



AfDB approves \$100m for Nigerian Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Bank Pg 2

FG sets up panel to assess effects of new US trade tariffs Pg 4



The New Daily Prime

f @new daily prime x @prime_daili149 @ @new_daily_prime

...your prime source for excellence in journalism

Former Super Eagles coach Christian Chukwu is dead Pg 40



Obasanjo: Nigeria too rich for its citizens to be poor Pg 7



I don't mind being 4th or 5th wife - Toke Makinwa Pg 23



Mbappe seizes nearly £50m in unpaid wages from PSG Pg 41



US Embassy announces new visa interview requirements for Nigerians Pg 5

Trump exempts phones, computers, chips from new tariffs Pg 30



Death toll from Dominican club roof collapse hits 225 Pg 35

AfDB approves \$100m for Nigerian Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Bank

By Dave Oludare Oso

President and Chairman, Board of Directors of African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr Akinwumi Adesina, has disclosed that the bank has approved \$100 million for the establishment of the Nigerian Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Bank.

Adesina said this in Abuja on Friday, when he delivered the 14th Convocation Lecture of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

The theme of the lecture is: "Advancing Africa's Positioning within Global Development and Geographical Dynamics."

The AfDB President said the move was to liberate the Nigerian youth financially and provide technical assistance, business development services, equity, quasi-equity and debt financing for businesses of young people across Africa.

"The key to solving unemployment is entrepreneurship. Africa is today experiencing an entrepreneurship boom, with 22 per cent of its working age population starting a business, the highest rate in the world according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2020.

"The leading areas of focus for entrepreneurship are in the sectors of agriculture, retail, services and technology.

"The future is very bright for innovative young entrepreneurs in Africa. This is driven by the rapid expansion of the digital economy which will add \$180 billion to Africa's GDP by 2050, and \$712 billion by 2050.

"Africa's startup ecosystem is taking advantage of the digital economy with more than 600 active startup hubs on the continent.

"Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Egypt have become centres of tech innovations, driven by youth entrepreneurs in health tech, Agric-tech and e-commerce," he



said.

According to Adesina, the AfDB marshalled out a robust financial development plan for Africa, because the global financial system has been unable to effectively address the challenges facing Africa.

Adesina listed the challenges to include matters of debt, climate change and access to greater financing.

"In addition, the AfDB and its partners approved \$614 million for the Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises programme to support access to financing for small and medium sized businesses in the creative and digital industries.

"It is a strong strategic partnership which includes the AfDB, the Agence Francaise de Developpement, the Islamic Development Bank and the Bank of Industry.

"The programme plans to add \$6.4 billion to the Nigerian economy and create over six million jobs."

The AfDB said in spite of the gains made over time, the majority of Africa's youth still lag behind on education.

"For the sake of comparison let's look at

Japan and Africa; while 98.9 per cent of the youth in Japan have completed a secondary education, only 43 per cent of the youth in Africa completed secondary school education.

"In terms of higher education, the gap is stark; while 60 per cent of the youth in Japan are pursuing higher education, only 10 per cent of Africa's youth enrolled in higher education.

"Among those pursuing higher education, African youth are less enrolled in educational fields that are dominating the world.

"While 30 per cent of Japanese youth in universities pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics, less than 25 per cent of students in sub-Saharan Africa are in these fields.

"This puts Africa behind in terms of its preparedness for the fourth industrial revolution, especially in fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics, automation and cloud computing, which are revolutionizing the world," Adesina added.

He said the bank was already working with the African Union to establish a \$300 million African Education, Science and Technology Innovation Fund, to address the education gap.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

EFFECTIVE FROM DECEMBER 1, 2024

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	372,500.00
HALF PAGE	213,000.00
QUARTER PAGE	106,500.00
14X2	118,000.00
10X6	261,585.50
10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	8,600.00
1X1	4,400.00

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	329,868.50
HALF PAGE	192,500.00
QUARTER PAGE	100,000.00
14X2	109,500.00
10X6	242,500.00
10X5	237,500.00
10X4	192,500.00
10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
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
5X3	57,819.00
5X2	40,379.50
4X4	55,000.00
4X3	31,000.00
4X2	22,003.50
3X2	17,260.00
2X2	12,945.00
2X1	8,630.00
1X1	4,315.00

POLITICAL COLOUR

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,200,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	885,000.00
FULL PAGE	420,000.00
HALF PAGE	213,250.00
QUARTER PAGE	115,012.50

POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,050,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	745,000.00
FULL PAGE	315,777.50
HALF PAGE	184,700.00
QUARTER PAGE	95,222.50

CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	254,533.50
HALF PAGE	142,787.50
QUARTER PAGE	80,706.50
14X2	78,222.50
10X6	217,830.00
10X5	192,305.50
10X4	142,787.50
10X3	121,355.50
9X6	192,305.50
9X3	107,757.50
8X6	170,725.00
8X3	70,390.00
7X4	58,666.50
6X4	67,048.00
6X3	53,361.50
6X2	37,694.00
5X6	83,850.00
5X4	55,900.00
5X3	43,705.00
5X2	27,938.00
4X4	44,493.00
4X3	33,524.00
4X2	22,350.00
3X2	16,763.00
2X2	10,877.00
2X1	5,588.50
1X1	2,795.50

SPECIAL POSITIONS

2X6 FRONT PAGE	700,000.00
2X6 BACK PAGE	300,000.00
2X6 INSIDE PAGE	155,000.00
3X6 FRONT PAGE	1,200,000.00
4X6 FRONT PAGE	2,250,000.00
5X6 FRONT PAGE	3,350,000.00
10X6 FRONT PAGE	8,250,000.00
EARPIECE FRONT PAGE(1.5X2)	246,500.00
EARPIECE INSIDE PAGE(1.5X2)	117,875.00
EARPIECE BACK PAGE	236,796.50
CENTRE SPREAD COLOUR (PUBLIC NOTICE)	1,027,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD COLOUR (PRODUCT)	929,000.00
CENTRESPREAD B&W	800,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	575,000.00
CENTRESPREAD STRIP COLOUR	191,668.50
DOUBLE SPREAD COLOUR	721,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	432,881.00
DOUBLE SPREAD STRIP COLOUR	144,294.00
CENTRE SPREAD B&W	835,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF PAGE B & W	550,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD B & W	725,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF B & W	425,000.00
FULL WRAP AROUND	15,000,000.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	8,500,000.00
HALF PAGE FRONT	5,500,000.00

PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	280,690.00
HALF PAGE	164,178.00
QUARTER PAGE	84,641.50
10X6	228,000.00
10X5	201,600.00
10X4	149,440.00
10X3	127,108.00
9X6	201,600.00
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
3X2	19,750.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	6,500.00
1X1	3,292.00

PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	210,795.50
HALF PAGE	124,236.00
QUARTER PAGE	70,950.00
14X2	76,128.35
10X6	194,961.00
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
3x3	23,458.00
3X2	14,923.00
2X2	10,200.00
2X1	5,439.50
1X1	2,700.00

ALLURE RATE

SIZE	RATE	TOTAL
CENTRESPREAD		967,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD		806,250.00
ALLURE COVER		750,000.00
(IBC) Inside Back Cover		376,250.00
(IFC) Inside Front Cover		430,000.00
(BC) Back Cover		483,750.00
Full Page		430,000.00
10X5		295,625.00
Half Page		225,000.00
EVENT		250,000.00

PICTURE & CAPTION

SIZE	RATE	7.5% VAT	TOTAL
PHOTO NEWS PAGE 2	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
PHOTO NEWS (3X3)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
PRESS RELEASE (4X4)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
EVENT COVERAGE	100,000.00	7,500.00	107,500.00
FEATURES	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00

GENERAL INFORMATION

SERIES DISCOUNT
5 PAGES 2.5%
10 PAGES 5%
15 PAGES & ABOVE 7.5%

SURCHARGE
PAGE 3 (100%)
PAGE 4, 5, 7 AND 8 (50%)
PAGE 2 (75%)

LOOSE INSERT
LEAFLET, POSTERS 1,000 COPIES
SPECIAL INSERTS (8 PAGES) COPIES
SPECIAL INSERTS (4 PAGES) 1,000 COPIES
HANDLING CHARGES FOR LESS THAN 35,000 COPIES
HANDLING CHARGES MORE THAN 35,000 COPIES

CLASSIFIED ADVERT RATES
CHANGE OF NAME
GUIDE BLACK & WHITE
GUIDE COLOUR

25,000.00
45,000.00
30,000.00
75,000.00
100,000.00

2,000.00
3,750.00
4,250.00

CONTACT US

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

E-mail Address:
info@newdailyprime.news
Terms and Conditions apply

ALL RATES ARE VAT INCLUSIVE

FG sets up panel to assess effects of new US trade tariffs

By Friday Omosola



The federal government (FG) has inaugurated a specialised panel to analyse how the recent trade tariff measures introduced by the United States might affect Nigeria's economic outlook.

According to a statement released yesterday, Mohammed Manga, Director of Information and Public Relations at the Ministry of Finance, said the initiative followed deliberations by the Economic Management Team (EMT).

The committee is chaired by the Finance Minister and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun.

Although Nigeria's primary export, crude oil, is not directly impacted by the new US trade actions, the development

coincides with a dip in global oil prices—raising alarm over potential strain on government revenue and the national budget.

On April 2, US President Donald Trump unveiled wide-ranging import tariffs on goods entering the United States, a move that also applies to Nigerian exports.

Reacting shortly after, Edun expressed confidence in Nigeria's capacity to weather external trade challenges, including those posed by the new US measures.

Manga noted that the EMT convened earlier this week alongside key stakeholders from relevant ministries and agencies to deliberate on the broader implications of the shifting trade dynamics.

“To support evidence-based policymaking, the EMT has established a sub-committee tasked with conducting a detailed review of the direct and indirect economic impacts of both the emerging tariff measures and the global commodity price shifts,” Manga said.

The newly formed sub-committee draws members from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning—including the Budget Office of the Federation—as well as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

Manga confirmed that the panel had already held its inaugural session and is expected to submit its findings to the EMT in the coming days.

US Embassy announces new visa interview requirements for Nigerians

By **Damilola Olufemi**

The United States Embassy has announced new visa interview requirements for Nigerian applicants, which will take effect starting April 22.

In a statement released on Friday, the US mission clarified that all applicants attending interviews in Abuja and Lagos must present a DS-160 visa application form that includes a confirmation barcode starting with “AA” followed by two zeroes.

“Starting April 22, 2025, all visa applicants in Abuja and Lagos must bring a DS-160 visa application form with a confirmation/barcode number (starting with AA and followed by 00 – two zeroes) that matches the one used to make their appointment online. You also must make your appointment in the location you selected when filling out your DS-160,” the statement read.

The embassy emphasized that applicants who fail to present a matching barcode will be denied entry to the consular section and disqualified from attending the interview.

“Matching Barcode Numbers: If the confirmation/barcode number on your DS-160 form does not match the one you used to book your appointment, you will not be allowed to enter the Consular Section or attend your visa interview,” the statement further noted.



Applicants are encouraged to verify the alignment of their barcode details at least two weeks before their interview.

The embassy also clarified that previously used DS-160 forms cannot be reused. In cases where there is a mismatch, applicants are advised to log into their AVITS account no later than ten days before the interview to submit a correction request.

“At least two weeks before your interview, please double-check that the barcode number on your DS-160 form matches the one you used to schedule your appointment. You cannot reuse a DS-160 from a previous application,” the embassy stated.

“If your DS-160 barcode is incorrect, you must log into your AVITS account at least 10 days before your appointment to create a support ticket requesting correction of your barcode number.”

DS-160 Form

The US mission also reminded applicants to ensure their visa appointment is scheduled at the location indicated on their DS-160 form.

“If you are turned away from your appointment because your barcode numbers do not match, once you correct the problem, you will need to book a new appointment to proceed with your visa application. You may book a new appointment by logging into your AVITS account. If your visa fee has expired, you may have to pay a new fee before booking,” the statement concluded.

These changes are part of ongoing efforts to streamline the visa processing system and reduce administrative errors.

Since January 1, all visa applicants have been required to visit the US Consulate General in Lagos twice as part of the application process.

Ribadu's office Hilux vehicle stolen during Juma'at prayer in Abuja

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A black Toyota Hilux vehicle belonging to the Office of the National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu was reportedly stolen by some unknown thieves during Friday's Juma'at prayers in Abuja.

The vehicle was parked around 1:05pm opposite the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) complex in Area 10, while the NSA attended prayers at a nearby mosque.

Disclosing the incident via his X (formerly Twitter) handle, a security source, Zagazola Makama, revealed that the ONSA official returned from the mosque only to find the vehicle missing.

According to him, sources said the theft was immediately reported to the Garki Police Division at approximately 2:00 p.m., leading to a swift response by law



enforcement.

Meanwhile, the FCT Police Command promptly activated a stop-and-search operation at various checkpoints and across all entry and exit points in the capital city.

Police authorities confirmed that investigations are ongoing and all efforts were being made to apprehend the culprits and recover the vehicle.

The Command said it had intensified efforts to track down the fleeing suspects and recover the stolen Hilux.

Meanwhile, the FCT Police Command promptly activated a stop-and-search operation at various checkpoints and across all entry and exit points in the capital city.

Police authorities confirmed that investigations are ongoing and all efforts are being made to apprehend the culprits and recover the vehicle.

The Command said it had intensified efforts to track down the fleeing suspects and recover the stolen Hilux.

APC chairman Ganduje dismisses Atiku, others' merger talk

By Dave Oludare Oso

Ahead of the 2027 general elections, the All Progressives Congress (APC) National Chairman, Abdullahi Ganduje, has dismissed talks of an opposition merger, describing the move as a futile alliance that is doomed to fail.

