serving.”

“Atiku is being deceived. The APC is not

involved in any such coalition,” Ibrahim said. “As a party, we are united, growing stronger every day, and not at all concerned with Atiku’s political theatrics.”

He added that any APC members who may be in contact with Atiku are likely misleading him, as has allegedly occurred in previous failed coalition attempts. “Each time he builds coalitions, he loses. That’s the pattern,” Ibrahim stated.

The APC reaffirmed its commitment to President Tinubu’s administration and dismissed the coalition talk as a distraction from the government’s ongoing reform efforts.

As the 2027 election approaches, political realignments are expected to intensify. However, the back-and-forth underscores the widening rift between Nigeria’s political heavyweights and sets the stage for a contentious electoral season.

# Tinubu holds security meeting ahead of Rome trip

By Alade Adisa



**P**resident Bola Tinubu on Friday held a closed-door meeting with the nation's service chiefs and the Inspector General of Police (IGP) at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

The meeting reportedly aimed to tackle the resurgence of insurgency in some parts of the country and inter-tribal hostilities in other regions.

The security chiefs are expected to brief the President on ongoing efforts to address insecurity nationwide.

The meeting came ahead of the President's scheduled trip to Rome on Saturday for the inauguration mass of Pope Leo XIV, following an official invitation from the Vatican.

In attendance were the Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa; Chief

of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Olufemi Oluyede; Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Hassan Abubakar; Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Emmanuel Ogalla; and the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, among others.

In his formal invitation, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Vatican, underscored the importance of President Tinubu's presence "at this moment of particular importance for the Catholic Church and a world plagued by numerous tensions and conflicts."

Pope Leo XIV, formerly known as Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, who served at the Apostolic Nunciature in Lagos during the 1980s, has often described Nigeria as "particularly dear" to him.

The President will be accompanied by a high-profile delegation, including Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu; Archbishop Lucius Ugorji, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria; Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Abuja; Archbishop Alfred Martins of Lagos; and Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah of Sokoto Diocese.

The pontiff will be formally installed during a grand ceremony at St. Peter's Square on Sunday, May 18, following his election by the College of Cardinals, 27 days after the death of Pope Francis on April 21.

President Tinubu is expected to return to Abuja on Tuesday, May 20.



# DSS sues Pat Utomi over alleged plan to form shadow Govt

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



**T**he Department of State Services (DSS) has filed a lawsuit at the Federal High Court in Abuja against political economist and former presidential adviser, Professor Pat Utomi, over his alleged plan to establish a “shadow government” in Nigeria.

In court documents submitted on May 13, the DSS described Utomi’s initiative as a direct affront to the Nigerian Constitution and a calculated attempt to destabilize the country. The suit, filed through the office of Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Akinlolu Kehinde, seeks a judicial declaration that the move amounts to an unlawful challenge to the authority of the democratically elected government.

According to the DSS, the proposal to create a shadow government—a concept typically used in

parliamentary systems by opposition parties to mirror and critique the actions of the sitting government—has no legal foundation under Nigerian law. The agency argued that such a move is not only unconstitutional but also dangerous, warning that it could incite unrest and undermine national stability.

“The formation of a parallel administrative structure, under any guise, is an aberration within the context of Nigeria’s presidential democracy,” the DSS stated in its filing. “Such actions amount to a grave attack on the Constitution and pose a serious threat to national security.”

The court filing suggests that the DSS believes Utomi’s alleged actions could potentially incite civil disobedience and erode confidence

in the legitimacy of the federal government. The suit calls for the court to formally restrain any such plans and declare them unconstitutional.

As of the time of this report, the case has not yet been assigned to a judge, and no official date has been set for hearing.

Neither Professor Utomi nor his representatives have responded publicly to the suit. Attempts to reach his media team for comment were unsuccessful.

The development has sparked mixed reactions across political circles, with some calling it a necessary step to preserve constitutional order, while others view it as an overreach that could stifle legitimate dissent.

# Tinubu approves new procurement thresholds for federal contracts

By Friday Omosola

**P**resident Bola Tinubu has approved a sweeping overhaul of public procurement thresholds for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of the Federal Government.

The reform is aimed at decentralising contract approvals and allowing the Federal Executive Council (FEC) to focus on high-level national policy issues rather than routine procurement matters.

Under the new guidelines, the FEC will now only approve contracts starting from ₦5 billion for goods and services, or from ₦10 billion for works.

Contracts below these thresholds will be handled by ministerial, parastatal, or departmental tenders boards, as well as accounting officers, depending on the contract value.

Ministerial tender boards are authorised to approve contracts for goods and services ranging from ₦50 million to less than ₦1 billion and for works from ₦50 million to less than ₦2.5 billion.

Parastatal tenders boards are permitted to handle procurements for goods and services up to ₦500 million and for works up to ₦1 billion.

Accounting officers are responsible for approving goods and services



below ₦50 million and work below ₦100 million.

The reform also introduces revised procurement methods based on contract value.

National or international competitive bidding will now be used for goods and services worth ₦1 billion and above, and for works from ₦5 billion and above.

Requests for quotations, also known as shopping, will apply to lower-value procurements.

Prequalification requirements have also been updated.

For non-consulting goods and services, prequalification is required for contracts from ₦500 million.

For works, prequalification begins from ₦1 billion.

For consultancy services, the Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) method must be used for contracts worth ₦100 million and above.

To improve transparency and accountability, all MDAs must publish monthly procurement reports on their official websites and on the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) portal.

These reports must include details of all awarded contracts.

Furthermore, MDAs are now required to budget for procurement training and are only permitted to engage trainers accredited by the BPP.

The reform also strengthens the 'Nigeria First' policy, which mandates that federal procurements must prioritise local goods and Indigenous contractors.



# ‘Obtain planning permits for building projects’ – LASPPPA to Lagos residents

By Friday Omosola



**T**he Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority (LASPPPA) has urged residents, developers, and property owners to obtain appropriate planning permits before commencing any building or development projects across the state.

The agency’s General Manager, Kehinde Osinaike, issued the call during a recent public engagement.

He described planning permits as both compulsory and essential to ensuring developments align with the Lagos State Master Plan.

“Planning permits ensure structures are sited appropriately and contribute to a well-organised urban landscape,” Osinaike said.

He explained that the permit process plays a vital role in balancing the development of residential, commercial, industrial, educational, healthcare, religious, and transportation infrastructure.

Osinaike also noted that the permits guarantee legal compliance, enhance property values, and support long-term urban sustainability.

“They help curb illegal developments, enforce zoning laws, and even influence the resale value of properties,” he added.

Reinforcing this stance, the Head of LASPPPA’s Monitoring and Compliance Unit, Olarinde Iyiola, emphasised that permits help prevent construction delays, legal disputes, and other regulatory infractions.

“Buildings erected with valid permits are more likely to meet safety standards and building codes, which ultimately protects lives and investments,” he said.

He added that such developments often have higher structural integrity and enjoy better market perception due to compliance with official regulations.

Olarinde reaffirmed LASPPPA’s commitment to sustainable urban development, urging all stakeholders to prioritise obtaining planning permits before initiating any construction.

“This is a shared responsibility,” he said, “and a necessary step for a safer, more sustainable Lagos.”

# Court rulings trigger political showdown between Osun PDP, APC

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

**P**olitical tensions in Osun State escalated this week as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) traded accusations over the legal status of local government chairmen and the perceived politicisation of the judiciary.

The dispute, which has deepened political divisions in the state, centers on conflicting interpretations of recent court judgments and the legitimacy of local government authorities currently in office.

In a statement released Wednesday, the Osun State chapter of the PDP accused the APC of deliberately misrepresenting court rulings in order to retain control of local government councils from which its members had been removed. The party alleged that the APC is “blackmailing the judiciary” and attempting to deceive the public with what it called a “false narrative” regarding reinstated council officials.

“There is no judgment reinstating the sacked chairmen,” stated Hezekiah Olabamiji, PDP Director of Media and Publicity. “The judgment of the Federal High Court sacking them still stands. The APC is peddling lies from the pit of hell in a desperate attempt to mislead the public.”

Olabamiji further called on the judiciary to remain resolute and not succumb to pressure or manipulation.



He warned that some APC leaders could face contempt proceedings should they continue to distort court decisions.

