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Sallah tragedy: IGP withdraws invitation to Emir Sanusi

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Inspector-General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, has withdrawn the invitation earlier extended to the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Muhammadu Sanusi over an alleged murder during last Sunday's Sallah festivities in Kano.

The police chief, however, directed the Kano State Command of the force to obtain the monarch's statement regarding the incident.

The IGP issued the directive through the Force spokesperson, Olumuyiwa Adejobi.

The Emir had been summoned over an alleged murder which involved some of his police escorts during last Sunday's Sallah festivities in Kano.

The incident occurred after Emir Sanusi returned home from Eid prayers. He had gone to the Eid prayer ground on foot but returned to the palace riding a horse.

According to Adejobi, the withdrawal of the invitation was due to the intervention of certain stakeholders in the country.

He also stated that the decision aligned with the police's commitment to ensuring that policing actions are not politicised or misinterpreted.

The statement read: "The Nigeria Police Force has withdrawn its earlier invitation extended to Alhaji Sanusi in connection with the unfortunate incident that occurred in Kano State during the Sallah celebration on March 30, 2025.

"The invitation was initially issued to enable Alhaji Sanusi to provide his account of the events that led to the breakdown of law and order in the state.

"However, following advice from respected stakeholders and in line with the Inspector-General of Police's



commitment to ensuring that policing actions are not politicised or misinterpreted, the IGP has directed that the invitation be withdrawn.

"Instead, operatives of the Force Intelligence Department (FID) have been mandated, on the instructions of the IGP, to proceed to Kano to obtain Alhaji Sanusi's statement.

"Prior to the Sallah Day celebration, credible intelligence at the disposal of the Police indicated that the two disputed Emirs in Kano State—Alhaji Ado Bayero and Alhaji Lamido Sanusi—were planning to hold separate Durbar Festivals.

"The Durbar Festival is a long-held tradition involving a recognised Emir riding on horses around the city accompanied by his people.

"To forestall possible violence, the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, Ph.D., NPM, deployed the Coordinating DIG for the North West, who also serves as the Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Force Criminal Investigation Department, DIG Abubakar Sadiq, mni, to engage in dialogue with the two disputed Emirs in Kano and the Kano State Government.

"It was mutually agreed that no Durbar Festival would be held to preserve peace and public safety, and neither of the

disputed Emirs would ride on horseback on Sallah day.

"Despite this agreement, Alhaji Sanusi, who had attended the Eid prayers in his car, decided to mount a horse in a procession after Eid prayers on Sallah Day, accompanied by local vigilantes.

"This triggered a confrontation by youths in the community, leading to the tragic death of one Usman Sagiru, and leaving several others injured. This was a situation the Force had earlier warned against and intended to avert by sending emissaries to both Alhaji Sanusi and Alhaji Ado Bayero.

"The Nigeria Police Force, under the leadership of the Inspector-General of Police, remains resolute in its commitment to conducting its criminal investigation duties with the highest level of professionalism, including the investigation of this incident.

"All individuals found culpable will, in due course, be brought to justice. To this effect, some arrests have been made, prompting the invitation to Alhaji Sanusi.

"The Force also wishes to reiterate that its actions are guided solely by the principles of justice, neutrality, and professionalism."

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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PRODUCT COLOUR

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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
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9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
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7X4	164,002.00
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9X4	137,875.00
9X3	112,875.00
8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
5X2	32,916.50
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3X2	19,750.00
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10X4	103,963.00
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9X5	168,191.50
9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
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6X4	65,000.00
6X3	41,124.50
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4X3	N/A
4X2	17,737.50
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3X2	14,923.00
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FG screens Femi Pedro, Fani-Kayode, others for Ambassadorial posts

By Dave Oludare Oso

Plans are afoot for the Federal Government to fill its foreign positions, as it currently vets potential candidates to fill diplomatic and ambassadorial roles in its 109 missions, 76 embassies, 22 high commissions, and 11 global consulates, NEW DAILY PRIME has learned.