The former Kano State governor made the remarks while speaking to journalists after leading the APC National Working Committee (NWC) on a Sallah homage to former President Muhammadu Buhari at his residence in Kaduna State on Friday.

Ganduje was quick to brush aside any notion of a serious threat to the ruling party when asked about ongoing discussions among major opposition figures, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar.

He said, "We are not worried at all. This is just history trying to repeat itself. They went on a joint venture, which will not work because from what we have seen,



there are just some particles that cannot come together. It is a game, and we will not reveal our technicalities on how to handle it, but we assure you, we are equal to the task."

The APC chairman touted the party's political dominance, noting its control of 21 states and declaring it "still the strongest party in West Africa."

He noted that the APC was not only focused on maintaining its hold on power

but also expanding its influence ahead of the 2027 polls.

Ganduje added, "We are eyeing other states that will come into our fold. Either the governors themselves will come, or we go for election and defeat them to increase our tally. We are comfortable, but we are not resting. We shall continue."

His comments followed an earlier visit by Atiku Abubakar, the 2023 presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), who also met with the former president.

The former vice-president, who led a delegation of notable political figures, including former governors Nasir el-Rufai (Kaduna), Aminu Tambuwal (Sokoto), Gabriel Suswam (Benue), Jibrilla Bindow (Adamawa), and Achike Udenwa (Imo), said the visit was strictly a post-Sallah courtesy call.

Obasanjo: Nigeria too rich for its citizens to be poor

By Friday Omosola

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo has insisted that poverty should have no place in Nigeria, given the nation's wealth of natural and human resources.

Speaking during a dinner held in his honour by the Abia State Government at the Government House in Umuahia yesterday, Obasanjo expressed frustration over the persistent mismanagement of Nigeria's abundant blessings.

"There's no reason why Nigerians should be living in poverty," he said. "God has already provided us with everything we need. The problem lies with how we've chosen to manage those gifts—not with God."

Obasanjo commended Abia State Governor Alex Otti for his administration's progressive policies and praised the visible improvements being made across the state.

He encouraged the governor to stay the course, stating that Nigeria would be in a far better place if at least 18 governors were performing at a similar level.

"What truly matters to me," the former president added, "is not personal recognition. Whether or not people greet me, what matters most is that Nigerians are governed well and receive the leadership they deserve."

Reflecting on past interactions with political figures, Obasanjo recalled a moment with former Transport Minister, Rotimi Amaechi.

He said he had advised Amaechi to consult historical documents regarding a national railway development blueprint, which the minister was initially unaware



of.

"You weren't familiar with the existing railway master plan that aimed to connect all state capitals. I told you to check the archives—it was already there," he said.

"You did a few things right in the office, and a few things wrong."

In his address, Otti expressed deep appreciation for Obasanjo's mentorship and shared some of the challenges he faced on his political journey.

"Leadership requires vision and determination," Otti said.

"It took ten years of perseverance to get to where we are today. We contested elections in 2015 and 2019 and won, but the victories were stolen. Still, I believed strongly in the calling and never gave up."

He added that his government had begun major reforms in education aimed at improving access and quality across the state.

However, former Minister Amaechi urged Abia's political stakeholders to begin early preparations for the 2027 general elections.

He stressed that the real impact of effective leadership often becomes clear only in contrast to less competent administrations.

"No matter who holds office, Obasanjo continues to distinguish himself through visionary leadership," Amaechi stated.

"If we don't begin to mobilise now, especially with other parties like the APC already organising, we may lose the ground we've gained."

He called on residents to continue backing Governor Otti, warning that failure to do so could cost the state dearly in the future.

Similarly, Chief Ginger Onwusibe, representing Isiala Ngwa North and South in the House of Representatives, and Labour Party's acting National Secretary, Darlington Nwokocha, expressed satisfaction with the strides being made in Abia.

Both lawmakers praised Obasanjo for his enduring support and commended Governor Otti for his even-handed development agenda that has touched all local government areas of the state.

FG rejects US embassy's comments on security, says claims are inaccurate

By Damilola Olufemi

The Federal Government has pushed back against a recent social media post by the United States Embassy in Abuja and testimonies given by Nigerian religious leaders at a U.S. Congressional hearing, describing the remarks as inaccurate and misrepresentative of Nigeria's security efforts.

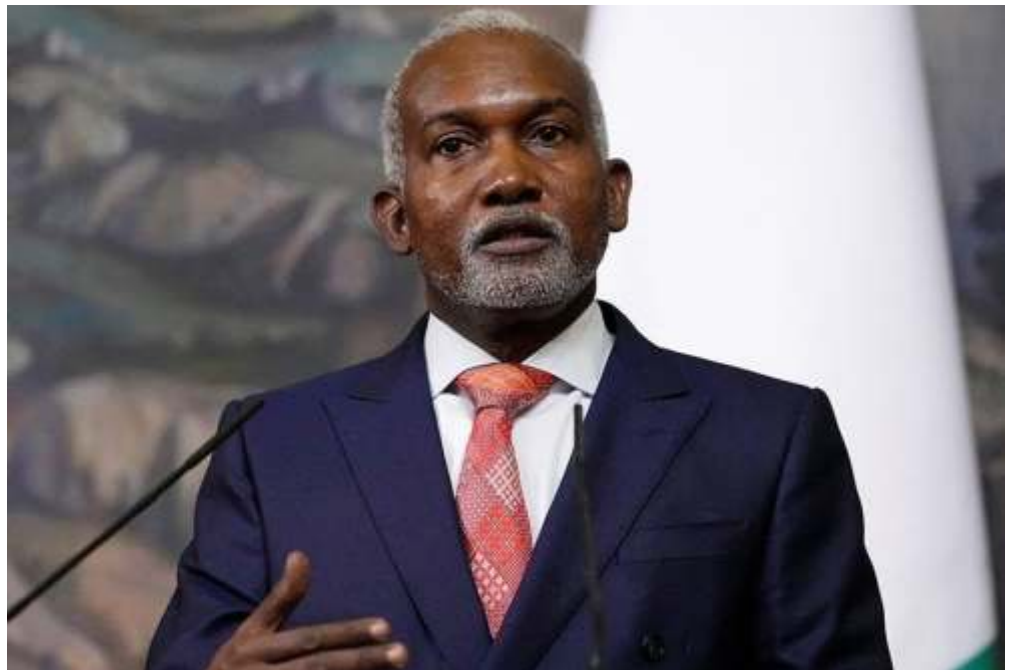
In a statement signed by Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebiefa, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the government said, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs observes with concerns a recent social media publication by the United States Embassy, Abuja, regarding the security situation in Nigeria and the testimonies provided by Bishop Wilfred Anagbe and Rev. Fr. Remigius Ihyula, on the unfortunate alleged threats that have arisen as a result of their testimonies at the U.S. Congressional Hearing on Religious Persecution in Nigeria."

The Ministry acknowledged the clergymen's rights to express their views but maintained that their remarks painted a distorted picture of Nigeria's challenges.

"Though their testimonies misrepresent facts and oversimplification of a deeply complex national challenge, the religious leaders are entitled to their opinions, freedom of expression, and association as enshrined in Nigeria's constitution," the statement read.

Reacting to the assertion that the Nigerian government has "allowed the violence to escalate unchecked," the Ministry called the claim "both inaccurate and unfair."

The government outlined various



measures it has implemented to tackle insecurity:

"The government has consistently taken decisive actions, including deploying security forces to areas affected by communal violence, engaging in peace-building efforts between farmers and herders, strengthening intelligence operations to track down criminal elements, and implementing policies to address root causes, including land use reforms and economic development initiatives."

Addressing broader concerns, the Ministry stated, "It is important to state that, while challenges remain, it is incorrect to suggest that the Nigerian government has been inactive or indifferent. The reality is that Nigeria is fighting multiple security threats, including banditry, terrorism, and organized crime, all of which affect different communities irrespective of religion."

Reaffirming Nigeria's dedication to human rights, the Ministry said the country remains committed to protecting "freedom of religion and

freedom of expression, among other freedoms," and assured that "any reports of threats or intimidation against religious leaders will be investigated, and appropriate actions will be taken."

The government also firmly rejected the narrative that Christian communities are being deliberately targeted.

"The portrayal of the crisis as an 'Islamist extermination' of Christians" was dismissed as inaccurate. The statement emphasized that "Government will continue to prioritize the protection of the lives and property of its citizens regardless of faith or ethnicity while strengthening national and international cooperation in the fight against insecurity."

The Ministry concluded by urging for more balanced narratives:

"We call for responsible reporting that reflects the full complexity of the challenges at hand and promotes constructive dialogue rather than polarisation."

Ndume to Tinubu: 72 Yorubas appointed, not fair

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Senator Ali Ndume, who represents Borno South Senatorial District, has urged President Bola Tinubu to address growing concerns over perceived regional imbalance in federal appointments, rather than allowing presidential aides to target critics.

Appearing on Channels Television's Politics on Friday, as reported by The New Daily Prime, Ndume expressed strong dissatisfaction with the appointments. He noted that such imbalance, if left unaddressed, could deepen resentment and strengthen emerging opposition alliances that may challenge both the President and the All Progressives Congress (APC).

He said, "Seventy-two of Tinubu's appointees are Yorubas. I'm not talking about North or South. Section 14(3) is clear—it says that appointments to political positions should be spread in such a way that no tribe is left out. The constitution says that everybody should have a sense of belonging.

"The reason I'm speaking out is because I believe the President may not be fully aware of this. I don't think it's deliberate. But now that he's well into his tenure, the appointments are clearly lopsided—there's no argument about that. It can be corrected, and it should be corrected. I hope they see this as a wake-up call. I criticized Buhari over his lopsided appointment of Service Chiefs. I even confronted him about it, and he gave me his reasons."

Earlier this week, the Presidency responded to Senator Ndume's criticism, accusing the lawmaker of hypocrisy and selective perception. Days after Ndume alleged that key



positions in Tinubu's administration were dominated by a single region, the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Bayo Onanuga, took to his X handle on Tuesday evening to dismiss the senator's claims.

Onanuga stated that Ndume's criticism ignored key facts and was driven by political theatrics rather than genuine concern for national equity. He accused the Borno South Senator of trying to position himself as a moral authority on fairness, despite contrary evidence.

He said, "Senator Ali Ndume's latest outburst on TV about so-called 'lopsided appointments' by President Tinubu reeks of hypocrisy and selective perception.

"While the Borno senator grandstanded as a moral authority on equity, he failed to mention that two of his kinsmen featured in recent NNPC Limited top appointments. The Chairman, appointed by President Tinubu, is from Ndume's senatorial district. If Tinubu's choices are so 'tribal,' how did two of Ndume's kinsmen clinch NNPC's top roles?"

He continued, "As a politician, Ndume

has proven time and again that he is allergic to facts and addicted to theatrics. His habit of firing half-baked criticisms—only to be contradicted by facts—proves he's more interested in headline-chasing, rabble-rousing, and stoking divisive narratives than offering constructive criticism."

Onanuga maintained that the Presidency remains committed to inclusivity and fairness, dismissing Ndume's remarks as part of a recurring pattern of sensationalism aimed at stirring public discontent. He reaffirmed President Tinubu's commitment to inclusive governance, stating that appointments under the current administration are guided by merit, integrity, and national balance.

"The President's appointments are—and will continue to be—based on merit, geographical spread, and a demonstrable capacity to serve the Nigerian people, not Ndume's cherry-picked tribal arithmetic," he said.

The presidential aide also advised Ndume to "elevate public discourse" and desist from what he described as "misinformation and baseless criticism."

FG imposes tougher immigration penalties for visa overstays

By **Damilola Olufemi**

The Federal Government has introduced tougher immigration penalties, declaring that expatriates who overstay their visas by more than six months will face a five-year entry ban, while those who remain in the country illegally for one year will be barred from re-entering for 10 years.

Additionally, the government stated that any overstays will incur a fine of \$15 per day, beginning from the visa's designated exit date.

According to Minister of Interior Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, these penalties will come into effect on August 1.

Tunji-Ojo made this known during the unveiling of the Ministry of Interior's new Expatriate Administration System at a stakeholder meeting held at the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association House in Ikeja, Lagos, on Friday.

Several reforms will be implemented starting May 1, including automated Landing and Exit Cards, an Electronic Visa system, Expatriate Comprehensive Insurance, and an enhanced Combined Expatriate Resident Permit and Alien Card.

Additional changes include the introduction of a Temporary Residence Visa, a Temporary Work Permit, and an updated Expatriate Quota framework.

According to Tunji-Ojo, these measures are part of a broader effort to control visa overstays and to gain accurate data on expatriates living in Nigeria.

"Our records indicate fewer than 50,000 expatriates in Nigeria, which we know is inaccurate. We need to establish the true number of foreigners living in the country. A nation without reliable data cannot progress,



as data is the foundation of effective planning," he said.

He also explained that the new system will automate the Landing and Exit Cards, requiring expatriates to leave the country on or before their visa expiration date and to seek extensions only from outside Nigeria.

"This is serious. We're not introducing anything new regarding the landing and exit card, just automating the current paper-based process. In a country of over 230 million intelligent, tech-savvy people, we shouldn't be using paper cards. Going forward, you must complete your landing and exit cards online," he added.

The automated system, he noted, would make it easier to track those who overstay.

"If you overstay, there will be consequences. Overstaying by six months attracts a five-year ban; one year attracts a 10-year ban. There is also a \$15 daily overstay penalty. People claim to be visiting Nigeria for two weeks but stay for 30 years working — that must end," the minister said.