In a swift response, the Osun APC issued a counter-statement through its Director of Media and Information, Kola Olabisi, on Thursday. The party accused the PDP-led state government of attempting to influence judicial proceedings through an ex-parte motion designed to prevent the disbursement of federal funds to local councils run by APC officials.

The APC noted that the court had not granted any such reliefs but instead directed all parties to maintain the status quo pending further hearing scheduled for June 4, 2025.

According to the APC, the state government’s legal maneuvers were intended to sideline necessary parties and secure favorable outcomes through “pliable judges”—a claim the



PDP has dismissed as defamatory and baseless.

Both parties referenced separate court rulings to support their respective positions. While the PDP insists that a Federal High Court ruling invalidated the APC’s control of the councils, the APC maintains that a Court of Appeal judgment dated February 10, 2025, affirmed the legitimacy of its officials.

The disagreement has turned local government control into a flashpoint in Osun’s political climate, with both parties accusing each other of legal manipulation and undermining democratic processes. Analysts warn that unless clarity is brought to the issue, continued ambiguity could fuel further unrest at the grassroots level.

The outcome of the pending court hearing in June is expected to significantly shape the political trajectory of local governance in the state.



# Appeal Court reserves judgment in Edo governorship dispute

By Friday Omosola

The Abuja Division of the Court of Appeal has concluded hearings on appeals challenging Governor Monday Okpebholo's election victory in Edo State, reserving its judgment for a date yet to be announced.

The appeals were brought by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and its governorship candidate, Asue Ighodalo, who is contesting the ruling of the Edo State Election Petitions Tribunal, which upheld Okpebholo's win in the September 21, 2024, election.

The All Progressives Congress (APC), Okpebholo's party, also filed a cross-appeal, contesting aspects of the tribunal's April 2, 2025, decision.

During yesterday's proceedings, a three-man panel of justices heard arguments from all parties involved, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which had declared Okpebholo the winner with 291,667 votes against Ighodalo's 247,655.

Ighodalo and the PDP, dissatisfied with the outcome, challenged the result on grounds of alleged electoral malpractices, including over-voting, ballot paper issues, and data inconsistencies across hundreds of polling units.

Monday Okpebholo and Asue Ighodalo Asue Ighodalo and Monday Okpebholo They claimed that INEC's failure to serialise sensitive materials compromised the election's credibility and favoured the APC.

Their petition, however, was dismissed by the tribunal for lack of evidence. Still dissatisfied, they proceeded to the



appellate court.

At the appeal hearing, Ighodalo's lead counsel, Robert Emukpoeruo, urged the court to overturn the tribunal's ruling.

He argued that the tribunal overlooked key irregularities, including the alleged non-serialisation of Form EC25B, in violation of the Electoral Act 2022.

He also denied that the petitioners dumped documents on the court without explanation, saying the evidence presented addressed inconsistencies between results at different collation levels.

On the other hand, Okpebholo's lawyer, Onyechi Ikpeazu, defended the tribunal's decision, insisting that the appellants failed to prove their claims.

He pointed out that Form EC40A—not EC25B, contained the necessary serial numbers, and the more critical Form EC25D was never presented by the petitioners.



Also speaking for the APC, Emmanuel Ukala dismissed the appeal, citing a failure by the petitioners to call witnesses from the majority of the 765 polling units being challenged.

He said that under the Electoral Act, evidence must be led from each polling unit in dispute — a standard the PDP and Ighodalo failed to meet, having called only 19 witnesses, of whom just five were polling agents.

INEC's counsel, Kanu Agabi, backed the arguments of the APC and Okpebholo, urging the court to uphold the tribunal's verdict.

Following the conclusion of arguments, the panel led by Justice M. A. Danjuma announced that judgment had been reserved and that the date would be communicated to all parties in due course.

# Akure Court remands man for allegedly impregnating teenager

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

**A** Magistrates' Court in Akure, Ondo State, has ordered the remand of a private security guard, Joel Monday, at the Olokuta Correctional Centre for allegedly sexually assaulting and impregnating a 16-year-old girl.

The defendant faces charges of unlawful sexual intercourse, physical abuse, and intimidation—offences that violate Section 31(2) of the Ondo State Child Rights Law, which prescribes life imprisonment for offenders found guilty of sexually violating minors.

The teenage victim, whose identity is being protected, told the court that she had travelled from Cross River State to Akure in search of work to support her ailing mother and younger siblings. She initially secured employment as a domestic worker with a promised salary of ₦180,000, but was paid only ₦50,000 at the end of her service.

Left without options, she met the defendant while seeking new employment. According to her testimony, he offered her accommodation and promised to help her find work but instead began making sexual advances. She alleged that when she resisted, he began forcing himself on her and subsequently gave her pregnancy prevention pills after each encounter.

He also allegedly posed as a police officer and used threats to keep her



silent.

“I didn’t have anywhere to go, and he promised to help me,” she said. “But then he started forcing himself on me and threatened me when I tried to resist.” The girl said she became pregnant in August 2024. Upon learning of the pregnancy, the defendant allegedly became aggressive, verbally abusing her and accusing her of destroying his plans to marry someone else.

It was at this point that she confided in a neighbour, who directed her to Emmanuel World Children’s Foundation. The NGO provided her with care and shelter until she gave birth on April 30, 2025. In court, the defendant’s lawyer, A. I. Musa, did not dispute the paternity of the child and appealed for leniency, citing his client’s willingness to support the child and mother on his ₦150,000 monthly salary. “This court must also consider the welfare of the baby and

the mother,” he said.

The prosecution opposed the plea, stressing the need for justice and deterrence. “This is not a case of mutual consent but of exploitation,” the prosecutor argued. “The victim came to Akure to work and was taken advantage of. Failing to act decisively could send the wrong message.”

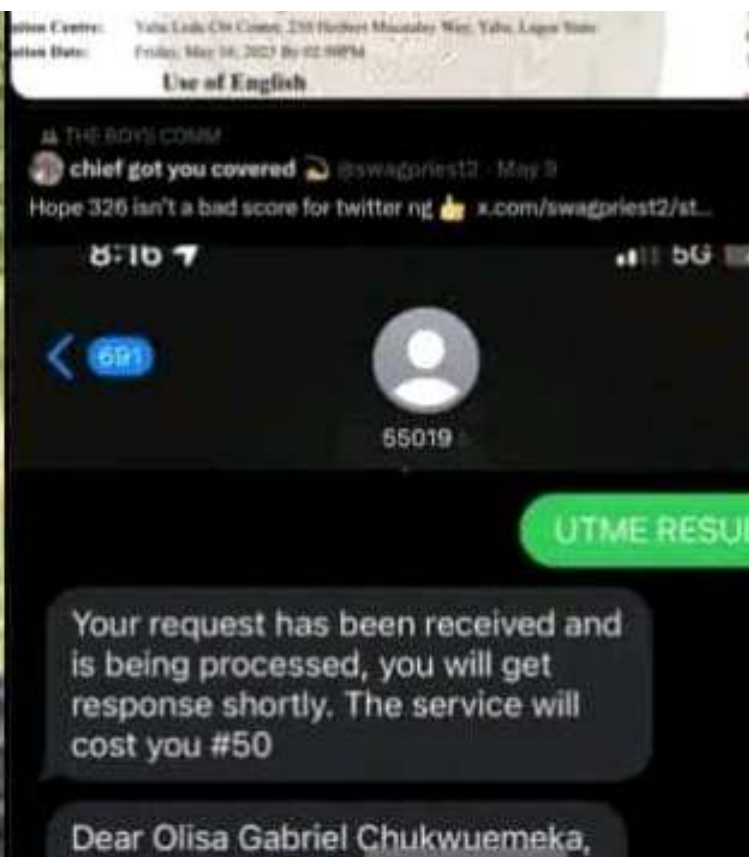
Magistrate Grace Alphonso ruled that the teenage girl and her baby be placed in temporary custody at Emmanuel World Children’s Foundation. She directed that the case file be sent to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for further review and adjourned the matter to July 31, 2025.

Police authorities confirmed that the suspect was arrested earlier this month following a report by the NGO. Investigations are ongoing.



# UTME candidate scoring 326 shocked by resit notification

By Alade Adisa



A candidate who scored 326 in the recent UTME has been unexpectedly rescheduled to retake the exam, despite previously receiving what many would consider an excellent score.