According to PUNCH, a former minister of aviation under the Obasanjo administration, Mr Femi Fani-Kayode, and a former deputy governor of Lagos State, Femi Pedro, are among the nominees.

It was also gathered that the vetting is not conducted centrally, as nominees are being asked to report to the DSS offices nearest to them.

Reports also have it that several candidates had been contacted to provide personal education and work history.

A presidency source said, “They’re already doing security checks with DSS. When they have cleared security checks, we will release the list.

“Only those who have been cleared are announced. The process is ongoing. I know that we should have a list before the end of this month (April).”

Another official who spoke anonymously said, “The vetting is not done centrally. It is based on the location of the nominees. Nominees have been reached to provide personal history and information such as where they attended school, what appointments they have held, and the



like. So, it is by location.”

Since September 2023, President Bola Tinubu has operated his 4Ds—Democracy, Development, Demography, and Diaspora—foreign policy without ambassadors.

That month, he concluded a sector-wide reassessment of Nigeria’s foreign policy, which saw over 83 career and non-career ambassadors recalled from their stations.

Last December, reliable sources close to the President confirmed that Tinubu spent part of his holiday reviewing the names of nominees with plans to transmit a consolidated list to the National Assembly before the end of the month.

However, updates in January revealed that the President changed his mind.

Our correspondent gathered that the process suffered delays due to the paucity of funds—to the tune of \$1bn

—required to pay arrears of foreign service officials, settle a backlog of overheads, replace ageing vehicles and renovate embassy buildings.

One official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, “You see, the major issue is money. Not money to pay them [ambassadors], because how much is their salaries and benefits? The main money is CAPEX [Capital Expenditure]. By the time they put the cost together to fix the issues, it is running to almost \$1bn.

“Most of those embassies, almost 90 per cent, are rundown. Either the residence is not good, the embassy does not have a functional office, or their rent has expired. The embassies that are buoyant may not be up to 10 as we speak.

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“I understand that some of them don’t have serviceable vehicles. The last vehicles they bought were from 10 years ago. Some of them are broken down, and ambassadors cannot use such vehicles because they carry the image of the country. Some of them don’t even have power and running water. So, if you post ambassadors there today, you’re sending them to trouble.”

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Tuggar, also attributed the delay to financial constraints.

“It is a money problem,” Tuggar said during a ministerial briefing in Abuja last May.

He argued that appointing ambassadors without the financial resources to support their travel and the effective running of missions abroad was pointless.

“We met a situation where foreign affairs was not being funded like it should be. Some loopholes are exploited by the likes of Binance. It is a money problem.

“There is no point sending out ambassadors if you do not have the funds for them to even travel to their designated countries and to run the missions effectively, one needs funding. Mr President is working on it, and it will be done in due course,” Tuggar said.

A foreign service official explained that though provisions had been made in the 2025 budget to cover some of that cost, the funds were hardly enough.

Senior Presidency and foreign service officers say although the complete list of nominees is highly classified, some prominent and controversial figures are being screened.

One official said, “They’re going to announce the appointments soon. They are being screened as we speak. The names of the nominees are highly classified for now because not every one of the names listed will eventually make it through.

“FFK [Femi Fani-Kayode] is on the list. These are some of the controversial names that have been put forward as well. Then there is Fola Adeola [founder of Guaranty Trust Bank Plc] and Femi Pedro too. They’re moving on with the process more quickly this time.”

Giving reasons for the slow process, another official explained that the vetting was necessary to avoid complications that might hurt the country’s standing on the global scene.

“The nominees are being vetted, and background checks are being

conducted on them. It is usually done so that the nominees will not have any security issues and their deployment will not have a negative impact on the country,” the official said.

There was also a claim that Reno Omokri, a former aide of former President Goodluck Jonathan, was on the list.

But a credible source in the Presidency denied it.

“Reno is not on the list. But FFK is there,” the source said.