He added that while the new regulations will officially commence on May 1, there will be a three-month grace period for expatriates to

regularise their status before strict enforcement begins in August.

As part of the overhaul, a new Electronic Visa system will also launch on May 1, which will enable applicants to secure visas within 48 hours.

This initiative replaces the current visa-on-arrival model, which Tunji-Ojo described as susceptible to corruption and undue influence.

"We're introducing the e-visa to make access to Nigeria easier for tourists and business travellers. Globally, population equals market, and we want to open our borders to legitimate opportunities. The e-visa eliminates bottlenecks. No more lobbying. It's a seamless and secure system," he stated.

Tunji-Ojo also revealed the rollout of a mandatory Expatriate Comprehensive Insurance policy.

"We spend billions annually on repatriation. Just a month ago, we had exhausted our yearly budget and had to request an extra N25m. That money should be used to build infrastructure, not deport individuals. We needed a sustainable solution," he said.

Lagos reaffirms support for MSMEs as tourism NBC trade fair begins

By Friday Omosola

The Lagos State Government has once again reiterated its unwavering support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and pledged to sustain a business-friendly environment that allows entrepreneurs to thrive.

This commitment was reaffirmed by the Special Adviser to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on Tourism, Arts and Culture, Idris Aregbe, at the opening of the Lagos Tourism NBC Trade Fair, held at the Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island.

The three-day event, which runs from April 11 to 13, is organised in partnership between the Lagos State Government, through the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and Naija Brand Chick (NBC).

The fair aims to empower women, youths, and small-scale businesses by boosting visibility and encouraging networking among vendors and customers.

Over 200 vendors and more than 77,000 visitors participated on the first day, according to Mr Aregbe.

“Lagos provides the perfect landscape for business growth, and this fair is proof that dreams can be actualised with the right support,” he said.

“We are excited to create another groundbreaking event that empowers SMEs and transforms lives, thanks to the visionary leadership of Governor Sanwo-Olu.”

He added that the initiative combines commerce and entertainment to enhance market visibility, while also promoting Lagos as a hub for investment and economic development.

Also speaking at the event, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Olanrewaju Bajulaiye,



highlighted the fair's innovation, including the use of a special currency – the Sanwo-Naira – for transactions.

He projected that the fair would generate up to ₦5 billion in revenue over the three days.

“We are showcasing our small business owners to the world to boost their sales and improve the overall economy of Lagos and Nigeria,” Bajulaiye said.

“Some vendors have made in one day what they typically earn in a month, which speaks volumes about the success of the fair.”

Founder and CEO of Naija Brand Chick, Nelly Agbogu, expressed excitement about the success of this year's edition, which featured several new innovations.

She commended the Lagos State Government for its continued support, stating, “Thanks to the partnership with the government, we've empowered more entrepreneurs and seen remarkable testimonies from vendors who have significantly increased their sales.”

Vendors at the trade fair lauded the event for providing them with broader exposure and business opportunities. A Realtor, Mrs Anthonia Boluwaji-Abayomi, praised the government's initiative, noting it helped bring entrepreneurs together under one roof for increased sales and networking.

She encouraged Lagosians to visit the fair and take advantage of discounted prices.

Beyond trade, the fair also featured vibrant entertainment. Attendees were treated to performances by top entertainers, including legendary Fuji musician K1 De Ultimate (King Wasiu Ayinde), comedians, and cultural displays by the Lagos State Council for Arts and Culture.

The event attracted high-profile guests including members of the Lagos State Executive Council, Nollywood actors, brand ambassadors, and shoppers.

The Lagos Tourism NBC Trade Fair continues through Sunday, April 13, as part of the Sanwo-Olu administration's broader agenda to build ‘A Greater Lagos Rising.’

PDP govts yet to summon FG on Rivers emergency rule - AGF

By Damilola Olufemi

The Office of the Attorney General of the Federation (OAGF) and the Federal Government have not yet been served with court summons in the suit filed by 11 governors from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), challenging President Bola Tinubu's suspension of Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara and the declaration of a state of emergency in the state.

Although both the AGF and the Federal Government are named as defendants in the case, sources within the OAGF said that they had not received the necessary legal documents.

A senior official in the AGF's office commented, "We have read about the suit in the media. You in the media are the ones telling us that a suit has been filed by some PDP-controlled states against the emergency rule declared in Rivers State."

"For now, I can confirm to you that the office of the AGF has not been served. I believe it is this office that will also be served with processes intended for the Federal Government or the President. We are waiting. This is our office. If indeed any suit has been filed, we will respond accordingly once we are served as required," The Nation reports.

Meanwhile, Vice-Admiral Ibok Ibas (rtd), the Sole Administrator appointed by President Tinubu to oversee Rivers State, explained that his decision to appoint administrators for the state's 23 local governments followed observations made during his visits to the



councils.

Also on Thursday, hundreds of women staged a protest in Port Harcourt, demanding an end to the emergency rule. They marched from Isaac Boro Park to Garrison Junction along Aba Road, carrying placards and singing solidarity songs.

The suit, marked SC/CV/329/2025, was filed by the Attorneys-General of 11 PDP-controlled states: Adamawa, Enugu, Osun, Oyo, Bauchi, Akwa Ibom, Plateau, Delta, Taraba, Zamfara, and Bayelsa. The plaintiffs are asking the Supreme Court to determine whether the President has the constitutional authority to suspend a democratically elected state government.

They also question whether the process used to declare a state of emergency in Rivers aligns with the 1999 Constitution.

The suit specifically seeks judicial interpretation of several constitutional provisions. Among the key issues raised:

"Whether upon a proper construction and interpretation of the provisions of

Sections 1(2), 5(2), 176, 180, 188 and 305 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria can lawfully suspend or in any manner whatsoever interfere with the offices of a Governor and the Deputy Governor of any of the component 36 States of the Federation of Nigeria and replace same with his own unelected nominee as a Sole Administrator, under the guise of, or pursuant to, a Proclamation of a State of Emergency in any of the State of the Federation, particularly in any of the Plaintiffs States?"

"Whether upon a proper construction and interpretation of the provisions of Sections 1(2), 4(6), 11(4) & (5), 90, 105 and 305 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria can lawfully suspend the House of Assembly of any of the component 36 States of the Federation of Nigeria, under the guise of, or pursuant to, a Proclamation of a State of Emergency in any of such States, particularly in any of the Plaintiffs States?"

Air Peace offers free repatriation, healthcare for trafficked Nigerian girls in Ivory Coast

By Friday Omosola

Air Peace has announced its commitment to repatriating a group of underaged Nigerian girls trafficked to Ivory Coast, along with providing them with complimentary medical treatment upon their return.

The airline's Chairman, Allen Onyema, revealed this in an official statement, urging Nigerians to unite against human trafficking, which he described as cruel and morally reprehensible.

This development follows a viral revelation by activist Martins Vincent Otse, popularly known as VeryDarkMan, who drew national attention to the plight of trafficked girls.

In response, Onyema pledged the airline's support by offering free flights to bring the victims home and ensuring they



receive proper medical attention to aid their recovery.

He expressed deep concern and condemnation over the recent discovery of Nigerian underaged girls trafficked to Ivory Coast.

"We will bring them home. We should discourage trafficking of any kind. It is inhumane and callous. It is absolutely ungodly and a good example of man's inhumanity to man.

"We, in Air Peace, are ready to bring our fellow citizens back home free of charge.

"Besides that, we are going to send all of them to Duchess International Hospital in Ikeja for free medical examination and treatment.

"While we implore the Nigerian Embassy in Cote D'Ivoire to assemble them and reach out to us, we equally call on the Federal Government to take charge of their education while reuniting them with their families."

Lagos to hold LGA elections in July

By Friday Omosola

Local government elections in Lagos State will take place on 12 July.

This was disclosed in an official statement from the Lagos State Independent Electoral Commission (LASIEC).

LASIEC's Head of Public Affairs, Tope Ojo, confirmed that the polls will cover 57 council chairmanship seats and 376 councillorship positions across the state.

A potential run-off election has been tentatively set for 19 July, should the need arise.

Lagos State is administratively divided into 20 Local Government Areas and 37 Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs), encompassing 376 political wards.

The commission noted that the timing of the election was carefully chosen to prevent any disruption in local governance when the tenure of the current administration expires.

The announcement also marked the official

start of the electoral process, with LASIEC publishing its notice of election and inviting political parties to obtain nomination forms from its headquarters.

According to Ojo, a meeting with all registered political parties is scheduled for Tuesday, to clarify expectations and outline the steps ahead.

He added that the commission will release Election Guidelines on 17 April**, with campaign activities permitted from 18 April to 9 July.

Political parties are expected to submit nomination forms for their candidates—whether substituted or sole—between 18 and 25 June.

Justice Bola Okikiolu-Ighile (rtd.), Chairman of LASIEC, reassured stakeholders of the commission's dedication to conducting a transparent and inclusive electoral process.

She called on political parties and aspirants to adhere strictly to the electoral calendar and conduct themselves responsibly throughout



the process.

"We are committed to providing a level playing ground for all contestants," she stated.

While fielding questions from journalists, Atiku said, "There is a plan for the major political parties to come together and form a strong opposition, but it is not part of our visit."

Unmarried teacher fired by school over pregnancy, sparks public debate

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A private school has come under public scrutiny after it allegedly terminated the employment of a female teacher for getting pregnant outside of marriage.

The incident came to light on the microblogging platform X (formerly Twitter), after an anonymous whistleblower shared the story via popular user @Wizarab10. According to the account, the school claimed that the teacher's pregnancy out of wedlock could serve as a "bad influence" on the female students.

While the identity of the school and teacher remain undisclosed, the situation has ignited heated debate across social media. Many Nigerians have weighed in, expressing a mix of support and disapproval over the school's decision.

The original post read: "Please is it right for a private school to sack an unmarried teacher because she is pregnant, saying she is a bad influence on the female students? Your opinions please."



Some users backed the school's decision on moral grounds. One commenter, @dabuthegemini, stated, "Yes it is. Getting pregnant out of wedlock isn't something young ladies should see as a norm. It's not right. Single mothers today, if given a choice, would have rather not given birth no matter how much they love the child now."

Another user, @cletusmyles2020, added humor to the conversation: "If na me I go fire you and not pay you if you still have balance with me."

However, others pushed back, questioning the relevance of the teacher's personal life to her professional responsibilities.

@G_Gerrard008 wrote, "I understand all these moral talks, but is she not an adult? So her life should pause because she's teaching? 99% of adults indulge in sexual activities before getting married, so which come be bad example?"

@EnemuJohn3794 also questioned the rationale behind the decision, sarcastically noting, "Who tell the students say she never marry? If I talk where the school dey now, dem go say na bigotry. By calculation, I don know the zone the school dey."

The school in question has yet to release an official statement regarding the dismissal.

Nigeria's oil reserves dip, gas hits 210.54 TCF — NUPRC

By Damilola Olufemi

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) has disclosed that the nation's oil and condensate reserves stood at 37.28 billion barrels as of January 1, 2025—a marginal decline of about 0.60 percent.

Despite the slight dip, Nigeria maintained its position as Africa's second-largest holder of crude oil reserves, trailing only Libya, which has an estimated 48.36 billion barrels. However, Nigeria remains the continent's top producer.

In contrast to the slight drop in oil reserves, the country's gas reserves increased to 210.54 Trillion Cubic Feet (TCF), marking a 0.61 per cent rise. This solidifies Nigeria's position as the leading gas reserve holder in Africa and around ninth globally, reaffirming its status as a "gas nation."

In recent years, the country has shifted focus to developing its gas resources, cutting down flaring significantly and actively exploring for gas, rather than treating it as an incidental by-product of crude oil drilling.

Globally, Nigeria's gas reserves now rank behind Russia, Iran, Qatar, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Venezuela.

In a statement signed by the Commission's Chief Executive, Gbenga Komolafe, the NUPRC noted that Nigeria's reserves life index as of January 1, 2025, was 64 years for crude oil and 93 years for gas.

According to the commission, the announcement aligns with its obligations under the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), 2021.

Last year, the commission reported



combined oil and condensate reserves of 37.50 billion barrels, while gas reserves stood at 209.26 TCF—split between 102.59 TCF of Associated Gas and 106.67 TCF of Non-Associated Gas.

Providing updated figures, Komolafe stated, "The commission, in keeping with its mandate as enshrined in the Petroleum Industry Act, 2021 (PIA), is committed to driving the efficiency and effectiveness of the upstream oil and gas sector, enhancing the growth of oil and gas reserves and ensuring sustainable increase in oil and gas production for shared prosperity, as articulated in the Regulatory Action Plan (RAP) for 2024 and the near term."

He added, "Against the foregoing, I am pleased to present to you an overview of the nation's oil, condensate, associated gas, and non-associated gas reserves as of January 1, 2025, as follows: 2P crude oil and condensate reserves stand at 31.44 billion barrels and 5.84 billion barrels respectively, amounting to a total of 37.28 billion barrels."

"2P Associated Gas and Non-Associated Gas reserves stand at 101.03 Trillion Cubic Feet (TCF) and 109.51 TCF, respectively, resulting in total gas reserves of 210.54 TCF. The reserves life index is 64 years and 93 years for oil and gas, respectively," the statement continued.

The term "2P reserves" refers to "proven reserves," a category that reflects the best estimate of recoverable oil and gas resources in a given area.

Komolafe explained that the public release was a statutory duty: "In view of the above, and in furtherance of Chapter 1, Part III, Section 7 (g), (i), (j), (k), (m), (q), (r), and other powers enabling me in this respect, I, Engr. Gbenga Olu Komolafe, Commission Chief Executive, hereby declare the total oil and condensate reserves of 37.28 billion barrels and total gas reserves of 210.54 trillion cubic feet as the official national petroleum reserves position as of January 1, 2025."