The news came to light after the candidate, posting under the handle @swagpriest2 on X (formerly Twitter), shared a screenshot of an SMS notifying him of the reschedule. “WTF, I got rescheduled... I’m not even in Lagos. Gosh, this country is so awful,” he wrote.

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) had earlier confirmed technical issues at some exam centers, leading to a

mass rescheduling of affected candidates. However, confusion remains, as many of the rescheduled candidates reportedly had high scores.

Reactions online were swift, with users expressing frustration and sharing similar experiences.

@Yhuchez joked, “Lmao. Them take back the score. Them say no be your own.”

Others questioned the criteria for rescheduling, especially given earlier assurances that only those who scored below 200 would be affected.

The situation has sparked debate online, with many calling for

greater transparency and fairness in the exam administration process.

See other reactions below:

@darhythms: “Also did you by any chance write in Lagos and then move afterwards?”

@\_\_onisamuel: “Is it that they just pick candidates to result again?”

@mrsaka\_1: “Thought they said they rescheduled those that scored below 200 only?”

@99daagents: “So wtf happened to your previous results? What’s the necessity of sitting again for another exam??”

# Enugu to upgrade health facilities, tackle maternal, newborn deaths

By Helen Okechukwu



**T**he Enugu State Government has announced plans to upgrade secondary healthcare facilities across all 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the state.

The goal is to reduce maternal and newborn deaths by strengthening emergency care services.

This was made known by the State Commissioner for Health, Prof. Emmanuel Obi, during a health meeting in Enugu on Friday.

The meeting focused on the findings of a health facility assessment for Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC).

Prof. Obi said the upgrades are part of efforts to build a healthcare system capable of handling emergencies during childbirth.

Read Also: NGO calls for community efforts to Cut Maternal Mortality

He noted that Enugu had already begun its facility assessments, which will now be combined with federal-level findings.

He said, “This is an official presentation of findings from the facility assessments conducted by the Federal Ministry of Health, the SWAP Office, and our State Ministry of Health.”

Why upgrade Enugu health facilities  
The upgrades will also allow Enugu to access federal funding through the “Hope Health” programme under the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP). Funds will be disbursed based on each facility’s performance and readiness.

Mrs. Francisca Ewoh, SWAP Desk

Officer, said that each qualified health facility could receive up to \$35,000. To qualify, centres must meet standards for infrastructure, utilities, and staff strength.

Dr. Chinyere Ezendu, who led the CEmONC assessment in Enugu, revealed that only two facilities in the state met basic standards. None had the full capacity to treat newborn complications.

She expressed hope that the findings would lead to practical steps to improve maternal and child health in the state.

Also speaking at the event, Dr. Chioma Oduenyi from Jhpiego, a partner organisation, assured continued technical support to help Enugu and other states carry out their health reforms effectively.



# Canada awards northern states \$15m to combat malnutrition

By Helen Okechukwu



**T**he Global Affairs Canada Initiative has committed 15 million Canadian dollars (equivalent to \$10.7 million) to support three northern states—Kebbi, Kaduna, and Bauchi.

The initiative aims to strengthen Gender-Responsive Sexual Reproductive Health Rights and Nutrition Services, with a strong emphasis on women, adolescents, and children.

According to PUNCH Healthwise, UNICEF is providing technical assistance for the programme, while state governments will oversee its implementation through Primary Health Centres (PHCs).

Speaking at a training workshop in Birnin Kebbi, UNICEF Chief Field Officer in Sokoto, Mr. Michael Juma, highlighted the goal of achieving

Universal Health Coverage and ensuring that no child is left behind.

He stressed the need for a well-coordinated and impactful health delivery system.

Juma also praised Kebbi State Governor Nasir Idris for his strides in improving healthcare, including the recruitment of 500 professional health workers to address manpower shortages.

Canadian Health Manager, Mr. Martin Dohlsten, explained that the five-year intervention would boost maternal and newborn health services in the three beneficiary states.

In response, Kebbi State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Yunusa Isma'il, thanked the Canadian government for its support and reiterated the state's commitment to

healthcare development.

He noted that the government had renovated 14 major health facilities and provided continuous training for newly recruited professionals.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Dr. Shehu Koko, emphasised the administration's focus on revitalising PHCS and developing human resources.

He revealed that 191 more PHCs across Kebbi State would be rehabilitated by the end of the year.

The two-day training session, held at Azbir Hotels in Birnin Kebbi, brought together health practitioners and journalists and is expected to enhance the capacity and implementation efficiency of healthcare delivery in the state.

# Abuja govt hospital records success in first living-donor kidney transplant

By Damilola Olufemi

**T**he Federal Medical Centre (FMC) Abuja has successfully performed its first living-donor kidney transplant.

Living-donor kidney transplant usually involves a donated kidney from someone you know. It might be a family member, friend or co-worker.

The facility's management disclosed this in a statement on Friday in Abuja.

According to the statement, the surgery, which was conducted on May 6, was performed on a 69-year-old male Nigerian who suffered from end-stage renal disease, a condition where the kidneys lose the ability to function.

However, a healthy donor, aged 39 and a close relative of the patient, donated one of his kidneys to the recipient, allowing for a life-saving transplant.

It also said that the medical team led by Dr Ernest Aniede, consisting of in-house qualified surgeons, nephrologists, and other medical and non-medical professionals, worked diligently to ensure the successful outcome of the procedure.

Also, the surgery was performed under strict sterile conditions and involved meticulous techniques to minimise risks and maximise the chances of transplant success.

The statement also notes that during his visit to the patient and the donor in the ward after the procedure, the Medical Director, Prof. Saad Ahmed,



commended the patient and donor for their trust in the hospital's services.

He also commended the medical team for a successful surgery.

"This is a major milestone for FMC Abuja and a positive sign for the healthcare landscape in Nigeria.

"This surgery demonstrates the hospital's commitment to providing advanced and life-changing treatments to its esteemed patients.

"This momentous surgery represents a step forward in providing life-changing treatment options for patients with kidney failure in the region and beyond."

He, however, said that the hospital's dream was to be a world-class health institution for rendering quality healthcare through teamwork, leveraging cutting-edge technology to enhance research, training, and innovation in healthcare provision.

According to the statement, Ahmed

appreciated President Bola Tinubu for his unwavering commitment to improving the health and well-being of the citizens and implementing crucial health reforms and initiatives in addressing kidney-related issues.

He added that the president's vision and dedication have led to significant progress in strengthening the healthcare system, especially in expanding access to dialysis, increasing funding for kidney disease research, and enhancing training for healthcare professionals.

In response, the donor and patient (recipient) expressed their heartfelt appreciation to the hospital management and staff for the professionalism and dedication they demonstrated before, during, and after the procedure.

The statement added that the patient and donor have recovered fully and are awaiting discharge from the medical team.



# LASUTH CMD calls for locally sourced orthodontic materials to cut treatment costs

By Helen Okechukwu



**T**he Chief Medical Director (CMD) of Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), Prof. Adetokunbo Fabamwo, has called for increased use of locally sourced materials in orthodontic care to reduce the high cost of treatment for patients.

According to the post shared on Friday, the CMD appealed during a courtesy visit by members of the Child Dental Health Unit to the hospital's top management committee.

The visit was part of activities marking World Orthodontic Health Day, celebrated on 15 May, under the theme "Building Beautiful Smiles."

Prof. Fabamwo noted that nearly all orthodontic materials used in Nigeria are imported, which significantly raises treatment costs. "We must look inward, source local materials, scout for hidden golden spots, and explore untapped

resources," he urged.

Read Also: Exclusive Interview: Expert warns untreated tooth decay can be life-threatening

He encouraged the government and orthodontic practitioners to invest in research and development to identify local alternatives that can serve as substitutes for imported dental products.

Dr. Toluwalase Yemitan, Head of the Child Dental Health Unit, thanked the hospital's management for its continued support in delivering quality care.

She explained that orthodontics is the branch of dentistry that focuses on diagnosing and correcting dental irregularities and facial deformities.

"An orthodontist is an expert in treatments related to correcting misaligned teeth and bite, which usually implies moving your teeth with braces or clear plastic aligners. In short, we move

teeth!" she emphasised," Dr. Yemitan said.