The President’s Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Mr Bayo Onanuga, who earlier spoke about the delays, said nominations for ambassadorial roles must be thorough before a final list is transmitted to the National Assembly.

“Don’t forget that the ambassadorial list has two components. There are career ambassadors and political ambassadors. The foreign affairs list and the consolidated list will still go through certain processes before they are released,” he explained.

Two of the nominees, when contacted by Sunday PUNCH, declined comment. They also did not confirm or deny the report.

Patience Jonathan's ex-staff legally remanded – NCoS

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Bayelsa State Command of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) has denied reports that its facility at the Okaka Custodial Centre is illegally holding former First Lady, Patience Jonathan's 15 former domestic staff.

Making the denial in a statement on Sunday, the Okaka Custodial Centre spokesman, Isari Gbosi Tombara, dismissed the reports as false and aimed at tarnishing the image of the service.

The statement read, "The rumour has been in circulation, purporting that the former first lady detained the said domestic staff since 2019 for theft, and that there was a closed-door meeting between the former first lady and top correctional officers of the Nigerian Correctional Service, Bayelsa State Command.

"These statements are unfounded and being spread in order to tarnish the good image of the Service."

There were reports that the inmates were detained since 2019 over the alleged theft of gold jewellery, home appliances and electronics said to be worth N200m.

According to PUNCH, the detainees also faced 18 counts bordering on conspiracy to commit murder, burglary, and other felonies.

Tombara added that the inmates were legally remanded by



competent courts and had not been denied their fundamental rights.

The statement added, "For the avoidance of doubt, the service categorically states that there was no such meeting between the former first lady and top officials of the command as concocted in the reports.

"Also, the said inmates were remanded in custody by the High Court 1 of Bayelsa State and have been attending trials at and as when due.

"They were in court on the 10th and 11th of March 2025, and the last time they attended court was Thursday, 3rd April 2025, where the matter was adjourned to the 17th of April 2025. The said inmates have also been treated fairly and humanely while in custody, and their fundamental human rights are respected."

He also stressed that no inmate can be held without a valid remand warrant, noting that the Okaka facility remains one of the most peaceful in the country.

"The public is further informed that the command is peaceful and that the Medium Security Custodial Centre, Okaka, remains one of the most peaceful custodial facilities in the country.

"Hence, they should discountenance the said reports as they are intended to cause chaos where none exists," the statement added.

The command also reiterated its commitment to the safe, humane custody and rehabilitation of inmates, in line with the directives of the Acting Controller-General of Corrections, Sylvester Ndid Nwaku.

My immediate concern is getting Oyo youths gainfully employed – Alaafin

By Dave Oludare Oso

Just-installed Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Akeem Owoade, has disclosed his plans for Oyo Kingdom, with a promise to focus on infrastructure development and youth empowerment.

The new king, who officially ascended the throne in Oyo town on Saturday, also said emphasis will be laid on the promotion of Yoruba culture and language.

He succeeded Oba Lamidi Adeyemi who passed away last year.

According to Nigerian Tribune, the monarch said his reign would focus on improving the welfare of his people, particularly by addressing youth unemployment and enhancing public amenities.

He said, “Of immediate concern is the need to get our teeming youths gainfully employed and take them off the street. They are our today and our future. They need skills and jobs.”

He revealed plans to provide vocational training for youths and the less-privileged, with an emphasis on self-employment and digital skills such as cybersecurity.

“These people would be trained well and would not need to travel abroad but would be able to work from the corner of their rooms and make a living,” he added.



The Alaafin also pledged to collaborate with the government to improve infrastructure in Oyo and its environs.

“I will work closely with the government on the need to improve the condition of public facilities, amenities and infrastructure such as roads and schools,” he said.

Oba Owoade, who spent over two decades in the UK and Canada, also plans to promote unity among Yoruba monarchs and preserve the cultural heritage of the region.