Internationally, Nigeria ranks around 11th in proven crude oil reserves. Despite this, the country's share of global production remains lower than expected, due to factors such as underinvestment, infrastructure limitations, security challenges, and regulatory uncertainty.

This underperformance has led to Nigeria producing below its potential, even with its strong reserve base.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's crude oil output fell to a five-month low in March 2025, averaging 1.4 million barrels per day (bpd) during the period.

Bomb planted by Boko Haram kills eight, injures 11 in Borno

By Dave Oludare Oso

An explosive device, reportedly planted by Boko Haram terrorists, detonated on the Damboa-Maiduguri road in Borno State, killing at least eight people.

It was gathered that several others were injured and taken to the hospital in the incident occurred on Saturday.

A Facebook user, Ibn Maigana, confirmed the attack, shedding light on the long-standing dangers faced by residents in the area.

Maigana, expressing grief, wrote, “Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raju’un. The road to my hometown, Damboa Local Government Area in Borno, has been dangerous and one of the riskiest roads in the country for years now. We’ve lost exceptional military staff and residents to the criminal elements called Boko Haram.”

Maigana further stated, “And today, they planted explosives that claimed the lives of eight innocent individuals on the Maiduguri-Damboia road. This further justifies the call for the intensification of security measures to protect the lives and properties of the citizenry. May Allah protect us from being victimized by ungodly elements and rest the souls of the deceased.”

Another user on X, @OffucialAzzaki, also confirmed the attack, saying, “A bomb blast has just occurred along Damboa road to Maiduguri. Sadly, 8 lives were lost, and several others have been taken to the hospital with injuries. Please pray for the victims.”



According to SaharaReporters, the Borno State Police Command spokesperson, ASP Nahum Daso Kenneth, said he was trying to gather more information about the incident when contacted.

Meanwhile, it was reported that Senator Ali Ndume revealed that Boko Haram terrorists had taken control of at least three communities in Borno State, effectively replacing the government authorities with their own.

The senator representing Borno South Senatorial District, spoke during an appearance on Channels Television on Friday, raising concerns about the worsening security situation in Nigeria’s North-East.

“Yes, three,” Ndume said when asked whether certain areas in Borno were currently under the control of Boko Haram insurgents.

He had named the communities as Gudumbali in Guzamala Local Government Area, Marte, and

Abadam, adding that there are “no civil authorities” in those regions.

“What we are saying is that there is no civil authority there, and the authority is Boko Haram,” he emphasised, describing a dire situation in which the government has lost ground to the terrorists.

The senator’s comments reinforce recent concerns raised by Borno State governor, Babagana Zulum, who also sounded the alarm over renewed Boko Haram attacks and widespread insecurity.

“As I address this important gathering today, it is unfortunate that the renewed Boko Haram attacks and kidnappings in many communities almost on a daily basis without confrontation signalled that Borno State is losing ground,” Governor Zulum had said earlier in the week during a security meeting in Maiduguri.

Senator Ndume backed the governor’s statement, dismissing any attempts to downplay the severity of the crisis.

Police kill 5 armed bandits, rescue kidnapped Kebbi varsity student

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Nigeria Police have successfully rescued a 23-year-old student of the Department of Economics at the Federal University Birnin Kebbi (FUBK), Augustine Madubiya, who was kidnapped on April 8, 2025, at Unguwar Jeji, Kalgo LGA of Kebbi State.

The Force spokesperson, Olumuyiwa Adejobi, announced the rescue of the student in a statement on Friday.

Adejobi said the rescue operation was conducted by a combined team of police officers and vigilantes in the Dakingari forest on April 10, 2025.

The statement read, "Upon sighting the team of operatives, the kidnappers took to their heels. The victim was rescued unhurt and is currently receiving medical treatment at a local facility before being reunited with his family."

The statement also indicated that police operatives of the Katsina Police Command, in a collaborative effort with the military, the Department of State Services (DSS), and local vigilante outfits conducted two successful operations that dealt a severe blow to armed banditry in the state.

"On April 10th, 2025, at about 4:15 AM, a joint security team, led by operatives of the Nigeria Police



Force proceeded to a suspected bandit route in Dutsen Wori village, Dandume Local Government Area, where the team successfully ambushed a group of suspected armed bandits along the route, leading to the neutralization of 5 armed bandits and the recovery of 7 operational motorcycles which were used by the bandits in their criminal activities.

"In a separate operation on the same date, at about 7 AM, the joint security team, acting on credible information, intercepted suspected armed bandit in Unguwar Adam and Unguwar Judo villages, Danmusa LGA.

"A fierce gun battle ensued, resulting in the dislodging of the bandits' hideout. Three suspected informants, who were providing information and logistical support to the bandits, were apprehended and 2 operational motorcycles and 2 bicycles were also recovered

during the operation," the Police spokesperson said in the statement.

"These successful operations highlights the importance of collaboration between the police and local communities and demonstrates the resolve of the Nigeria Police Force to combating armed banditry and similar violent crimes, ensuring the safety and security of our communities.

"The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, Ph.D, NPM, commends these gallant operatives of the Nigeria Police Force, Nigerian Armed Forces and local security groups.

"The Force remains dedicated to protecting the lives and property of all residents as investigations towards apprehending the remaining suspects and dismantling their entire criminal networks continues," the Force spokesperson added.

Zimbabwe compensates white farmers 25 years after land seizures

By Dave Oludare Oso

Zimbabwe has started to make compensation payments to white former farm owners, 25 years after Robert Mugabe's government began confiscating land.

The government paid \$3.1m (£2.3m) to a "first batch" of 378 farms, the ministry of finance said in a statement on Wednesday, the first payout under a 2020 agreement to pay \$3.5bn in compensation.

The remainder of the \$311m due to this group of farmers will be paid in US dollar-denominated treasury bonds with two- to 10-year maturities and interest of 2%. That is much lower than the current yield on a two-year US treasury bond of about 3.8%.

Zimbabwe's finance minister, Mthuli Ncube, said: "The payments will continue. We are very serious about this."

Mugabe's government seized more than 4,000 mostly white-owned farms, often violently, from about the year 2000 to redistribute to black people in what it claimed was restitution for the dispossession of British colonial rule.

However, Mugabe and his cronies took nearly 40% of the 14m hectares (about 35m acres) confiscated for themselves, according to a 2010 investigation by a local news outlet, ZimOnline.

Agricultural production, which had accounted for 40% of exports, plunged and the economy collapsed, with



hyperinflation reaching a staggering 500bn% in 2008.

Zimbabwe cannot borrow from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund as it has been in arrears since 2000 and 2001, respectively. Government debt was \$21bn late last year, about half of which was arrears and penalties.

The compensation payments to the displaced farmers are one of the requirements of international lenders to start a debt restructuring process with Zimbabwe, including a new IMF programme.

Andrew Pascoe, who signed the 2020 compensation deal while head of the Commercial Farmers' Union, confirmed the first payments had been received on 24 March and thanked Zimbabwe's government, in comments included in the ministry of finance statement. He said: "We are extremely grateful."

However, Tony Hawkins, a retired University of Zimbabwe economics professor, called the payments a "publicity stunt", noting that the US could block an IMF programme.

A US law "restricts US support for multilateral financing to Zimbabwe until Zimbabwe makes concrete governance and economic reforms", according to the US state department.

Of using government bonds to pay farmers, Hawkins said: "We continue to accumulate arrears because we are unable to service our foreign debt, so we can't really afford to take on new debt commitments ... It's derisory, the more you look at it."

About 1,000 former farmers had signed up for compensation, said Harry Orphanides, one of Pascoe's co-negotiators. He said: "Look, it's not a perfect deal. But there was no other alternative."

NCDC sets four-pillar plan to tackle antimicrobial resistance

By Helen Okechukwu

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has proposed a four-pillar framework to guide national and global efforts in combating the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Tochi Okwor, head of disease prevention and control at the NCDC, made this known in an interview with News Agency Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday in Abuja.

Ms Okwor stressed the urgent need to act decisively and strategically at the country level.

“We are at a critical point. If we are to make meaningful progress in the fight against AMR, we must adopt a pragmatic and inclusive approach built on four key pillars,” she said.

She listed the first pillar as strategic information and pragmatism.

Ms Okwor stressed the importance of reliable data to inform AMR surveillance, policy, and action.

“Data must guide every step we take, and our strategies must be realistic and tailored to the unique realities of our health system,” she said.

She said that the second pillar, “Equity Must Be Central”, underscores the need to ensure that access to quality antimicrobials, diagnostics, and AMR-related services was not limited to urban or privileged populations.

“Equity is fundamental. Without it, AMR efforts will remain fragmented and ineffective,” she said.



The third pillar calls for accountability equals inclusion. There is the need for transparency and stakeholder engagement at community and facility levels.

“Inclusion drives accountability. Communities must have a voice in shaping AMR interventions if we want sustainable outcomes,” she said.

According to her, the framework’s fourth pillar involves a whole-of-society approach.

She said that AMR was not just a clinical issue but a societal challenge requiring multi-sectoral collaboration across health, agriculture, environment, and education.

“Antimicrobial resistance threatens our ability to treat infections and safeguard modern medicine.

“These four pillars offer a practical and inclusive roadmap for Nigeria and

other low- and middle-income countries to mount an effective response,” she said.

AMR occurs when microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites develop the ability to defeat drugs designed to kill or slow their growth.

While this phenomenon can occur naturally through genetic changes, it is accelerated by factors such as the overuse and misuse of antimicrobials in healthcare and agriculture.

As a result, common infections can become harder to treat, leading to prolonged illnesses, higher treatment costs, and an increased risk of death.

AMR represents a global health challenge that necessitates coordinated, multi-sectoral efforts to improve surveillance, promote responsible antimicrobial use, and develop new treatments.

Expert reveals men with large breasts at higher risk of breast cancer

By Helen Okechukwu

The Coordinator of the National Cancer Control Programme, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Dr Uche Nwoku, disclosed that men with large breasts are at a higher risk of developing breast cancer.

Nwoku revealed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday in Abuja.

He said that men undergoing hormone therapy to alter their body physiology to appear more feminine are also at elevated risk.

He explained that because men had breast tissue, they could develop breast cancer, although the condition was rare.

Confirming that such cases had been recorded in Nigeria, the NCCP coordinator emphasised the need for awareness.

According to him, breast development in men can be triggered by an increase in estrogen, the hormone responsible for breast growth, particularly when testosterone levels drop.

He said: “The hormone that women have that makes their breasts develop is also present in men. The difference is that testosterone, which is higher in men, suppresses that hormone; so when there’s an imbalance between the two, whichever is higher tends to manifest more.”

He added that when estrogen levels in men become dominant, it could lead to gynecomastia (the enlargement of male breast tissue) which in turn increases the risk of breast cancer.

“Once there’s a fluctuation that disrupts the body’s ability to regulate the cell



ducts, it can trigger breast cancer,” he said.

Nwoku noted that the risk factors for breast cancer in men are similar to those in women.

He, however, said that women were more prone due to their more developed breast tissue and cell ducts.

He said that men with larger breasts face a higher risk than those with average breast size, though no man was completely exempted.

“The reason is simple, anything that lowers male hormones, whether due to sickness or environmental factors, can cause an increase in female hormones. That imbalance can result in gynecomastia and, by extension, raise the risk of breast cancer,” he said.

He also identified genetics as a significant factor, saying “People who come from families with a genetic predisposition need to be cautious, as even slight environmental triggers can elevate their risk.”

The coordinator further warned that men who undergo hormone therapy in attempts to transition to a female body structure are also at increased risk.

“When men take hormone therapies to alter their physiology, the more active female hormones can expose them to a higher risk of breast cancer,” he said.

On available data, Nwoku said figures are low partly because men often do not recognise the symptoms of breast cancer until they receive a proper diagnosis.

He acknowledged the lack of conclusive data on the disease in men, saying it reflected a broader challenge in cancer data collection.

However, the NCCP coordinator noted that the Federal Government had designated cancer as a reportable disease to enhance data gathering.

He added that efforts were underway to improve diagnostic capacity nationwide so that any abnormality found in the body could be accurately identified and

One minute of brisk movement daily bolster health system - Expert

By Helen Okechukwu

Walking 10,000 steps a day in 2025 is still one of the most common fitness goals. But while it's a good way to stay active, research suggests the number itself isn't magic. Studies show that walking 7,000 to 8,000 steps daily already gives great health benefits.

Still, the idea of having a clear, round goal helps people stay motivated, and that's a good thing. But if you really want to improve your health—like losing weight, lowering blood pressure, or managing blood sugar—how you move is just as important as how much.

A 2024 study published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports* says it's not just about counting steps.

The intensity of your activity—the speed or effort—also plays a big role in lowering five key risk factors linked to metabolic syndrome; high waist size, high triglycerides (a type of fat in your blood), low HDL (the “good” cholesterol), high blood pressure, and high blood sugar.

Dr. Elroy Aguiar, who led the study, explains “the analysis says you can get away with just doing a higher volume of exercise, but you're better off doing a higher volume and a higher intensity of exercise in combination.

A Little More Effort, Big Health Gains

One don't need to do intense workouts or run long distances to see results. Just adding 30 minutes of brisk walking or light jogging to your day can make a big difference.



Even shorter bursts of intense movement help. One of the study's surprising findings was that just one minute of higher-intensity movement per day—like a fast walk—can reduce your risk for health problems.

So, if most of your steps are at a regular pace, that's okay. Just try to speed up for a minute or two while walking to the store, chasing the bus, or running errands.