She added that untreated dental misalignments can lead to speech issues, pain during chewing, poor oral hygiene, and loss of self-confidence. "Aesthetically, these issues often affect self-confidence, making it challenging for individuals to smile and enjoy life to the fullest," she emphasised.

As part of the celebration, a health talk was held to educate patients on proper dental care. Participants were encouraged to maintain good oral hygiene and seek treatment for issues like teeth spacing, crowding, and underbites.

The event aimed to raise public awareness about the importance and benefits of orthodontic treatment, bringing together dental experts, patients, and members of the public.

# Health warning: Nasal tanning sprays linked to cancer, breathing problems

By Helen Okechukwu



**H**ealth officials in the United Kingdom (UK) have issued a warning to the public about unregulated nasal tanning sprays being sold online, which could lead to serious health problems—including a possible link to skin cancer.

These sprays contain Melanotan 2, a chemical that darkens the skin but is not approved for use in the UK.

Despite being promoted as harmless cosmetic products, they are not regulated like other medicines or beauty items, raising major safety concerns.

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) has received reports of users experiencing severe side effects such as nausea, vomiting, high blood pressure, and changes in moles, which may point to skin cancer risks. Some people have also reported breathing difficulties after using the sprays.

Read Also: NAFDAC boss urges

varieties, pharma firms to develop local medicines, vaccines

Experts are also warning that inhaling these sprays can damage the respiratory system, leading to coughing, sneezing, nasal irritation, and even long-term breathing issues with repeated use.

Worryingly, some sellers are targeting young people by offering flavoured versions of the sprays and related products, such as drops and gummies, in sweet flavours like bubblegum, peach, and strawberry—prompting fears of a new youth trend similar to disposable vapes.

One woman, Edith Eagle, told CTSI that she ended up in the hospital after using a nasal tanning spray she bought online. “It was as if I was drowning within my own body,” she said, describing her frightening experience.

CTSI is urging the public to avoid any tanning products that are inhaled or consumed. Instead, people are encouraged to use safer, regulated

tanning creams and sprays from trusted shops.

Experts warn that the long-term risks of these products are still unknown. “Unlike cosmetic products, nasal tanning sprays are unlikely to have had expert safety assessment, and use of relevant health warnings and instructions for safe use are rare,” said CTSI’s Richard Knight.

In the UK, according to Trading Standards officers recent survey, unlicensed cosmetic products are the major threat to consumers.

Consumers are encouraged to report suspicious products or reactions to Trading Standards using the available helpline: 08082231133.

Those in Scotland are advised to contact Consumer Advice Scotland on 08081646000, or Consumer in Northern Ireland can reach across on 03001236262.



# Cassie returns to witness stand in Diddy's sex trafficking trial

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**S**inger Cassie Ventura, the former longtime girlfriend of music mogul Sean “Diddy” Combs, is expected to return to the witness stand on Friday for further cross-examination in the federal sex trafficking and racketeering case against Combs.

Ventura, who is eight and a half months pregnant, has been testifying since Tuesday, providing harrowing accounts of alleged physical and sexual abuse she endured during her decade-long relationship with Combs. Her testimony is central to the prosecution’s case, which accuses Combs of running a criminal enterprise that included coercing women into sex and trafficking them across state lines.

On Thursday, Ventura faced a gruelling six-hour cross-examination by Combs’s defence team, which sought to cast doubt on her credibility. Lawyers presented a trove of explicit messages between Ventura and Combs, including texts in which she appeared to consent to the “freak-

offs” -drug-fueled sex sessions with male escorts- she now claims were non-consensual and coerced.

In one message, Ventura told Combs, “I’m always ready to freak off.” In another, she wrote: “I love our (Freak Offs) when we both want it.” When questioned about the messages, Ventura responded: “They were just words at that point.”

Asked by Combs’s lawyer if she had told Combs she wanted to participate in the sex sessions to make him happy, Ventura replied firmly: “No, there’s a lot more to that.

The defence also delved into the couple’s drug use. Ventura testified that both she and Combs had battled opiate addiction and regularly used drugs like ecstasy, cocaine, ketamine, and GHB.

Cassie describes the relationship

Ventura also described a toxic and volatile relationship, marked by infidelity, jealousy, and control. She

testified that Combs was enraged over her brief relationship with rapper Kid Cudi during a breakup in 2011 and that she had long felt like a “side piece” compared to Combs’s longtime partner, the late Kim Porter.

Throughout her testimony on Thursday, Combs, dressed in a beige sweater, was visibly engaged, whispering to his lawyers, fidgeting, and staring intently at Ventura. His mother, sons, and publicist were in attendance, as was Ventura’s husband.

Combs, who has pleaded not guilty to all charges, is facing counts including racketeering conspiracy, sex trafficking, and transportation for prostitution. If convicted, the 55-year-old music mogul could face life in prison.

Prosecutors announced that singer Dawn Richard, a former member of Danity Kane, is expected to testify next and could take the stand as early as Friday.

# Upcoming artistes face disappointments, we must keep pushing for best – Laba laba

By Adeniyi Yusuf

**A** Nigerian up and coming afrobeat artiste, Onaopemipo Idowu, known as Laba Laba music, shares with The New Daily Prime her interest(s) in music, struggles in the industry and a host of others

**Can you tell us about your journey into the world of art and how did it all begin for you?**

Honestly, I've always been an artist at heart. Growing up, I was that girl who loved to sing, dance, paint, anything that let me express myself. It just came naturally. But when adulthood hit, reality checked in. I needed a way to survive, so I leaned into interior design, which still gave me space to create. Over time though, I realized I was only feeding part of my soul. After going through a breakup last year, I had to pause and reflect. That's when I remembered the one place that truly made me feel alive being on a stage. That spark came back, and now here I am as Laba Laba—which means butterfly. It's symbolic because I've evolved, and I'm finally flying in my truth.

**What themes or emotions do you find yourself most drawn**



**to in your work, and why?**

I'm drawn to whatever feels real in the moment. Sometimes it's heartbreak, sometimes joy, sometimes just the vibe of the beat. I don't force it. I just let the music guide me, and I follow wherever it leads.

**Who or what are your biggest artistic influences?**

Adele has a way of making pain sound beautiful, she really moves me. Rihanna's boldness is a whole mood, and Asa reminds me to always stay grounded and soulful. Each one inspires a different part of me.

**How would you describe your style, and how has it evolved over time?**

I'd say my style is free, emotional, and a little unpredictable. I like to blend sounds and feelings. I'm not boxed in and I let life shape the sound, and I just evolve with it.

**What is your creative process like, from initial concept to final piece?**

It starts with a feeling that could be a line, a beat, or just a random thought. I hum, freestyle, and let it build naturally. I like when it flows without pressure. I know it's real when it hits me first.

Continue reading  
on next page



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**Is there a particular piece you've created that holds special meaning for you?**

Yes. My most recent piece, still unreleased, is a love letter wrapped in melody. It dives into how far I'm willing to go as a lover girl not the fairy tale kind, but the kind that shows up fully, fights gently, and loves with no brakes. It's a song that feels like a late-night voice note you never had the courage to send. And for me, that's what makes it special.

**What challenges have you faced as an emerging artist, and how have you overcome them?**

Whew—plenty. From people not keeping their word to weird deals that don't feel right. It's tough out here. But I've learned to listen to my instincts, take my time, and protect my art. I'm still learning, but I'm more intentional now.

**How do you see your art fitting into the larger contemporary art scene?**

I think I bring something unique, my Nigerian roots, my experiences, my vulnerability. I'm not trying to fit in, I'm just showing up as me, and I believe there's space for that in today's art scene.

**What are you currently working on, and what can your audience look forward to next?**

Right now, I'm working on my debut EP. It's raw, it's personal, it's soft and strong all at once just like a butterfly. It's my way of saying, "I'm here, and this is what I sound like."

**What advice would you give to other aspiring artists trying to find their voice?**

Be real. Be loud. Be soft. Be everything you are. Don't shrink yourself to fit in. There's power in doing you, fully.



# Trump announces plans for US trade letters to countries

By Fatimah Idera

US President Donald Trump announced on Friday that US officials will send letters to countries within the next two to three weeks, outlining the costs of doing business in the United States.

The letters, expected to be sent by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, will detail what countries will be paying to operate in the US.