“I will be strengthening this aspect of our civilisation... and I hope to be taking our culture and tradition to the next level in terms of maintenance and promotion,” he stated.

On language preservation, the monarch noted that the Yoruba language would be a priority during

his reign.

“As the custodian of Yoruba culture, our language would be one of our major priorities and we will work hard to promote it along with other aspects of our culture and tradition,” he said.

He further disclosed that he had shipped in hospital equipment and would be setting up a community health centre to provide free medical services to the less privileged, especially widows and widowers.

Oba Owoade also revealed plans to renovate and modernise the over 200-year-old palace while retaining its cultural essence.

“Some new buildings need to be constructed and some need to be renovated... to make it modern while keeping its essential traditional qualities,” he said.

Former Oyo Governor Omololu Olunloyo dies at 90

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Former civilian governor of old Oyo State Dr. Victor Omololu Olunloyo dies at the age of 90 years.

According to a statement by his family on Sunday, he died a few days before his 90th birthday.

The statement titled 'Victor Olunloyo goes home' was signed by Oladapo Ogunwusi on behalf of the family.

It read, "With a heavy heart but gratitude to the Almighty, we announce the passing into glory of Dr. Victor Omololu Olunloyo, former governor of Oyo State, mathematician and engineer and renowned technocrat, a few days before his 90th birthday.

"The Balogun of Oyo and Otun Bobasewa of Ife, Dr. Olunloyo was first Rector, Ibadan polytechnic and first Rector, Kwara State Polytechnic among other notable appointments.



"His long record of service to the nation and humanity is a source of pride to his family and associates even as we come to grip with this devastating event.

"The Olunloyo family will appreciate the understanding of the press and the public as they commence efforts to give him a befitting burial.

The family appealed for privacy during this period of mourning, noting that arrangements for a befitting burial are

underway.

Victor Omololu Sowemimo Olunloyo is a Nigerian mathematician and politician who served as the governor of Oyo State from 1 October 1983 to 31 December 1983, when the military regime of General Muhammadu Buhari took power.

He later became a power in the Peoples Democratic Party in Oyo State.

Magnus Abe chides Gov Diri over anti-Wike moves

By Dave Oludare Oso

Senator Magnus Abe has urged Bayelsa State Governor, Douye Diri, to reconsider his efforts in stopping the April 12th rally organized by supporters of the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Chief Nyesom Wike.

In a post on his verified Facebook page, Abe expressed disbelief over the Bayelsa government's deployment of resources aimed at preventing Wike from visiting the state, despite the minister's public statement that he had no plans to attend the event.

Abe stated that the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees every citizen, including Wike, the right to freedom of movement within the country.



He pointed out that Governor Diri would not tolerate any interference with his own visits to Rivers State and urged the Bayelsa government to focus its resources on addressing the needs of the people, rather than engaging in costly campaigns against Wike.

"The Constitution guarantees all

Nigerians, including Nyesom Wike, the freedom to move freely within our country. When Wike decides to visit Yenagoa, he will do so just like Governor Diri visits Port-Harcourt and Abuja at will," Abe stated.

The senator also suggested that a simple phone call between Governor Diri and Minister Wike could have resolved the issue and spared the state from unnecessary tension and financial strain.

He concluded by calling for greater collaboration and cooperation among leaders in the South-South region, urging them to move beyond unnecessary conflicts and focus on working together for the greater good.

25 killed in multi-vehicle accidents in Ogun

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

An official of the Federal Road Safety Corps and 24 others were killed in two separate accidents that occurred in Ogun State on Saturday.

Also, eight other persons sustained multiple injuries in the accidents.

According to a Punch report, the first multiple crash involving a Mack truck marked SEY 363 YY, a tanker with registration number T2900LA and a bus marked LSD 180 YA at about 7am on Saturday around NIPCO filling station axis of Lagos-Ibadan expressway claimed seven lives while four people were injured.

Florence Okpe, the Spokesperson for the Ogun State Sector of the FRSC, disclosed this in a statement sent to journalists on Saturday.