Why It Matters

Improving how you move every day can help reduce dangerous belly fat (called visceral fat) that sits around your organs. This type of fat messes with how your body works and raises your risk of serious health problems.

Exercise helps burn that fat. Even better, it can lower your blood pressure for up to 24 hours and reduce your blood sugar for up to 48 hours—just from one brisk walk.

While eating better is still key to weight loss, exercise alone can help lower many health risks, especially for people who are overweight or at risk of metabolic syndrome.

What You Can Do

The World Health Organization (WHO) says adults should aim for 150 minutes of moderate exercise (like brisk walking) per week, or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise (like jogging), or a mix of both.

But you don't need to do it all at once. You can break it up throughout your day. And even simple, everyday movement—like walking to your car or speeding up on your way to the bathroom—can count.

“All movement helps,” says Dr. Aguiar. “The new WHO messaging says that all movement counts, so if that means walking a little bit more quickly to your car or the train station, just to elevate your heart rate and your metabolic rate a little bit for brief periods you can accumulate throughout the day, those things count in terms of exercise.

“And they're incidental. We all walk, to some degree; from your office to the bathroom or to a local cafe. If you can focus on walking a little bit faster than you normally do, that's going to be beneficial for a lot of these risk factors, especially the blood glucose and blood pressure side of things.”

'I almost sold lamps under Ajah bridge before Olamide discovered me', says Fireboy DML

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Afrobeats singer Adedamola Adefolahan, widely known as Fireboy DML, has opened up about a surprising chapter from his early career.

It's a chapter that almost saw him trading his music dreams for a much more modest life as a petty trader. Despite holding a bachelor's degree, Fireboy was on the verge of starting a small business selling rechargeable lamps under Ajah Bridge in Lagos.

That was before he was discovered by renowned rapper and music executive Olamide, whose decision would change the course of his life.

A potential businessman, not a musician

Fireboy's rise to fame in the music industry could have taken a very different path. Before Olamide signed him to YBNL Nation in 2018, the young artist was ready to give up on music. At the time, he had no idea that his life was about to change forever.

In a heartfelt interview on the 90s Baby Show in London, Fireboy spoke about the struggles he faced before finding success in music.

He shared that, at one point, he was even selling pepper soup at a local food joint just to survive. But despite putting in the work, he was unhappy with his situation. His heart wasn't in it.

The idea to sell lamps

"I was thinking about selling rechargeable lamps," Fireboy said, reminiscing about his time considering a business venture.

He met a man under Ajah Bridge who told him about the lamp-selling business. Intrigued by the idea, Fireboy was ready to make the switch.

"I thought it was a more dignified job than what I was doing," he explained. "At least people would say, 'Oh, he's a lamp seller,' not 'He sells pepper soup.'"

At the time, Fireboy believed selling



lamps would give him more respect than his current job. To him, the idea of selling food didn't feel dignified.

However, he was still making ends meet in any way he could. He admitted that he kept his side jobs a secret from his parents.

They had no idea he was working menial jobs to survive. "My parents didn't know I was doing those kinds of jobs," he recalled. "It was crazy." But now, looking back, Fireboy is thankful for his journey. "I'm just grateful for how far I've come," he added.

A life-changing WhatsApp message

Everything changed for Fireboy when he received a message that would set him on the path to stardom. Despite not yet being deeply involved in the music scene, he caught the attention of Olamide, the founder of YBNL Nation. Olamide, who was already aware of Fireboy's talent, decided to sign him to the label in an unexpected way.

Fireboy laughed as he remembered the moment, describing it as casual and almost unbelievable. "I got signed on WhatsApp," he said, sharing that it all happened quickly with little fanfare. That simple message marked the beginning of Fireboy's rise to fame.

Breaking through with 'Jealous'

The turning point in Fireboy's career came with the release of his breakout single "Jealous" in 2018.

Featured on the YBNL Nation album YBNL Mafia Family, the song was an instant hit and introduced Fireboy to a larger audience. The track's success was just the beginning of what would become a remarkable career.

In 2019, Fireboy released his debut studio album, *Laughter, Tears, and Goosebumps*. The album was packed with chart-topping singles and solidified Fireboy as one of Afrobeats' rising stars. He had made the transition from side jobs to music, from struggling to survive to thriving in the limelight.

A grateful reflection on his journey

Looking back on his unexpected rise, Fireboy is filled with gratitude. What could have been a career in business has turned into an incredibly successful music career.

I don't mind being 4th or 5th wife – Toke Makinwa

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Social media influencer, Toke Makinwa has disclosed her openness to becoming a second, third, 4th, or even fifth wife.

The popular host made the disclosure on a recent episode of her podcast Toke Moments, where she shared thoughts on love, marriage, and life at 40.

“At this point in my life, if I have the opportunity to marry again, as a second, third, fourth, or fifth wife, I will take it,” she said, suggesting a shift in her views on traditional marriage dynamics.

This statement follows her earlier reflections on being single and childless at 40.

In a previous episode, Makinwa admitted that while she once considered remarrying, she believes she would have ended up divorced again, emphasizing that the lessons in life and love never truly

end.

Despite societal pressures, the outspoken media personality said she doesn't allow herself to wallow in self-pity. Instead, she chooses to focus on her achievements and the love that surrounds her.

PERSONALLIFE

Makinwa lost both of her parents in a gas explosion when she was 8 years old. On 15 January 2014, she married Maje Ayida, whom she had been involved with for eight years prior to their wedding. In 2015, she separated from Ayida after finding out that he had gotten his ex-girlfriend pregnant.



Actress Wumi Toriola reveals plans to have more kids with ex-husband

By Damilola Olufemi

Nollywood actress Wumi Toriola has opened up about her personal life, revealing her plans to have more children with her ex-husband despite their separation.

Toriola, who got married in 2018 and welcomed her son Zion in 2019, confirmed her split from her partner in early 2023 via a lengthy Instagram post. However, in a recent interview on TVC, she shed more light on where things stand now and her future intentions.

The actress shared that she has chosen to stay away from relationships and marriage for the time being, focusing instead on parenting and expanding her family.

“For now, I don't want to go into marriage. I don't want to go into a relationship because I have plans to have more kids with my ex-husband,” she said.

She noted that their co-parenting arrangement has remained amicable, and they continue to maintain mutual respect.

“There's a collaboration. Sometimes when we're together I get messages like you may not be a good wife to me but you're a good mother. I still hold that dear,” she added. “I have one child now but I want more. If marriage comes later, fine.”

Toriola admitted she's not certain about her ex-husband's current relationship status but said they are both focused on raising their child.

“I don't know if he is married at the moment. But maybe he is seeing somebody else. We co-parent well so I just feel for now I want more kids,” she said. “Then after that we can now have time to start noticing and trusting somebody else because age don dey go.”

Recall that the actress had shared the struggles she faced before achieving success with her blockbuster film Queen Lateefah.



The movie became one of Nigeria's highest-grossing films of 2024, earning an impressive ₦350 million at the box office.

In a recent interview, Toriola revealed that bringing Queen Lateefah to life was not easy. She faced multiple setbacks, including disappointments and unexpected delays. Despite these challenges, she remained determined to create a film that would leave a lasting impact.

'Jesus disrupted my DJ career plans', DJ Cuppy reveals

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

DJ Cuppy, daughter of billionaire Femi Otedola, reveals her Christian faith has completely changed her career path and redefined her life's purpose.

In a reflective post on X (formerly Twitter), she opened up about how her spiritual journey has led to unexpected but meaningful changes in her life.

Turning point in London

The 31-year-old music star said her life took a new turn in August 2024. That month, she made a personal decision to dedicate her life to Christ during a church service at Holy Trinity Brompton in London. The church is known for its vibrant Christian community and has played a key role in many people's spiritual growth.

A life-altering realization

In her social media post, Cuppy shared her thoughts openly.

"Was thinking this evening," she wrote. "Jesus really disrupted my DJ career plans o. But in the BEST way. 'Booked and busy' means nothing if you're not walking in purpose."

Her statement suggests a deep and personal reflection on the direction of her life. It shows how she has begun to see her work and success in a new light—no longer just about fame or a busy schedule, but about meaning and purpose.

From fame to faith

Before her recent transformation, Cuppy had spent nearly a decade making a name for herself in music. She performed on global stages, released popular tracks,



and built a brand known for energy and style. Her image as a successful DJ was admired by many, and she often shared her glamorous lifestyle with fans online.

Now, however, her priorities are shifting. The once "booked and busy" DJ seems more focused on living with purpose and following the path she believes God has laid out for her.

Redefining success

Cuppy's message has sparked discussion among fans, with many expressing support for her spiritual awakening. Her words challenge the popular idea that being constantly busy or visible equals success. Instead, she emphasizes the importance of inner peace and living according to a deeper calling.

"Booked and busy means nothing if you're not walking in purpose," she said—words that many found inspiring and thought-provoking.

A bold and public declaration

It's not every day that a public figure speaks so honestly about a life-changing

spiritual decision. While many celebrities may mention faith in passing, Cuppy's post signals a real and lasting change in how she sees herself and her future.

She didn't share specific details about upcoming plans, but it's clear she's on a new path—one where faith, not fame, is guiding her steps.

What's next for Cuppy?

Whether DJ Cuppy continues performing or moves in a completely different direction, her followers will be watching with interest. Her openness about her relationship with God has added a new dimension to her public image—one rooted in honesty, transformation, and purpose.

Her story reminds us that even in the fast-paced world of entertainment, there's always space for personal growth and a fresh start. DJ Cuppy is no longer just chasing success; she's searching for significance.

And that, perhaps, is the biggest career move of all.

Eedris Abdulkareem: “They offered me N200m to keep quiet”

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Veteran Nigerian hip-hop artiste and activist, Eedris Abdulkareem, has stirred fresh controversy following his revelation that he was allegedly offered a bribe of N200 million by an unidentified individual claiming to be a senator. The offer, according to the musician, was disguised as underground support for his newly released protest song, Tell Your Papa.

The embattled track, which delivers a scathing critique of Nigeria’s political leadership and prevailing economic hardships, was officially banned by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) on Thursday, April 10. The ban has since provoked backlash from civil society groups and prominent stakeholders within the Nigerian creative industry.

In a video that has gone viral, Abdulkareem narrated how he received a suspicious phone call from a man who initially introduced himself as a “Honourable” and later claimed to be a senator. According to the artist, the caller mentioned being part of a meeting involving Seyi Tinubu, son of President Bola Tinubu, and other government officials.

“He said, ‘They are going to call you and bribe you, don’t listen to them, we are going to be sponsoring you underground’,” Abdulkareem recounted. “I told him I wasn’t interested. He said, ‘We will give you N200 million’.”

The Jaga Jaga crooner, known for his bold critiques of the political establishment, said he rejected the offer outright, suspecting an ulterior motive



aimed at silencing or discrediting him.

“Immediately I heard his voice, I knew he was sent. I told him, ‘Go and rest somewhere, I am not interested. Thieves, may God punish all of you’.”

The artist also suggested that the attempt to “sponsor” him might have been part of a plot to ridicule or record him in a compromising situation.

The NBC’s decision to ban Tell Your Papa has come under intense scrutiny. The Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria (PMAN) issued a statement condemning the move, cautioning that it may have the opposite effect of amplifying the song’s impact.

“It only serves to amplify the song’s reach and relevance in light of the current socio-economic challenges facing Nigerians,” PMAN stated.

Similarly, the Media Rights Agenda (MRA) criticized the NBC’s action, describing it as a “blatant abuse of

regulatory power.” In a statement signed by Programme Officer, Ayomide Eweje, the MRA accused the Commission of overstepping its mandate.

“The NBC has completely confused its role as a supposedly independent media regulatory body with that of a propaganda agency charged with shielding the government from criticism or embarrassment,” the statement read.

As public outrage builds over issues of censorship, artistic freedom, and government accountability, Abdulkareem’s defiance has rekindled national conversations about the place of protest music in Nigeria’s democratic evolution.

With Tell Your Papa now trending across online platforms, many are asking whether the government’s attempt to stifle dissent has only emboldened voices of resistance.

'Olamide, Don Jazzy are my musical godfather', Odumodublvck

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

O dumodublvck names Olamide and Don Jazzy as his godfathers, crediting their support and saying no one can oppress him with them behind him.

In a bold post shared on Thursday via his official X (formerly Twitter) handle, the 'Declan Rice' hitmaker declared that with Olamide and Don Jazzy by his side, he feels untouchable in the industry. His words were simple yet powerful:

"Baddo [Olamide] and Don Jazzy na my musical godfathers. Nobody fit oppress me." He wrote

This short but strong message instantly caught the attention of fans and industry watchers alike. It wasn't just a casual post—it was a clear statement of gratitude and a reminder of how mentorship continues to shape the next generation of Nigerian music stars.

A strong bond with Olamide

Olamide Adedeji, fondly called Baddo, is the founder of YBNL Nation and one of the most respected names in Nigerian music. Over the years, he has helped many up-and-coming artists find their footing. Odumodublvck is no exception.

Back in 2024, Odumodublvck publicly shared a special memory with Olamide. He revealed that the YBNL boss gave him his first taste of luxury travel—by flying him in a private jet. For many artists, that moment would have been unforgettable. For Odumodublvck, it marked a major turning point. It symbolized both Olamide's belief in his talent and a step into a new level of recognition.



The relationship between the two seems rooted not just in music but in mutual respect. Olamide's ability to spot raw talent and support younger artists has made him a true leader in the scene. Odumodublvck, with his bold lyrics and strong presence, fits right into the lineup of artists Olamide has influenced.