However, Trump didn't provide further clarification on the matter during his speech in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates.

This development comes after China and the US announced a truce in their trade war on Monday, following talks in Geneva. Trump mentioned this truce in his Abu Dhabi remarks, alongside a separate trade deal with Britain.

The US and Britain had agreed to a limited bilateral trade agreement the previous week, which maintains Trump's



10% tariffs on British exports while reducing higher tariffs on steel and cars.

Trump mentioned that countries can appeal the business costs outlined in the letters. He also noted that US officials won't be able to meet with all 150 countries interested in making a deal. The letters are part of Trump's effort to renegotiate trade agreements and impose new tariffs, aiming to boost the US economy and create jobs.

Abu Dhabi marked the final stop on Trump's four-day Gulf tour, focused on securing business deals worth hundreds of billions of dollars. These deals have the potential to significantly benefit the US economy and create new job opportunities. Trump's trade policies aim to strengthen the US economy through strategic agreements and tariff adjustments.

# Without migration, Germany will be poor country – President

By Damilola Olufemi

The President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, has said the country would be a poor country without migration.

Steinmeier, while speaking at an event to mark the 50th anniversary of the Intercultural Week, a nationwide initiative against racism, called for debates on migration to be held with reason amid increased border controls under the country's new government.

"Immigration was never easy. It is also not just a problem story. It is also always an important part of our



country's success story," he said.

He noted that conversions on migration policy should include both

an "honest position that says what we want and can do, as well as a consensus that we are and will remain a country with many backgrounds, religions and cultures."

"Being German today also means equal rights for those with immigrant biographies," the president added.

"Some 21 million people in Germany, around a quarter of the population, either migrated to the country or are the children of migrants, Steinmeier said.



# New Pope backs marriage between man, woman

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



In his first major public statement since ascending to the papacy, Pope Leo XIV on Friday affirmed the Catholic Church's longstanding teachings on the sanctity of life and the traditional structure of the family.

Speaking during his inaugural meeting with the Vatican diplomatic corps, Pope Leo declared that the family is "founded on the stable union between a man and a woman," reinforcing the Church's position on marriage. He further emphasized that both the unborn and the elderly possess inherent dignity as creations of God, offering a firm stance on issues surrounding abortion and end-of-life ethics.

The address came just two days ahead of his formal installation Mass on

Sunday, a traditional moment of international significance. The gathering with ambassadors and envoys from over 180 countries is part of Vatican protocol following the election of a new pope, allowing global representatives to meet the leader of the Catholic Church and head of state of the Holy See, which holds observer status at the United Nations.

Pope Leo XIV, the first American ever elected to the papacy and a member of the Augustinian order, used the occasion to outline his vision for the Church's role on the global stage. In addition to reaffirming doctrinal positions, he issued a call for the revival of multilateral diplomacy and the promotion of interfaith dialogue, particularly in the pursuit of global

peace.

"Peace be with you all," he began—words that echoed his first blessing to the world from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica immediately after his election. The message underscores what he has declared a central priority of his pontificate: reconciliation and peace in a fractured world.

Leo's remarks are expected to shape the tone of his early leadership, signaling continuity in doctrine alongside renewed engagement in diplomacy and global interreligious cooperation.

The new pope's address comes at a time of growing global tension and cultural debate.

# Syria clears arrears, eligible for new world bank loans – World Bank

By Fatimah Idera

The World Bank announced on Friday that Syria's \$15.5 million in outstanding debt has been cleared, thanks to payments from Saudi Arabia and Qatar. This move makes Syria eligible to apply for millions of dollars in grants for reconstruction and budget support.

In April, Saudi Arabia and Qatar pledged to cover Syria's arrears with the World Bank, allowing the country to access new grant programs subject to the bank's operational policies. This development follows U.S. President Donald Trump's surprise announcement that he would lift all sanctions on Syria, a country struggling to rebuild after 13 years of civil war.

The United States is expected to start providing some sanctions relief in the coming weeks. As of May 12, Syria has cleared its outstanding balances with the International Development Association, the World Bank's fund for the poorest countries.

The World Bank expressed its satisfaction



with the clearance, stating, "We are pleased that the clearance of Syria's arrears will allow the World Bank Group to re-engage with the country and address the development needs of the Syrian people. After years of conflict, Syria is on a path to recovery and development."

The bank plans to collaborate with other countries to mobilize public and private financing for programs that can help the Syrian people build better lives and stabilize the country and region. Its first

project with Syria will focus on improving access to electricity, enabling economic progress and delivering essential services like healthcare, education, water, and livelihoods.

The World Bank added that this project is the first step in a planned increase in support designed to address Syria's urgent needs and invest in long-term development, marking a significant step towards the country's recovery.

# US musician Charles Strouse dies at 96

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Charles Strouse, the celebrated American composer behind Broadway classics such as *Annie* and *Bye Bye Birdie*, has died at the age of 96. His family confirmed that he passed away peacefully at his home in New York on Thursday.

A three-time Tony Award winner, Strouse leaves behind a towering legacy in American musical theatre. Best known for composing the jubilant score to *Annie*, Strouse helped bring to life such enduring songs as *Tomorrow*, *It's the Hard-Knock Life*, and *You're Never Fully Dressed Without a Smile*. The show opened on Broadway in 1977 and ran for nearly six



years, earning seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Original Score. Its soundtrack also won a Grammy and was later adapted into a 1982 film.

Born on June 7, 1928, in New York City, Strouse studied at the Eastman School of Music and went on to train under musical giants Aaron Copland and Nadia

Boulanger. He married dancer and choreographer Barbara Siman in 1964, and the couple remained together until her death in 2023. Strouse is survived by their four children: Benjamin, Nicholas, Victoria, and William.

Strouse's breakthrough came in 1960 with *Bye Bye Birdie*, a spirited comedy inspired by the rise of rock 'n' roll and the phenomenon of Elvis Presley. The show earned him his first Tony and introduced the hit song *Put on a Happy Face*. A decade later, he claimed his second Tony for *Applause*, a musical adaptation of the film *All About Eve*.



# 130 Labour MPs rebel against Starmer's benefits cuts plan

By Fatimah Idera

**S**ir Keir Starmer is facing the biggest rebellion of his premiership over planned benefits cuts, with more than 100 Labour MPs saying they won't back his sweeping welfare reforms in a vote expected next month.

The proposals, outlined in the Spring Statement, aim to bring down the benefits bill by £4.3 billion.

Rachel Reeves, the Chancellor, has drawn concern with plans to restrict Personal Independence Payments (PIP) to only the most disabled adults and make under-22s ineligible for Universal Credit. Around 130 MPs have signed a letter to Alan Campbell, the Government's Chief Whip, stating that Sir Keir must change course or risk defeat in the Commons.

The rebellion extends into the Government, with some parliamentary private secretaries wavering on the issue. The revolt comes amid growing anger over Sir Keir and Ms Reeves's decision to strip winter fuel payments from 10 million pensioners, blamed for Labour's local elections drubbing this month.

The letter, first reported by Good Morning Britain, expresses "significant concern" over the changes to PIP and Universal Credit. It demands an extended consultation on the Pathways to Work green paper and an independent analysis of the proposals. The MPs argue that the Bill should be delayed to reflect the findings.



According to the Government's figures, the welfare cuts will push 250,000 people into poverty, including 50,000 children. About 3.2 million families are set to lose out financially. Labour MPs are demanding concessions, including an impact assessment of the reforms.

The Government's working majority in the Commons is 165, meaning the estimated 130 rebels could force a parliamentary defeat. This isn't the first time Labour MPs have expressed dissatisfaction; 42 MPs signed a separate letter last week calling the changes "the biggest attack" on the welfare system since George Osborne's austerity policies.

The biggest revolt of Sir Keir's premiership to date took place in September when 53 Labour MPs abstained on his winter fuel cuts. Wes Streeting, the Health Secretary, admitted the changes had proven costly at the ballot box, with Labour

losing 187 county council seats largely to Nigel Farage's Reform UK.

The Conservatives have said the planned welfare reforms don't go far enough, with Kemi Badenoch, the Tory leader, suggesting the welfare budget should be smaller than defence spending. The welfare cuts are part of an apparent shift to the Right by the Government, accelerated by Reform's rise.