She noted that the accident was caused by excessive speed on the part of the driver of the Mack truck which led to loss of control after which it rammed into the other two vehicles.

According to the FRSC PRO, "A total of 15 people were involved which comprised of 13 male adult and 02 female adult and 04 persons were injured (03 male adult and 01 female adult) while 07 people were recorded dead from the multiple crash.(06 male adult and 01 female adult).

"03 vehicles were involved with registration numbers SEY363YY, a MACK truck T2900 LA tanker, and a yellow bus LSD 180 YA.



"The suspected cause of the multiple crash was excessive speed on the part of. Mack truck Which led to loss of control and rammed into the other two vehicles.

"The injured victims were taken to Divine Touch Hospital and Glory Center Hospital Ibafo while the dead bodies were taken to Idera morgue Sagamu."

The crash vehicles were towed off the road for free Flow of traffic.

Okpe explained that the second multiple crash involving seven vehicles occurred at about 4pm around Mosimi along Sagamu-Ikorodu Road while the operatives of FRSC were clearing an earlier accident.

A vehicle with faulty brake reportedly ran into the rescue team killing a FRSC staff and 18 others.

She said, "A total of 22 people were involved in the multiple crash (14 male, 6 female and 01 child) 04 people were injured and 18 persons were killed including one of the rescue officers who

happened to be an FRSC personnel.

"This happened when vehicle one and two crashed and the FRSC rescue team were carrying out the rescue operation when another vehicle ran into them as a result of brake failure and killed FRSC staff.

"The injured victims were taken to Dasochris Hospital, Gbaga while the deceased were deposited at OOUTH. The crash involved 07 vehicles with registration numbers as follows AGL752YC Toyota Hiace bus, T14007LA DAF Truck, HT680 Honda car, another DAF truck with no registration, STF10204 Pick up, A G G 4 4 8 Q motorbike and ^[1]_[SEP]PKA214WS Bajaj motorcycle."

The Sector Commander, Akinwumi Fasakin, has however expressed his pain over the recklessness of drivers and the number of crashes recorded on Saturday which were attributed to excessive speed and brake failure.

Fasakin advised motorists to drive within the stipulated speed limit and observe road signs as well.

Suspected herdsmen intensify abductions, killings in nine states

By Dave Oludare Oso

In recent weeks, there seems to be a resurgence of kidnappings, rapes, killings, and other forms of crimes perpetrated by suspected herdsmen across many states in the country.

This development shattered the relative respite in herdsmen disturbances across the country in the past months.

Despair, fear and anxiety now reign supreme in many communities across the nation.

A Vanguard report listed that no fewer than nine states are living in fear over the development, which threatens lives and property, especially in rural areas.

The report listed the affected states to include Ondo, Ogun, Ekiti, Osun, Edo, Enugu, Delta, Ebonyi, and Benue.

The leader of a group protesting the activities of suspected herdsmen, who sexually assault women in Enugu said, "Our sons and husbands can no longer go to their farms. I have seen a situation where a herder inserted sticks into the private parts of our women. We can't continue like this."

Some are of the opinion that the new wave of criminality is linked to the killing last week of 16 northerners travelling through Uromi in Edo State who were mistaken for kidnappers and attacked by a mob.

Many parts of Edo were believed to have been traumatised by kidnappings and killings allegedly perpetrated by herdsmen, forcing residents to raise vigilantes to redress the situation.

The slain northerners, described as hunters, were travelling from Rivers State



to Kano for the recently celebrated sallah when the truck conveying them was stopped in Uromi by some vigilantes, searched and several dane guns reportedly uncovered.

The resultant mob action saw the travellers being lynched.

The jungle justice meted to the victims has drawn nationwide condemnation but some analysts say this is the result of the peoples' loss of confidence in the nation's justice system as there is no guarantee that when a suspect is caught and taken before the authorities, justice will be done.