Don Jazzy's helping hand

The second godfather named by Odumodublvck is Don Jazzy, the CEO of Mavin Records. Don Jazzy is another powerhouse in the Nigerian entertainment industry. Known for his production skills and business sense, he has helped build the careers of stars like Tiwa Savage, Rema, and Ayra Starr.

For Odumodublvck, Don Jazzy's support came at a crucial time. According to past statements from the rapper, Don Jazzy offered him financial assistance early in his career. Though details of the support were not made public, the gesture clearly left a lasting impact.

Financial help, especially in the early stages of an artist's journey, can make

all the difference. It shows belief in potential. It builds confidence. And in a tough industry like music, it provides the push needed to keep going.

A powerful statement

By naming both Olamide and Don Jazzy as his godfathers, Odumodublvck is sending a clear message. He's not standing alone. He has the backing of two of the biggest names in the business. And that kind of support doesn't just inspire—it protects.

"No one can oppress me," he wrote—and many of his fans agree. In an industry known for its competitiveness, having strong mentors can open doors, close gaps, and build lasting careers.

Odumodublvck is still rising, but with this revelation, one thing is clear: his journey is being shaped by the wisdom, experience, and generosity of two music legends.

And as long as Olamide and Don Jazzy remain in his corner, the sky might just be the beginning.

‘I’m raising my kids alone’, says Funke Akindele

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian movie star Funke Akindele has spoken out about her struggles with motherhood, heartbreak, and loss.

In a revealing interview, she accused her former husband, Abdulrasheed Bello, also known as JJC Skillz, of not taking responsibility for their children.

Akindele, a beloved actress and filmmaker, made the claim during a recent interview with media personality Chude Jideonwo. She shared how she has been raising their twin boys alone since the couple separated in 2022.

“I’m the only one raising the kids,” she said firmly, making it clear that her ex-husband has not been involved in parenting since their split.

The timeline of their relationship

Akindele and Bello tied the knot in 2016 in a widely celebrated wedding. Two years later, in 2018, the couple welcomed their twins. Their marriage appeared strong in public, with both often sharing loving photos and videos on social media.

However, in June 2022, Bello took to Instagram to announce their separation. His post suggested that the two had grown apart but still had unresolved matters, especially concerning their children and shared business ventures.

“I’m making this announcement to clear the air,” he wrote. “We are now living separate lives. We still have to sort out the custody and wellbeing of our children, and also deal with business matters. But I believe everything will be resolved eventually.”

Despite these words, Akindele now says she has been left to manage the entire responsibility of raising their children alone.



A storm of personal challenges

In the same interview, Akindele also opened up about personal struggles she faced after her mother’s death and her political loss in the 2023 general elections.

Akindele, who ran as the deputy governorship candidate for Lagos State under the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), said she felt broken after the defeat. She admitted that she fell into depression during that time, made worse by the pain of losing her mother.

“I don’t like mourning,” she confessed. “When my mom died, I tried to move on quickly. I didn’t want to break down. But not allowing myself to grieve properly affected me deeply. I nearly died from the weight of everything.”

Holding it all together

The 46-year-old actress described that period of her life as one of the darkest. She was juggling her campaign, family responsibilities, and the emotional pain of personal loss—all at once.

She explained that the combination of losing her mother, separating from her husband, and facing a crushing political loss created a perfect storm that pushed her to the brink.

Despite everything, Akindele remains determined and strong. She said her

children give her strength to keep moving. Being a mother, she added, has made her even more focused and driven.

“I have to be strong for them,” she said. “They are my world.”

Public support and future uncertainty
Akindele’s words have drawn sympathy from fans and fellow celebrities, many of whom admire her honesty and courage. Online, her story has sparked fresh discussions about single parenting and mental health, especially among women in the public eye.

Though Bello has not yet responded to Akindele’s recent claims, many are now watching to see whether he will comment or take steps toward co-parenting more actively.

Akindele, known for her hit sitcom *Jenifa’s Diary* and numerous blockbuster movies, has always been vocal about issues affecting women. Her recent statements have once again placed her at the center of public attention—this time, not for her roles on screen, but for the real-life drama she continues to face behind the scenes.

Resilience in the face of adversity

As she focuses on raising her twins and rebuilding her life, Funke Akindele remains a symbol of strength to many Nigerian women resilient in the face of loss, and unwavering in her commitment to her children.

‘Why I quit football for music’, Kcee opens up

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Kcee, Nigerian music star, revealed that he was once a footballer but turned to music after his soccer career ended due to lack of support and sponsorship.

In a recent interview with podcaster Temisan Emmanuel, the “Limpopo” hitmaker shared that before music brought him fame, he had dreams of making it big on the football pitch.

Playing for top Nigerian clubs

Kcee revealed he once played for Julius Berger FC and Puma FC during the 1990s. He described himself as a promising young athlete, full of energy and ambition. Football, he said, was his first love.

“I started with football,” he said. “That was the first thing that took me out of Nigeria. I played for Julius Berger. I also played for Puma. My first trip to South Africa was because of football. That was before music ever came into the picture.”

Part of a promising generation

He recalled being a teenager when he was actively involved in the sport. At the time, he played alongside other talented young Nigerians who were tipped to take over from the legendary 1996 Super Eagles team—the Olympic gold medal winners that featured stars like Austin “Jay Jay” Okocha and Nwankwo Kanu.

“I was a very young boy then, maybe 16 or 17,” he said. “Jay Jay and Kanu were already making waves. My set was supposed to be the next generation. We were the ones expected to carry the torch after them.”

A career cut short

But despite his talent and hard work, Kcee



said he couldn’t go further in his football journey due to one major obstacle lack of sponsorship.

“I gave it everything I had,” he explained. “But getting support or sponsorship was so hard. We didn’t have the opportunities that players have today. It was a real struggle.”

Turning to his second love

That struggle forced him to consider other options. Thankfully, he had another passion—music.

“I didn’t leave football because I wasn’t good,” Kcee added. “I left because it was tough to survive in it. That’s when I looked at my second love—music. I had always loved singing, so I started focusing on that.”

Juggling two passions

At first, he tried to juggle both careers. He would train on the field and then spend time writing and recording songs. Eventually, music began to show more promise.

“I was doing both at the same time,” he said. “Then I entered the Star Quest music talent hunt. I won. And I started making money from music. It was clear that music was opening more doors.”

Choosing the path forward

Faced with a tough decision, Kcee chose to follow the path that gave him the most hope—and income. He left football behind and began building a name for himself in the Nigerian music industry.

“After winning Star Quest, I had to choose. I couldn’t keep doing both. Music was taking off, and football wasn’t,” he said.

A life changed by music

That decision changed his life. Kcee went on to become one of Nigeria’s most popular music acts, known for hits like “Limpopo,” “Pull Over,” and “Ojapiano.” Over the years, he has released several chart-topping songs and albums, winning awards and performing on big stages across Africa.

Still a football fan at heart

Although he left football behind, Kcee says he still loves the game and sometimes thinks about what could have been.

“Football gave me discipline. It taught me focus. I’ll always be grateful for that part of my journey,” he said.

From the pitch to the stage, Kcee’s story is one of talent, persistence, and finding success when one door closes and another opens.

'I'm not against you because of political choices', Mr Macaroni tells Seyi Law

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Comedian Mr. Macaroni responded to Seyi Law's comments, denying their rift is due to Law's APC affiliation. He cites Law's behavior as the real issue.

The entertainer took to social media platform X to set the record straight, addressing the issue head-on and clearing up what he describes as "false narratives."

Uncivilized behavior, not politics, behind the rift

In a pointed statement, Mr. Macaroni explained that his fallout with Seyi Law was not about politics. Instead, he accused Seyi of displaying "uncivilized behavior" during and after the elections, which, according to Macaroni, had a significant impact on their friendship. The comedian's response comes after Seyi Law suggested that their issues were politically motivated, an accusation that Macaroni was quick to reject.

Macaroni clarifies his stance on APC supporters

Macaroni's post on X made it clear that he holds no grudge against Law for his support of the APC. He emphasized that his disagreement with Seyi stems from his actions, not his political choices. Macaroni also revealed his frustration with Law's attempts to manipulate the situation by spreading false claims and trying to paint him as ungrateful.

Addressing the "dance of shame"

The entertainer took to social media to address the matter in a calm but firm manner. He began by directly calling out Seyi Law's actions, urging him to stop what he described as a "dance of shame." Macaroni stated that the video Seyi had posted, which implied that their conflict was due to political differences, was misleading and mischievous. He clarified that he had no problem with Seyi Law's political views, pointing out that he still maintains respectful relationships with several people who supported the APC.

The core issue: Uncivilized behavior



"The issue is not about your political affiliation," Mr. Macaroni wrote. "It's about your behavior, which I found uncivilized during and after the elections. This is where the problem lies." Macaroni explained that while he was willing to overlook the actions of others, he could not ignore the false narratives being spread by Law. The comedian added that Seyi Law had previously tried to paint him as ungrateful, but he had kept quiet out of respect. However, once the lies started, he felt the need to speak out.

Setting the record straight: Collaboration misunderstanding

Macaroni also took the opportunity to address a specific claim made by Seyi Law. According to Macaroni, Law had suggested that he had asked Tolu, Seyi's cousin, to beg him for a collaboration. Macaroni vehemently denied this, clarifying that it was actually Seyi who had reached out to him first with the idea of collaborating. They worked on the project together, and Macaroni expressed his appreciation for the effort, both at the time and still today.

"I never asked Tolu to beg you for a collaboration," Macaroni wrote. "You reached out to me first. You shared an idea, and we executed it together. I appreciated it then, and I still do now. What I don't appreciate, however, is you

trying to create a false agenda to sell your show or rally your APC supporters to attack me. I've grown used to their attacks, but this is crossing a line."

Final plea and conclusion

Macaroni ended his post with a final plea for Seyi Law to "do better" and stop spreading false information. He made it clear that he would not engage in this matter further, stating that this would be the last time he would speak on the issue. He concluded with the word "Shalom," signaling an end to the conversation.

Public reaction and social media backlash

This public dispute between the two comedians has sparked significant attention on social media, with fans and followers weighing in on both sides. While the conflict appears to have its roots in personal differences, it also highlights the complexities of navigating relationships in the public eye, especially when politics and social media are involved.

Macaroni moves on from the controversy

For now, it seems that Mr. Macaroni is determined to move on from the controversy, hoping that his message will be heard and that the false claims will finally cease.

Trump exempts phones, computers, chips from new tariffs

By Dave Oludare Oso



President Donald Trump will exempt smartphones and computers, among many tech devices and components from new tariffs imposed, according to new guidance from U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The guidance, issued late Friday evening, comes after Trump earlier this month imposed 145% tariffs on products from China, a move that threatened to take a toll on tech giants like Apple, which makes iPhones and most of its other products in China.

The guidance also includes exclusions for other electronic devices and components, including semiconductors, solar cells, flat panel TV displays, flash drives, and

memory cards.

These products could eventually be subject to additional duties, but they are likely to be far lower than the 145% rate that Trump had imposed on goods from China.

The exemptions are a win for tech companies like Apple, which makes more than 80% of its products in China. The country manufactures 80% of iPads and more than half of Mac computers produced, according to Evercore ISI.

“This is the dream scenario for tech investors,” Dan Ives, global head of technology research at Wedbush Securities, told CNBC. “Smartphones, chips being

excluded is a game changer scenario when it comes to China tariffs.”

He added that the tariffs have been a “black cloud over tech since the day of liberation, because no sector was going to be more hurt than big tech.”

“I think ultimately big tech CEOs spoke loudly, and the White House had to understand and listen to the situation that this would have been Armageddon for big tech if were implemented,” Ives said.

In the days since Trump’s tariff announcement, Apple lost over \$640 billion in market value.

US accused of 'camouflaged invasion' by Panama opposition party

By Dave Oludare Oso

Opposition politicians in Panama have accused the US of launching a “camouflaged invasion” of the country, amid simmering discontent over the government’s handling of the diplomatic crisis.

After a three-day visit by the US defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, Donald Trump appeared to confirm that US military personnel had been deployed to the Central American country on Thursday, telling reporters: “We’ve moved a lot of troops to Panama.”

Hegseth said that the US would increase its military presence at three former US bases in the country to “secure the Panama canal from Chinese influence”.

The last US military bases in Panama were vacated in 1999 as a condition of the 1977 Torrijos-Carter treaties to hand the canal to Panamanian ownership. Under the canal’s neutrality treaty, no foreign power can “maintain military forces, defense sites and military installations within its national territory”, and the US comments have prompted outrage in Panama.

“This is a camouflaged invasion,” said Ricardo Lombana, the leader of the opposition Other Way Movement. “An invasion without firing a shot, but with a cudgel and threats.”

At a Wednesday press conference to announce the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the US, Panama’s minister of public security, Frank Abrego, said the agreement would

n
o
t
i



mpinge on his nation’s sovereignty and that the country would not accept military bases.

However, a full text of the MOU included aerial photos of Fort Sherman, Rodman naval base and Howard air force base, with areas outlined for “training”, “humanitarian activities” and the “installation of US property”.

The Panamanian government says they are not “military bases” and that the deal is temporary, but opposition parties have rejected such claims.

“If you have an installation which is for use of foreign soldiers and they have control over what happens inside – and Panama has to ask in advance to enter – that’s a military base,” said Lombana.

For many Panamanians, the return of US armed forces – even for supposed “joint operations” – will bring back uncomfortable memories of 1989’s Operation Just Cause, when American troops killed thousands of civilians.

A second agreement allows US navy ships to be reimbursed for the fees they

pay to the canal. That preferential treatment would appear to violate the neutrality treatment and could open the door to further attempts to negotiate down the fees charged by the canal.