Liz Kendall, the Work and Pensions Secretary, is engaging with concerned MPs, with talks expected to intensify before the Bill's publication. MPs leading the rebellion are holding regular briefings on the cuts' impacts and plan to run a "myth-busting" session next month. Ms Kendall believes she has a strong argument and that MPs will be won over once the Bill is published.

# U.S. Judge backs Trump's use of wartime law to deport migrants

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Washington, D.C., May 16, 2025 — A federal judge in Pennsylvania has become the first in the United States to support former President Donald Trump's controversial use of a centuries-old wartime law to deport alleged Venezuelan gang members, marking a rare legal victory in his ongoing immigration crackdown.

Judge Stephanie L. Haines, a Trump appointee to the U.S. District Court, ruled that the 1798 Alien Enemies Act — a law historically invoked during wartime — could be legally applied to expel foreign nationals deemed threats to national security, even in the absence of an official war or military invasion.

The ruling opens the door for summary deportations of migrants accused of gang affiliation within her jurisdiction in western Pennsylvania, and it could potentially influence future appeals if the matter reaches the U.S. Supreme Court, currently dominated by conservative justices.

The Alien Enemies Act has only been used three times in U.S. history — during the War of 1812, World War I, and World War II — and has never been activated during peacetime until Trump's March 2025 order. His administration invoked the law to target alleged members of Tren de Aragua (TdA), a violent Venezuelan gang he has labelled a foreign terrorist organization.

Trump argued that the presence of



TdA in the U.S. constituted a “de facto invasion” with links to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro — a claim U.S. intelligence agencies have refuted, saying there is no evidence of Maduro's direct involvement.

Judge Haines pushed back against arguments that the law requires a formal invasion by a foreign military. “The Act does not require an invasion or predatory incursion,” she wrote. “Is a Foreign Terrorist Organization like TdA not the modern equivalent of a pirate or robber?”

However, while she upheld the use of the act, she also found the Trump administration's enforcement procedures constitutionally inadequate. The judge ruled that migrants must be given 21 days' notice in a language they understand and the right to appeal their

deportation in court — contradicting government claims that only 24-hour notice was sufficient.

Her decision diverges from rulings in New York, South Texas, West Texas, and Colorado, where federal judges previously concluded the use of the Alien Enemies Act was unlawful under current conditions.

Legal analysts suggest that the Pennsylvania ruling could be a pivotal development if the administration seeks to defend the act's use at the Supreme Court level.

As the political debate around immigration intensifies ahead of the 2026 midterms, this ruling is expected to galvanize support and opposition alike, while putting the rarely used 18th-century law squarely back into the spotlight of American constitutional discourse.



# Again, Chega leader André Ventura hospitalised days before Portugal election

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**A**ndré Ventura, the leader of Portugal's far-right Chega party, has been hospitalised for the second time in two days after collapsing during a campaign rally, just three days before the country's third snap election since 2022.

The 42-year-old politician fell ill during a rally in the southern town of Odemira on Thursday. Videos circulating online show Ventura clutching his chest and loosening his tie before collapsing into the arms of aides, who quickly carried him away. He was first taken to a local clinic and later transferred to a hospital in Setúbal, near Lisbon, for further medical attention.

This latest incident follows a similar collapse on Tuesday, after which Ventura was discharged from a hospital in Faro. Doctors at the time diagnosed him with an oesophageal spasm triggered by gastric reflux and high blood pressure.

Speaking to CNN Portugal, Chega MP Marta Silva confirmed that an electrocardiogram conducted in the ambulance after Thursday's collapse indicated no cardiac issues. "It was likely another spasm," she said, seeking to downplay concerns about Ventura's health.

Ventura later reassured supporters



by posting a photo from his hospital bed, flashing a thumbs-up. "This is a setback and a difficulty," he wrote on X. "It won't bring us down. Keep going ... keep going!!! Portugal is much more important, it is this country that moves us."

Despite the health scares, Chega is projected to maintain its position as Portugal's third-largest political force in Sunday's election, trailing behind the centre-right Democratic Alliance (AD) and the centre-left Socialist Party (PS). Polls show AD at 33 per cent, PS at 26 per cent, and Chega at 17 per cent.

Ventura's combative, anti-establishment rhetoric has helped propel Chega into national prominence, largely on a platform that mixes populism, harsh anti-immigration stances, and promises to clean up corruption. However,

his bid for government influence continues to face roadblocks, particularly from Prime Minister Luís Montenegro, who has consistently ruled out forming any alliance with the far-right party.

Chega's rise has been marred by scandal in recent months. In January, an MP was expelled from the party over allegations of stealing suitcases at airports. That same month, another member was caught drink-driving, while a third faces charges for soliciting oral sex from a 15-year-old boy.

As the nation prepares to head to the polls, questions loom not only over Ventura's health but also over the long-term direction and stability of the party he leads.

# 80 killed in Israeli airstrikes, artillery shelling across Gaza

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

At least 80 people have been killed in the latest wave of Israeli airstrikes and artillery shelling across Gaza, as ceasefire negotiations stall and U.S. President Donald Trump draws global condemnation for suggesting the U.S. “take” Gaza and transform it into a “freedom zone.”

Speaking during his Middle East tour in Qatar, Trump reiterated a controversial proposal he first outlined in February, an American-led redevelopment of Gaza as a luxury business and leisure destination. Critics have slammed the idea as a thinly veiled call for the displacement of Gaza’s 2.3 million residents.

“I have concepts for Gaza that I think are very good,” Trump said. “Make it a freedom zone... I’d be proud to have the United States have it, take it, make it a freedom zone.”

Hamas swiftly rejected the remarks. “Gaza is an integral part of Palestinian land, it is not real estate for sale on the open market,” said senior Hamas official Basem Naim. “We are prepared to make every sacrifice to preserve our homeland and secure our people’s future.”

Trump’s remarks came amid escalating violence. Palestinian officials reported that Thursday’s strikes killed as many as 120 people, the deadliest surge since Israel resumed its offensive following a collapsed ceasefire in March.

Humanitarian situation reaches dire levels in Gaza

In Gaza, the humanitarian situation has reached dire levels. Nearly half a million people are at risk of starvation, with food and fuel stocks nearly depleted. Human Rights Watch condemned Israel’s blockade as “a tool of extermination” and



warned that plans to compress Gaza’s population into smaller zones while rendering other areas uninhabitable could amount to war crimes.

The Israeli government, maintaining that Hamas exploits aid deliveries, has proposed a controversial system of humanitarian “hubs” managed by private contractors and protected by Israeli forces. The U.S.-based Gaza Humanitarian Foundation claims it will begin implementing the program by month’s end, though aid agencies and Gulf donors have dismissed the plan as unworkable and dangerous.

Meanwhile, violence also erupted in the occupied West Bank. A nine-month pregnant Israeli woman was shot and killed on her way to the hospital in a suspected Palestinian gun attack. Hamas praised the shooting as “heroic,” though it did not claim responsibility. The Israeli army later killed five Palestinians during a raid in the village of Tammun.

The Israeli offensive began in October 2023 following a deadly Hamas attack that left 1,200 Israelis dead and 251

hostages taken. Since then, Israel’s retaliatory campaign has claimed over 52,000 lives in Gaza, according to the territory’s health ministry, figures considered reliable by the UN.

Trump’s omission of Israel from his current regional itinerary was widely noted, signalling potential tension with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The U.S. president instead visited Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

Palestinians marked Nakba Day on Thursday, commemorating the 1948 mass displacement during Israel’s creation. “What we are experiencing now is even worse than the Nakba of 1948,” said Ahmed Hamad, a displaced resident of Gaza City. “Death surrounds us everywhere.”

As international pressure mounts for an end to the blockade and a lasting ceasefire, the prospects for peace remain bleak, and the people of Gaza continue to suffer under the weight of war and uncertainty.



# Mexico seeks compensation from YouTube star MrBeast over unauthorized use of video

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**T**he Mexican government is demanding compensation and a public apology from YouTube megastar MrBeast and his production company after he filmed and promoted a chocolate brand at the country's ancient Maya ruins without proper authorization.