The surge in kidnapping by suspected herdsmen in Ondo State, lately, has put the people on the edge and residents have been gripped by palpable fear following killings by suspected herdsmen.

25 persons were said to have been murdered by rampaging herdsmen after they invaded and sacked four communities in Akure North Local Government Area of the state and Aba Oyinbo community in the same council area.

The incident took place within two weeks without being challenged by security agencies or local security groups.

In fact, the state has been turned into a crime resort as kidnappers now operate in broad daylight.

There is anxiety after a series of abductions, especially in Oba Ile, in Akure North and also in the northern senatorial district, specifically in Akoko axis.

The number of reported cases of abductions across the hitherto peaceful state keeps increasing daily.

Suspected herdsmen, recently, ambushed an 18-seater bus along Owo-Akoko Expressway while en route to Akure, the Ondo State capital.

All the passengers were abducted and later released after alleged payment of ransom. The state security outfit codenamed Amotekun also rescued some of the victims.

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on next page**

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Also, three students of Federal College of Agriculture, Oba Ile were abducted by suspected herdsmen a few metres from Akure airport.

Also, five farmers working on their farms at Ajegunle-Powerline community in Akure North of the state, were gruesomely murdered by suspected herdsmen.

Barely a week after, seven travellers along the Benin/Owo/Akure highway were abducted.

A female septuagenarian farmer in Ifira Akoko, Akoko North East LGA was gang-raped by suspected herdsmen. She was later rescued by Amotekun personnel.

Also, a 46-year-old health worker, Akinola Oyabiyi, in Eleyowo community, was shot dead by bandits while returning home after the day's work. He was said to have been shot when he reportedly wanted to escape.

His son, who accompanied him, was abducted but was released 10 days after ransom was allegedly paid.

Another ugly incident was the abduction of a farm owner, Olanrewaju Oyeleye, and his manager in Akure North.

The farm manager, who just returned to the country to invest in farming, was abducted and his captors demanded N100 million ransom.

The unending killings by herdsmen led to a protest by market women in the council area after nine surveyors were abducted.

While lamenting that the state government was unconcerned about the killings in the area, the protesting women accused the police of not making any arrest.

Meanwhile, the corpses of five farmers allegedly murdered by suspected herdsmen while working on their farms at

Ajegunle-Powerline community in Akure North were taken to the Governor's Office by some protesters.

The deputy governor of the state, Dr Olayide Adelami, addressed the angry protesters who accused the governor of not being sensitive to the killings by suspected herdsmen.

Reacting to the surge in criminality in Ondo, the state Commander of Amotekun, Chief Adetunji Adeleye, said that no fewer than 114 people found wandering in the forests across the state had been arrested on the suspicion that they could be criminals.

His words "Our people should not panic. We are not relenting.

"In recent times, there has been a significant influx of strangers into our state, particularly at our borders.

"Trailers have been arriving and dropping off individuals who are unfamiliar with the terrain.

"They simply penetrate the bush, leading to an increase in criminal activities around our border towns and cities.

"The governor has directed us to ensure that all miscreants and those with no legitimate business in the forests are removed.

"We have commenced a clearance operation to achieve this goal."

The state government, he said, has directed Amotekun to immediately establish security posts in communities under attack by suspected herdsmen.

In Oyo State, there has been an upsurge in the attacks by herdsmen in the last two months.

Due to the resurgence of the atrocities of these bandits, affected victims and other residents have been crying and pleading

with security agents including hunters to increase surveillance in the forests.

Places where the herders carry out their nefarious activities in Oyo State include Akinyele Local Government, Akinmorin, Jobele and Iseyin-Ibadan road.

One of the victims, Damilare Aduloju, a farmer, who spoke on a private radio in Ibadan, said he was working on his farm when the bandits who were armed with AK 47 rifles swooped on him, tied his hands and also blindfolded him.

Aduloju narrated, "They led me into the bush. When they were crossing the road at Akinmorin, they stopped articulated trucks and took over the road.