On Thursday a local lawyer filed a legal case against the Panamanian president, José Raúl Mulino, accusing him of “crimes against the international personality of the state”.

Frustration is growing over the government’s handling of the diplomatic crisis. Since Trump declared his plan to “take back” the Panama canal on his 20 January inauguration speech, all communication on the topic has been through Mulino and the details of negotiations kept largely secret.

This has led to serious differences in the US and Panamanian accounts of those negotiations. When the secretary of state, Marco Rubio, visited in early February, Mulino told press that the meeting had been “very cordial” and that the canal was not under threat. Later, however, Rubio said the situation around the canal was “unacceptable” and Trump continued to call for the return of the canal.

Iran, US start nuclear talks in Oman

By **Fatimah Idera**

Iran and the United States are set to engage in high-level talks in Oman on Saturday aimed at jump-starting negotiations over Tehran's fast-advancing nuclear programme, with U.S. President Donald Trump threatening military action if there is no deal.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi was leading Iran's delegation while the talks on the U.S. side were being handled by Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff.

In a post on X by the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei said Each delegation had their separate room and would exchange messages as "Indirect talks between Iran and the United States with the mediation of the Omani foreign minister have began.

Iran had approached the talks warily, sceptical that they could lead to a deal and suspicious of Trump, who has repeatedly threatened to bomb Iran if it does not halt its escalating uranium enrichment programme.

While each side has talked up the chances of some progress, they remain far apart on a dispute that has rumbled on for more than two decades and have not agreed on



whether the talks will be face-to-face, as Trump demands, or indirect, as Iran wants.

Ahead of the start of the talks – the first between Iran and a Trump administration, including Trump's first term in 2017-21 – Araqchi met with Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi in Muscat to present Tehran's "key points and positions to be conveyed to the U.S. side", Iranian state media reported.

Signs of progress could help cool tensions in a region aflame since 2023 with wars in Gaza and Lebanon, missile fire between Iran and Israel, Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping and the overthrow of the government in Syria.

However, failure would aggravate fears of a wider conflagration across a region that exports much of the world's oil. Tehran has cautioned neighbouring countries that have

U.S. bases that they would face severe consequences if they were involved in any U.S. military attack on Iran.

"There is a chance for initial understanding on further negotiations if the other party (U.S.) enters the talks with an equal stance," Araqchi told Iranian TV.

He said it was too early to comment on the duration of the talks. "This is the first meeting, and in it, many fundamental and initial issues will be clarified," Araqchi said, "including, whether there is sufficient will on both sides, then we will make a decision on a timeline."

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who in the Islamic Republic's complex power structure has the final say on key state matters, has given Araqchi full authority for the talks

Trump envoy wants Ukraine divided up like post-war Berlin

By Dave Oludare Oso

Donald Trump's special envoy to Ukraine has claimed that the country could be partitioned like Berlin after the Second World War as part of a peace deal – as the US president urged Russia to “get moving” on a ceasefire.

Keith Kellogg told The Times that British and French troops could adopt zones of control in the west of the country, forming a “reassurance force”, while Russia’s army could remain in the occupied east – separated by Ukrainian forces and a demilitarised zone.

The Anglo-French-led force west of the Dnipro river – which bisects Ukraine from north to south – would “not be provocative at all” to the Kremlin, said Mr Kellogg, who was excluded from peace talks last month because Russia complained that he was “too close” to Kyiv.

It came as four people were injured in Kyiv and Kharkiv during an overnight barrage of Russian drone strikes, which damaged residential buildings and sparked fires, also hitting the Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk regions.

Trump’s envoy Steve Witkoff met Vladimir Putin for talks on a “Ukrainian settlement” in St Petersburg lasting four hours on Friday.

Donald Trump has been “continually frustrated with both sides of this conflict”, the White House has said.

Speaking after it emerged that Mr Trump’s envoy Steve Witkoff had met Vladimir Putin once again in Russia, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters: “This is another step in the negotiating process towards a



ceasefire and an ultimate peace deal in Russia and Ukraine.

“As these negotiations are ongoing, I obviously will not get ahead of the president or his team, but I think the president has been quite clear that he’s been continually frustrated with both sides of this conflict, and he wants to see this fighting end.”

Convicted murderer mistakenly released from jail recaptured in Florida

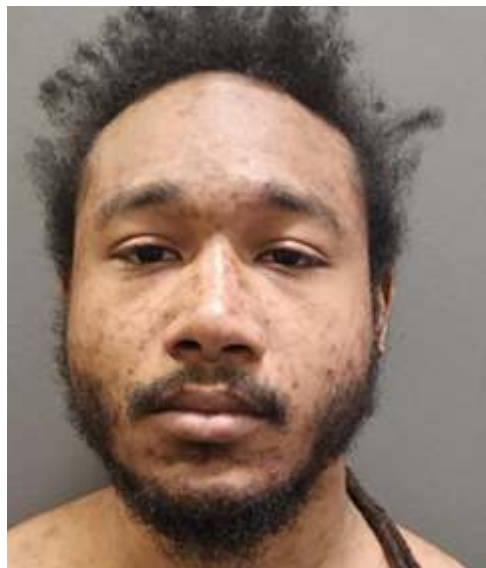
By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A convicted murderer who was mistakenly released from jail in March was apprehended and arrested in Florida on Friday, officials said.

Kathan Guzman was taken into custody by the U.S. Marshals Service without incident, per the Orange County Sheriff’s Office.

The U.S. Marshals Service did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Guzman is being held in Florida, NBC affiliate WXIA-TV reported.

Guzman was sentenced to life in prison in October 2024 for a murder in Clayton County, Georgia, according to Clayton County Sheriff Levon Allen. WXIA-TV reported that he was found guilty of murdering his girlfriend, 19-year-old Delila Grayson, in 2022.



While awaiting transport to the Georgia Department of Corrections to serve his sentence, Guzman was mistakenly released from the Clayton County Jail on March 27, Allen said in a statement.

Officials only realised the error on Tuesday when the Clayton County

District Attorney’s Office contacted Allen about Guzman.

Allen said he activated the office’s fugitive squad, contacted local law enforcement agencies for assistance and turned over all information to the U.S. Marshals Service. Guzman’s whereabouts were traced to outside of Georgia, he added.

Guzman was apprehended in Ocoee, Florida, on Friday morning by the U.S. Marshals Service, according to the Orange County Sheriff’s Office.

It is not immediately clear what led to Guzman’s release from jail.

“The cause of the release is under investigation, and disciplinary actions are pending,” Allen said. “Once the investigation is complete, it may result in the termination of employees within the Clayton County Sheriff’s Office.”

Ex-Arkansas gov, Mike Huckabee appointed Trump's ambassador to Israel

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Senate has confirmed former Arkansas Governor, Mike Huckabee as the Trump administration's ambassador to Israel, few days after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's White House visit.

The 53-46 vote installs a vehement supporter of Israel in the key Mideast post, which may prove critical to Trump's unsuccessful efforts so far to end the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, the conflict with Hezbollah in Lebanon and threats posed to Israel by Iran.

Netanyahu left his meeting Monday with Trump largely empty-handed, in stark contrast to his triumphant visit two months ago. During an hourlong Oval Office appearance, Trump appeared to slap down, contradict or complicate each of Netanyahu's policy prerogatives, from eliminating 17% tariffs on Israeli imports to sidelining Iran.

Trump instead held firm to the tariffs and then announced that the United States and Iran would hold talks over the Iranian nuclear program beginning this weekend. Israel and Netanyahu in particular have been very wary of any discussions with Iran, which Israelis regard as an existential threat.

Senate confirmation of Huckabee, a



well-known evangelical Christian, may come as a bit of a relief for Israeli officials, although he told lawmakers during a hearing last month that he would "carry out the president's priorities, not mine" as ambassador.

"I am not here to articulate or defend my own views or policies, but to present myself as one who will respect and represent the president, whose overwhelming election by the people will hopefully give me the honor of serving as ambassador to the state of Israel," Huckabee said at the time.

Huckabee acknowledged his past support for Israel's right to annex the West Bank and incorporate its Palestinian population into Israel but

said it would not be his "prerogative" to carry out that policy.

Huckabee, a one-time presidential hopeful, also has repeatedly backed referring to the West Bank by its biblical name of "Judea and Samaria," a term that right-wing Israeli politicians and activists have thus far fruitlessly pushed the U.S. to accept.

Most notably, he has long opposed the idea of a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinian people. In an interview last year, he went even further, saying that he does not even believe in referring to the Arab descendants of people who lived in British-controlled Palestine as "Palestinians."

Death toll from Dominican club roof collapse hits 225

By Dave Oludare Oso

The death toll in a roof collapse at a popular nightclub in the Dominican Republic has risen to 225 after four people hospitalised after being rescued from the rubble died overnight, health officials said Saturday.

Officials said 189 people were rescued alive from the rubble of the popular venue in the capital Santo Domingo. More than 200 were injured, with 15 of them still hospitalised, including five in critical condition.

Early on Tuesday, the roof at the nightclub Jet Set collapsed during a merengue concert. Politicians, athletes and a fashion designer were among those enjoying live music when disaster struck.

As of Saturday morning, people remained at a forensics institute waiting for the return of their loved ones' bodies. Later in the day, health authorities said all 225 bodies had been returned to the victims' families.

The Jet Set nightclub in Santo Domingo on April 10. Martin Bernetti/AFP—Getty Images



Health minister Victor Attalah told journalists Saturday there was a delay in identifying victims because the majority of them had to be matched using biometric data.

Victims identified so far include former Major League Baseball players Octavio Dotel and Tony Enrique Blanco Cabrera. Nelsy Cruz, the governor of the northwestern province of Montecristi whose brother is seven-time MLB All-Star Nelson Cruz also died.

Family members.

People wait for the bodies of their relatives at the Forensic National Institute morgue after the Jet Set nightclub roof collapsed in Santo

Officials have said it is too soon to determine why the roof fell, although prosecutors visited the scene on Thursday after rescue crews began packing up and removed heavy equipment.

On Thursday, President Luis Abinader and First Lady Raquel Arbaje attended the burial of singer Rubby Pérez in Santo Domingo's National Theater. Pérez had been performing on stage at the packed Jet Set club early Tuesday when dust began falling from the ceiling and, seconds later, the roof caved.

Mourners clad in black and white streamed into the theater and some doubled over in tears as a recording of Pérez singing the national anthem played.

Air Force Academy under Trump ends race consideration in admissions

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

President Donald Trump's revealed that the U.S. Military Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy will no longer consider race as a factor in admissions as the military schools had long done to boost enrollment of Black, Hispanic and other minorities.

The changes were detailed in court filings, by the U.S. Department of Justice in federal courts in Denver, New York and Colorado related to two lawsuits filed by the group that successfully persuaded XD;- U.S. Supreme Court to ban race-conscious admissions at civilian universities.

That group, Students for Fair Admissions, was founded by affirmative action baction opponent Edward Blum and has been seeking to build on its 2023 victory at the Supreme Court, when the 6-3 conservative majority invalidated race-conscious admissions policies used by Harvard and the University of North Carolina.

The ruling did not apply to military academies, which Chief Justice John Roberts wrote had "potentially distinct interests."by

That prompted Blum's group to launch new lawsuits aimed at barring similar admissions practices at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York; the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado; and the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

West Point trains cadets for service as Army officers. The Air Force Academy educates cadets for service as officers in the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force.

Among the 974 Air Force Academy graduates in 2024, 358 were members of a minority group — or 23%. The academy



said on its website that 127 graduates were Hispanic or Latino, 136 were Asian, 65 were African American, 23 were Pacific Islander and seven were Native American.

Most Air Force officers commission from ROTC programs at other colleges and universities.

Across the whole Air Force in December 2024, 68% of the force was White, 16% Black or African American, 5.4% Asian, 5.6% identified as more than one race, 0.9% Native American or Native Alaskan, 1.3% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Among the Air Force, 3.1% declined to respond to the question about race.

Democratic President Joe Biden's prior administration defended the use of race as an admissions factor, saying senior military leaders had long recognized that a scarcity of minority officers could create distrust within the armed forces.

Courts sided with his administration and declined to block the U.S. Naval Academy and U.S. Military Academy from considering race. Students for Fair Admissions sued the Air Force Academy only after Trump had won November's election.

Trump signed an executive order on January 27 aimed at ending diversity, equity and inclusion practices within the military.

In a filing in New York, the Justice Department said the U.S. Military Academy had been following Trump's order, and the academy had changed its policy so that "race and ethnicity are no longer factors in its admissions process."

In a separate filing in Colorado, the Justice Department pointed to a February 6 memo from a top U.S. Air Force official that implemented that order by, among other things, ending admissions quotas or objectives based on sex, race or ethnicity.

The Justice Department said the new policy may render the Students for Fair Admissions case moot as "the Air Force Academy no longer permits any consideration of race, ethnicity, or sex in the admissions process."

The Justice Department last month said the U.S. Naval Academy similarly had ended the consideration of race as an admissions factor.

Blum had no immediate comment.

Argentina seals \$20bn IMF deal, tears down currency controls

By Fatimah Idera

In a bid to move ahead of the deal and dismantled key parts of its years-long currency controls and loosened its grip on the peso, Argentina sealed a \$20 billion, 48-month Extended Fund Facility deal with the International Monetary Fund

The IMF will disburse \$12 billion by next Tuesday, while another \$2 billion will become available by June.

The IMF said the deal is expected to help Argentina catalyze additional official multilateral and bilateral support, and a timely re-access to international capital markets.

“Key pillars of the program include maintaining a strong fiscal anchor, transitioning towards a more robust monetary and FX regime, with greater exchange rate flexibility,” it added in a statement.