The video, titled "I Explored 2,000 Year Old Ancient Temples," was uploaded to MrBeast's YouTube channel on May 10 and has already garnered more than 60 million views. In the video, the influencer, whose real name is Jimmy Donaldson, visits prominent archaeological sites including Calakmul and Chichén Itzá in southeastern Mexico.

A line in the video, where MrBeast remarks, "I can't believe the government's letting us do this," has sparked widespread backlash, particularly among Mexicans who are typically barred from accessing the same restricted areas. The footage shows the YouTuber entering sacred spaces and historic structures generally off-limits to the public.

Mexico's newly sworn-in President, Claudia Sheinbaum, has since called for clarification on how MrBeast's team was granted such privileged access. The



situation escalated after the video was found to feature product placements for MrBeast's own snack line, including references such as "Mayan-approved" a move that has drawn official ire.

The National Institute of Archaeology and History (INAH) released a strongly worded statement, accusing MrBeast's production company, Full Circle Media, of violating the terms of their filming permit.

"While we are pleased that YouTubers and young people around the world value our indigenous civilizations, we strongly condemn those who take advantage," the Institute said via social media.

According to INAH, the permit did not authorize "the use of the image

of the archaeological sites for the advertising of commercial brands for private profit." The agency has formally demanded financial compensation for damages and a public retraction from MrBeast's team.

In Mérida, the capital of Yucatán state where Chichén Itzá is located, local residents have voiced frustration over the perceived double standard. Tour guide Jose Elias Aguayo, 53, remarked, "Restrictions and regulations should apply to everyone: domestic tourists, foreign visitors, as well as us locals."

As of press time, MrBeast and Full Circle Media have not issued a public response to the allegations or demands.

# Trump tariffs threaten Croatia's Game of Thrones filming site

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The ancient Croatian town of Dubrovnik, famous for its stunning fortresses and cobbled streets, attracts numerous tourists eager to visit the iconic locations from the Game of Thrones television series and the Star Wars had been threatened.

However, recent comments by President Donald Trump imposing a 100% tariff on all movies produced outside the United States have sent shockwaves through the entertainment industry and among locals in Dubrovnik. Many fear that directors may no longer consider filming in this picturesque town due to the proposed tariffs.

Croatian film producer, Igor Aleksandar Nola expressed his concerns, stating that the planned tariffs have already caused significant disruptions. Budgets have been impacted by the global economic uncertainty, and part of the financing from banks and investment funds for audio-visual arts has been put on hold. "There have been huge disruptions because of the tariffs that Trump plans to introduce," Nola said, highlighting the uncertainty surrounding film financing.

Central European countries and the Balkans have long been favored by Hollywood for their breathtaking scenery, diverse architectural



styles, and cost-effective filming options. When a movie or series becomes a hit, these locations often experience a surge in popularity among visitors. Dubrovnik is a prime example, having become a hotspot for Game of Thrones fans worldwide.

"The film and Game of Thrones have changed Dubrovnik for sure," said Ivan Vukovic, a local tourist guide. Approximately 1,000 tourists join Game of Thrones tours every day, and the town has witnessed an economic boom with the opening of new souvenir shops and job creation for local guides and production assistants. "All of this created a big economic boom," Vukovic added, emphasizing the positive impact of film tourism.

The lack of clarity on the timing and application of the tariffs has

left film industry executives uncertain about how they will be affected. Despite the initial shock, participants at the Cannes Film Festival adopted a cautious yet business-as-usual approach following Trump's tariff announcement.

Mate Frankovic, the mayor of Dubrovnik, remains optimistic, believing that the crisis will be short-lived and won't significantly impact film productions or tourism in the city. With around 1.4 million tourists visiting annually, Frankovic said, "I honestly cannot imagine a single serious U.S. film and large production without including a major European city," expressing confidence in Dubrovnik's enduring appeal to filmmakers.



# Ratcliffe loses £6.5bn in rocky year at Man United

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

**S**ir Jim Ratcliffe, Manchester United co-owner and chairman of the Ineos Group, has suffered a staggering £6.473 billion drop in his personal fortune over the past year, according to the latest edition of the Sunday Times Rich List. The 72-year-old's net worth has shrunk from £23.519 billion to £17.046 billion, pushing him from fourth to seventh in the annual ranking of the UK's 350 wealthiest individuals.

This dramatic fall represents more than a quarter of Ratcliffe's total wealth and comes at a time when both his flagship petrochemical business and footballing venture have faced mounting scrutiny and financial pressure.

Ratcliffe's Ineos Group completed the purchase of a 27.7% stake in Manchester United in February 2024, in a deal valued at approximately £1.25 billion. Alongside that minority stake came full control over football operations at Old Trafford, a shift that has sparked controversy among fans and insiders alike.

Since the Ineos takeover, Manchester United have implemented several unpopular cost-cutting measures. These have included two rounds of staff redundancies and an increase in ticket prices—moves that have drawn heavy criticism. Ratcliffe defended these actions in a BBC interview in March, stating that the club could have “run out of cash by the end of this year” without swift and decisive financial intervention.

Despite the backlash, Ratcliffe and Ineos are pressing ahead with ambitious plans to revitalise the club's infrastructure. In March, Manchester United unveiled proposals for a new £2 billion, 100,000-seat stadium to be built near Old Trafford, describing it as an “iconic” future home for the club.

Ratcliffe has insisted that the financial



pressures facing Ineos will not affect investment at United. However, signs of strain have emerged. Ineos pulled out of its sponsorship deal with New Zealand Rugby in February and ended its long-standing support of four-time Olympic champion Ben Ainslie's America's Cup sailing team. The company cited “cost-saving measures” across its operations, pointing to the beleaguered state of Europe's chemicals industry, which has been hit hard by rising energy prices and heavy carbon taxes.

“Europe has become a very difficult place to do business for industrial companies,” Ratcliffe said in his March interview. “Energy prices in Europe are now five times higher than in America, where a lot of our competition is based.”

On the pitch, United's performances have done little to lighten the mood. The club currently sits 16th in the Premier League with just two matches remaining. Their only hope for silverware—and a place in next season's Champions League—rests on next week's Europa League final against Tottenham Hotspur. Victory would not only salvage the season but potentially ease pressure on the club's new leadership.

Ratcliffe's turbulent year comes against the backdrop of broader shifts in the Sunday Times Rich List. While several billionaires, including Ratcliffe, have seen significant declines in wealth, top athletes are thriving. Golfer Rory McIlroy, fresh off completing a career Grand Slam at the Masters, now tops the Sunday Times 40 under 40 list, with his fortune climbing from £225 million to £260 million.

Other athletes seeing gains include boxer Anthony Joshua (£195m), tennis legend Sir Andy Murray (£110m), and England football captain Harry Kane, whose Bundesliga triumph with Bayern Munich helped lift his net worth to £100m—just enough to secure 38th spot on the under-40 list.

While McIlroy and his peers rise, Ratcliffe's fall serves as a stark reminder of the volatility of both sport and industry. With Ineos under pressure and United's fanbase divided, the next year may determine whether Ratcliffe's Old Trafford gamble will ultimately pay off—or prove too costly.

# From rejection to Wembley: Eze's inspiring rise

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

On Saturday, Eberechi Eze will walk out onto the hallowed turf of Wembley Stadium for the FA Cup final, representing Crystal Palace in a clash against Manchester City. It's a moment that marks the pinnacle of a career shaped by rejection, unwavering determination, and deep faith.

Now 26 and a key figure for both Crystal Palace and the England national team, Eze's path to the top of English football was anything but smooth. Raised on a council estate in Greenwich, south-east London, his early years were filled with disappointment. Arsenal released him at 13. Fulham, Reading, Millwall—all said no. Trials at Bristol City and Sunderland went nowhere.

"I remember facing Arsenal a few months after being released by them," Eze recalled. "I had tears ready to pour down my face. I didn't know how to process the emotions."

By the age of 18, Eze had seen more closed doors than most players do in a lifetime. Millwall, the last of many clubs to reject him, ended his two-year scholarship without offering a professional contract. A final unsuccessful trial at Sunderland left his confidence shattered.

But then came Queens Park Rangers. They offered him a lifeline, and Eze seized it. Within two years, he was a first-team regular. In 2020, he earned a £19.5 million move to Crystal Palace—a meteoric rise from non-league obscurity to Premier League star.

Saturday's final represents more than just silverware. For Eze, it's a moment of personal vindication. A symbol of what can happen when talent meets faith and persistence.



"I know so many people who got released once and gave up," said Eze. "But I never let go of my love for football. I just kept asking, 'What's next?' After every setback, it was about moving forward."

He credits his Christian upbringing with giving him strength during those trying times. "I could be anywhere doing anything, but God placed me here," he said. "I haven't been given anything. All I have is from working hard and the grace of God."

Eze's statistics this season speak volumes: seven goals and eight assists in the Premier League, and three crucial goals in the FA Cup—including a stunning long-range strike that helped sink Aston Villa in the semi-finals.

Off the pitch, Eze remains grounded and connected to his roots. He recently reunited with the local mentors, Gabriel and Rafael, who taught him how to play football in a Greenwich cage. "They showed me all the skills," he said. "I owe so much to them."

His impact goes beyond goals and

assists. Lisa Shaw, his former primary school teacher, described how he invited children from his old school to watch Palace train—sending a fleet of cars to pick them up. "He's never forgotten where he came from," she said. "He's a fantastic role model."

Those closest to him, like younger brother Chimaechi—who plays for Palace's U21s—view him as an inspiration. "If I went through what he did, I don't know if I could continue," he said. "He's shown us all that you can change your story."

As the final looms, fans will be hoping for another moment of magic from Eze—perhaps another wonder goal like the one that sent Palace to Wembley.

"He felt peace when that goal went in," said childhood friend Dajon Golding. "Words can't describe how proud I am of him."

From being rejected by club after club, to leading his team into a major final, Eberechi Eze's story is one of resilience, faith, and the power of never giving up.



# How Flick's young guns made Barça champions

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

When Alan Hansen famously claimed in 1995 that “you can’t win anything with kids,” Manchester United’s Class of ’92 quickly made him eat his words. Fast forward nearly 30 years, and Hansi Flick’s youthful Barcelona side has rewritten that script once more, clinching the La Liga title and Copa del Rey in a dazzling Double that has captivated the footballing world.

Barcelona’s resurgence under Hansi Flick has been a story of belief, bravery, and the bold embrace of youth. With an average age of just 25—the lowest in La Liga—Barcelona didn’t merely win trophies. They restored joy to the Camp Nou faithful with a style of football that was equal parts fearless and flamboyant.

Central to this revival has been Flick’s faith in his “young musketeers”: 17-year-old Lamine Yamal, 18-year-old Pau Cubarsí, 21-year-old Alejandro Balde, and midfield maestro Pedri, still only 22. Each has played beyond their years, blending talent with tenacity. But youth alone doesn’t explain the transformation—it’s Flick’s vision that turned promise into silverware.

When the former Bayern and Germany boss took over last summer, Barcelona were not only struggling on the pitch, but off it as well. Financial constraints meant big-money signings were off the table. Players like Frenkie de Jong, Robert Lewandowski and Raphinha felt undervalued and out of sync with the previous regime.

Flick’s first move? Restore trust. He made it clear to the senior players that they were integral to his plans. Lewandowski responded with 25 goals; Raphinha, once often subbed off before the hour mark, added 18 in the league. De Jong became the side’s heartbeat, anchoring the midfield with leadership and precision.



Read also: Jacobo Ramon’s late winner delays Barcelona title party  
But it was Flick’s reimagining of Barcelona’s structure that truly defined this campaign. Youth wasn’t just promoted—it was empowered. He let the young players lead, even allowing them to choose the dressing-room music. They repaid him with vibrant performances and an infectious team spirit.

The manager also worked wonders behind the scenes. Players say he listens. Injuries and fatigue are managed in consultation with them, creating mutual respect. This approach has particularly benefited Lamine Yamal, whose development has been managed with remarkable care. The teen prodigy is already the youngest player to make 100 Barcelona appearances—and in this season’s Clásico, he outran and out-defended even the seasoned centre-backs.

Flick also demanded more from his defence. Veteran centre-back Iñigo Martínez was asked to play a high line, a system alien to his previous roles. Despite lacking pace, Martínez adjusted through sheer discipline and guidance, becoming the marshal of a risky but relentless back line.

Discipline extends off the pitch too. Flick insists on punctuality—players like Jules Koundé and Iñaki Peña have been benched for tardiness. And in an age of designer fashion, Flick has enforced uniform club attire for away matches, including among the board.

It’s no surprise, then, that this team, united in vision and spirit, plays with such cohesion. Flick sets the strategy, but players like Yamal, Raphinha and De Jong drive the engine. They’ve bought into the philosophy completely, often rescuing games from the brink with a blend of grit and grace.

Still, it’s not perfect. Conceding 24 goals in 14 Champions League matches and falling short of the final shows that balance is needed. Flick’s goal for next season is clear: blend their attacking chaos with a touch more control.

With one year left on his deal, Flick isn’t rushing to commit long-term. But for now, Barcelona are back. Champions, entertainers, and perhaps the start of a new dynasty.

And just like Ferguson’s Class of ‘92, this could be only the beginning.

# “You are my heroes” – Michail Antonio’s near-death journey

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

**M**ichail Antonio, West Ham United’s record Premier League goalscorer, recently opened up about his harrowing experience following a near-fatal car crash six months ago. The 35-year-old striker’s journey of physical recovery and mental resilience has inspired many, shedding light on the challenges athletes face beyond the pitch.

On a stormy December day, Antonio’s Ferrari skidded off the road and crashed into a tree in Epping Forest. The impact shattered his thigh bone and left him trapped in the car. Emergency responders, including Essex and Herts Air Ambulance paramedics Rob Moon and Dr James Moloney, rushed to the scene and saved his life.

“Meeting these people who saved my life has been very humbling,” Antonio said during a recent BBC One interview. “I want to say thank you, because obviously I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for you guys. You saved my life, so you guys are basically my heroes.”

Despite the severity of his injuries, Antonio’s memories of the crash are fragmented. He recalls being trapped and in pain but has no recollection of the faces of those who rescued him. Moon shared that they immediately recognized Antonio from the West Ham shirt found inside the car, providing a clue that helped them understand the situation quickly.

The paramedics reassured Antonio during their treatment, talking about football and his team to keep him calm. He was rushed to the Royal London Hospital, though the air ambulance couldn’t be used due to the storm.

Since that day, Antonio has been on a slow but determined path to recovery. From being hospitalized for over three weeks with a broken leg to now walking and undergoing rehabilitation, the journey has been physically and emotionally taxing.

The incident also deeply affected Antonio’s family. “They’ve probably



experienced the incident more than I did,” he reflected. “They were all in the hospital, they have those memories, they lived it whereas I didn’t live it as much as them.”

Antonio has been candid about the toll the accident has taken on his mental health. The crash not only threatened his football career but also forced him to confront emotional struggles, including anxiety and depression. His contract with West Ham is due to expire soon, and with a managerial change at the club, Antonio has found the uncertainty difficult.

In addressing his mental health, Antonio has found strength in speaking openly and seeking support. Earlier this year, he joined former professional footballer Clarke Carlisle to discuss the mental health challenges players face. Carlisle, who battled depression and alcoholism following a career-threatening knee injury, shared his journey from silence to advocacy.

“Clarke’s story really resonated with me,” Antonio said. “He talked about how there was a culture of not putting your business out to the world, and that’s what I experienced growing up too.”

Antonio has become a vocal advocate for therapy and mental health awareness,

encouraging others to break the stigma. “I used to push down my emotions, but now I see the importance of talking and healing,” he explained. His openness has helped him deal with setbacks and celebrate moments like West Ham’s UEFA Conference League success in 2023 — something he struggled to enjoy fully at the time due to his mental state.

Throughout his recovery, Antonio has made significant lifestyle changes. He admitted his love for sports cars came to an abrupt end after the crash and now relies on more practical vehicles and family support for transport.

Looking forward, Antonio remains hopeful and committed to rebuilding his career and life. “The journey has been tough, but I’m grateful for every day,” he said. “I want to use my experience to inspire others to speak up, seek help, and never give up.”

From the brink of tragedy to becoming a beacon of hope, Michail Antonio’s story is a powerful reminder that resilience, faith, and community support are vital in overcoming life’s greatest challenges. His message is clear: heroes aren’t just those who play on the field but also those who help save lives and support mental well-being off it.