Earlier, the South American nation’s central bank announced it would undo a fixed currency peg from Monday, letting the peso freely fluctuate within a moving band between 1,000 and 1,400 pesos per dollar, versus 1,074 at the close on Friday.

Argentina will eliminate major parts of the so-called cepo capital controls that have restricted access to foreign currency, the central bank said in a statement.

Companies, from this year, will also be able to repatriate profits out of the country, a key demand from businesses that could unlock more investment.

“As of Monday, we will be able to put an end to the foreign exchange restrictions which were imposed in 2019 and which limit the normal functioning of the economy,” Economy Ministry Luis



Caputo said at a press conference.

Libertarian President Javier Milei addressed the nation in a televised speech on Friday night and stated that Argentina was in a better position than ever to withstand external turbulences.

However, an IMF staff report on the \$20 billion deal warned that downside risks remain elevated, as program implementation could be challenged by rising global trade tensions and, domestically, by the volatility added by the upcoming electoral cycle and fragile social conditions.

About the Currency Deal

The new exchange rate system could allow the peso to weaken almost a third if the currency were to hit the weaker edge of the band, although the central bank is likely to have some tools to intervene. The band will expand 1% each month, the bank said.

The policy move came ahead of the final IMF nod for what is the 23rd program in a long and mottled history between the

grains-producing nation and the Washington-based lender.

Funds from the IMF deal will be used to recapitalize Argentina’s central bank and the government expects they will help usher in a healthier currency, reduce inflation and allow for tax cuts, Caputo said.

Other multi-year disbursements were also announced, including \$12 billion from the World Bank and \$10 billion from the Inter-American Development Bank.

Argentina needs the financial firepower to bolster depleted foreign currency reserves that are in the red on a net basis and have been falling in recent weeks, amid sticky inflation and a country risk index that has started to rise again.

The funds are also key to unlocking the currency controls, which will likely prompt a period of local market volatility already stirred up by the international tariff war between the United States and its trade partners.

South Carolina man who killed policeman executed by firing squad

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A firing squad on Friday executed a South Carolina man who killed an off-duty police officer, the second time the state has used the rare execution method in the past five weeks.

Mikal Mahdi gave no final statement and did not look to his right toward the nine witnesses in the room behind bulletproof glass and bars once the curtain opened.

He cried out as the shots hit him, and his arms flexed. A white target with the red bull's-eye over Mahdi's heart was pushed into the wound in his chest.

He groaned two more times about 45 seconds after that. His breaths continued for about 80 seconds before he appeared to take one final gasp.

A doctor checked him for a little over a minute, and he was declared dead at 6:05 p.m., less than four minutes after the shots were fired.

Mahdi, 42, chose to die by three bullets to the heart instead of lethal injection or the electric chair. On March 7, Brad Sigmon was executed in the first U.S. firing squad death in 15 years and only the fourth since 1976. The others all occurred in Utah.

The firing squad is an execution method with a long and violent history around the world. It has been used to punish mutinies and desertion in armies, as frontier justice in America's Old West and as a tool of terror and political repression in the former Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

But South Carolina lawmakers saw it as the quickest and most humane way to kill an inmate, especially with the uncertainty in obtaining lethal injection drugs. Three volunteers fired the bullets that killed Mahdi.



Mahdi is the fifth inmate executed by South Carolina in less than eight months as the state makes its way through prisoners who ran out of appeals during an unintended 13-year pause on executions in the state.

Mahdi's is the 12th execution in the U.S. this year. Twenty-five prisoners in nine states were killed in all of 2024. Alabama and Louisiana have killed inmates by nitrogen gas. Florida, Oklahoma, Arizona and Texas have executed men by lethal injection, while South Carolina has used both the firing squad and lethal injection.

Mahdi's last meal was ribeye steak cooked medium, mushroom risotto, broccoli, collard greens, cheesecake and sweet tea, prison officials said.

The crime

Mahdi admitted he killed Orangeburg Public Safety officer James Myers in 2004, shooting him at least eight times before burning his body. Myers' wife found him in the couple's Calhoun County shed, which had been the

backdrop to their wedding 15 months earlier.

Myers' shed was a short distance through the woods from a gas station where Mahdi tried but failed to buy gas with a stolen credit card and left behind a vehicle he had carjacked in Columbia. Mahdi was arrested in Florida while driving Myers' unmarked police pickup truck.

Mahdi also admitted to the killing three days earlier of Christopher Boggs, a Winston-Salem, North Carolina, convenience store clerk who was shot twice in the head as he checked Mahdi's ID. Mahdi was sentenced to life in prison for that killing.

Final appeal

Mahdi's final appeal was rejected this week by both the U.S. and South Carolina Supreme Courts. His lawyers said Mahdi's original attorneys put on a shallow case trying to spare his life that didn't call on relatives, teachers or others who knew him and ignored the impact of months spent in solitary confinement in prison as a teen.

The defense's case to spare Mahdi's life before a judge lasted only about 30 minutes. It "didn't even span the length of a Law & Order episode, and was just as superficial," Mahdi's lawyers wrote.

Mahdi's earliest memory was his father slamming his mother through a glass table and later lying to his son and saying his mother was dead. Mahdi's father pulled him out of school in fifth grade when officials suggested he needed behavioral help, defense lawyers said.

US Supreme Court orders Trump officials to return man wrongly deported to El Salvador

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

The US supreme court upheld a judge's order requiring Donald Trump's administration to facilitate the return to the United States of a Salvadoran man who the government has acknowledged was deported in error to El Salvador.

US district judge Paula Xinis last week issued an order that the administration "facilitate and effectuate" the return of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, in response to a lawsuit filed by the man and his family challenging the legality of his deportation.

The supreme court, in an unsigned decision, said that the judge's order "properly requires the government to 'facilitate' Abrego Garcia's release from custody in El Salvador and to ensure that his case is handled as it would have been had he not been improperly sent to El Salvador".

However, the court said that the additional requirement to "effectuate" his return was unclear and may exceed the judge's authority.

The justices directed Xinis to clarify the directive "with due regard for the deference owed to the executive branch in the conduct of foreign affairs".

The administration, meanwhile, "should be prepared to share what it can concerning the steps it has taken and the prospect of further steps", the court directed.

Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran migrant who was living in Maryland and has had



a work permit since 2019, was stopped and detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He was deported on 15 March on one of three high-profile deportation flights to El Salvador that also included alleged Venezuelan gang members.

Justice department lawyers in a supreme court brief had argued that the judge's order, by requiring the Trump administration to "effectuate" Abrego Garcia's return, had impermissibly encroached on presidential authority on foreign relations in violation of the US constitution's separation of powers between its judicial and executive branches.

"The United States does not control the sovereign nation of El Salvador, nor can it compel El Salvador to follow a federal judge's bidding," justice department lawyers wrote.

The supreme court has a 6-3 conservative majority. Its three liberal justices on Thursday issued a statement agreeing with the court's decision, but said they would have denied the

administration's request outright.

"To this day, the government has cited no basis in law for Abrego Garcia's warrantless arrest, his removal to El Salvador, or his confinement in a Salvadoran prison. Nor could it," liberal justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote in the statement.

Sotomayor added that the administration had requested "an order from this court permitting it to leave Abrego Garcia, a husband and father without a criminal record, in a Salvadoran prison for no reason recognized by the law".

Abrego Garcia is married to a US citizen with whom he is raising a US citizen child in addition to his wife's two children from a prior relationship.

He had never been charged with or convicted of any crime, according to Abrego Garcia's lawyers, who have denied the justice department's allegation that he is a member of the criminal gang MS-13.

Former Super Eagles coach Christian Chukwu is dead

By **Damilola Olufemi**

Christian Chukwu, former captain and head coach of the Super Eagles, has passed away at the age of 74.

The Nigerian football legend died in the early hours of Saturday in his home state of Enugu.

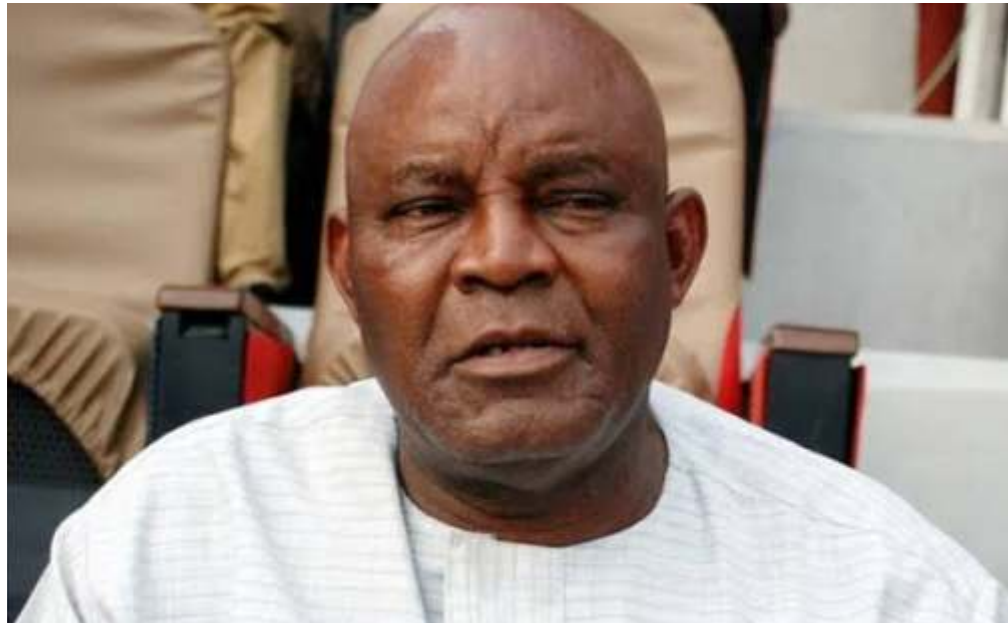
The exact cause of his death remains unknown at the time of this report.

Chukwu's death was confirmed by his longtime friend and former teammate, Dr. Olusegun Odegbami, who shared the news via his official X handle.

Odegbami, who played alongside Chukwu in Nigeria's victorious 1980 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) campaign, wrote: "My Chairman has passed on. This morning, 'Chairman' Christian Chukwu, MFR, my bosom friend and teammate, one of the greatest football players in Nigeria's history, former captain and coach of the national team, has passed on."

Born on January 4, 1951, Chukwu captained Nigeria's national team, then known as the Green Eagles, from 1974 to 1980.

Under his leadership, Nigeria won its first-ever AFCON title in 1980 and finished as runners-up in the 1976 and 1978 editions. At the club



level, Chukwu led Enugu Rangers FC to continental glory, winning the African Cup Winners' Cup in 1977.

He later coached the team and was eventually appointed its General Manager and CEO by former Enugu State Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi.

Chukwu also played pivotal roles in coaching Nigeria's national teams. He served as assistant coach for the Golden Eaglets, who won Nigeria's first-ever FIFA World Cup title at the U16 level in China in 1985. He was also part of the coaching crew of the famed 1994 Super Eagles squad—Nigeria's first team to qualify for the FIFA World Cup.

In 1998, Chukwu briefly coached the Kenyan national team. He later returned to helm the Super Eagles from 2003 to 2005, guiding them to a third-place finish at the 2004 AFCON in Tunisia.

His tenure ended in June 2005 during the qualifiers for the 2006

FIFA World Cup.

In recognition of his service to Nigerian sports, Chukwu was honored with the national award of Member of the Federal Republic (MFR).

In 2019, Chukwu battled prostate cancer, which affected his leg. A public fundraiser was launched to support his medical treatment. Nigerian businessman Femi Otedola donated \$50,000 toward his treatment in the United Kingdom.

The donation was presented by Philip Akinola, COO of Zenon Petroleum and Gas Ltd, in the presence of former Governor Ugwuanyi, former NFF Chairman Amaju Pinnick, and veteran journalist Onochie Anibeze.

With initial support from the Enugu State Government, Chukwu underwent surgery in Nigeria and was reported to have recovered at the time.

Mbappe seizes nearly £50m in unpaid wages from PSG

By Dave Oludare Oso



Kylilian Mbappe's legal team say they have seized close to £50m in unpaid wages from Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) as the legal dispute between the World Cup winner and his former club rages on.

The France international, who left PSG for Real Madrid last summer, claims the Parisians owe him €55m (£47.4m) in wages, with his lawyers now asking the Paris court to start proceedings.

Thomas Clay, one of Mbappe's legal experts, said the striker had been authorised by the courts to make a precautionary seizure of the money from PSG's bank accounts and that he proceeded with the move on Thursday.

A legal hearing is scheduled for May 26 as Delphine Verheyden, Mbappe's head counsel, vowed to "go on the attack".

"This story has been going on for just over a year now," Verheyden said. "One year was the deadline for trying to resolve this dispute as peacefully as possible."

"As the months went by, Kylian Mbappe still hasn't been paid the missing €55m. A decision has been taken, this time to go on the attack."

Verheyden said they were also asking the French sports minister to intervene and legally challenge a decision by the appeals commission of the French Football Federation, which previously ruled that Mbappe's appeal against PSG was not receivable.

She also intends to ask UEFA to look into the matter, arguing that PSG are in breach of its salary obligations – something which could cost the club its licence to play in the Champions League.

Mbappe could yet face his former side in Europe's premier competition, with Real Madrid on the same side of the Champions League draw as PSG.

And while PSG are in control of their quarter-final tie against Aston Villa after taking a 3-1 advantage from the home leg, Los Blancos will require a stunning turnaround if they are to progress to the last four after being condemned to a 3-0 first-leg thrashing by Arsenal on Tuesday.