"The vehicles waited when they saw that they were all armed.

"They beat me mercilessly and dragged me with a long rope. We trekked a long distance in the bush. During the day, they would order me to stop and hide in a bush until nightfall.

"They demanded about N50 million but my friends and family got some millions of Naira, which we gave to them before they released me."

Another victim narrated that the herdsmen came to his residence at Jobele area at 1 am.

"When I heard dogs barking, I knew there was something fishy. I peeped through the window and saw about six of them trying to force the gate open.

"Our dogs were barking seriously. They fired a gunshot at the dogs but they missed their target.

"By this time, we were making calls to security agents, especially Amotekun Corps. To my surprise, when the dogs heard the gunshot, they stopped barking even though they were not hit by bullets.

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"I, my wife and baby were in the house. I had to tell them that they should be patient.

"I said I would open the door. I said it because they had broken all the window glasses.

"Later, I secretly opened the backyard door and jumped over the fence and escaped.

"I hid myself somewhere close and I saw the kidnappers. They were six in number.

"After escaping, I thought about my wife and baby. I had to surrender to the kidnappers. One was trying to speak adulterated Yoruba and the other was speaking pidgin.

"They tied me up and allowed my wife and baby to go.

"We trekked from minutes past 1am to 4am. They gave me water from a stream and fed me with fruits.

"But, as God would do it, we were trying to cross from a cassava farm into a thick bush when we heard some voices.

"All the five kidnappers moving behind me suddenly overtook me and started running.

"When I knew it was Amotekun Corps and other security agents, I raised my two hands, shouting that I was the one they kidnapped so that the security agents would not mistake me for bandits," he said.

"I thank God for the security agents including our local hunters who started combing the bushes around searching for me.

"It happened about two weeks ago and I'm yet to get over the shock."

The President of Soludero Hunters Association, Oba Nureni Akintola, urged state governors in the South-West to empower hunters so that they can fish out the kidnappers hibernating in the forests.

He said, "We are hunters and we are familiar with all the nooks and crannies of the forests around us. The governors should mobilise us. We can enter the bushes and smoke the bandits out."

Suspected herders have returned to some communities in Ogun State, wreaking havoc on farmlands.

Reports have it that the herdsman with an estimated 500 cows invaded farmland in Obafemi/Owode Local Government, Ogun State, destroying over 30 acres of cassava farms.

It was also gathered that a yet-to-be-identified group of herdsman with a large number of cows allegedly invaded and destroyed a five-hectare rice plantation belonging to one Okegbenro Julius, in Ilupeju Ibaro Village, Abeokuta.

Police spokesperson, Omolola Odutola, said the owner of the farm, Julius reported the incident to the police.

She stated that the herdsman, who had caused extensive destruction to crops, fled the scene leaving one of their cows behind.

One of the affected cassava farmers, Adeogun Olamide, said he was shocked to discover that the entire 4.5 acres of cassava farm were destroyed by the herdsman.

Fire destroys products worth millions of naira at Oyo herbal storage facility

By Helen Okechukwu

A fire outbreak at a residential storage facility in Oyo town on Saturday destroyed herbal products worth several millions of naira, despite swift response by state firefighters who battled for hours to contain the blaze.

The incident occurred at Olanlokun Junction, Obabi Street in the Old Cele area of Oyo town, Oyo State.

According to a statement issued on Sunday by the General Manager of the Oyo State Fire Service, Yemi Akinyinka, the fire was reported at exactly 10:39 a.m., and firemen arrived



at the scene just six minutes later.

"On getting there, the crew met heaps of local herbs within the premises of a residential building being used to store different types of local herbs, engulfed

by fire," Akinyinka said.

He noted that the firefighters quickly commenced operations and successfully curtailed the fire from spreading to the main building and nearby structures.

"The properties worth several millions of naira were saved by the officers of the agency," he added.

Akinyinka explained that it took over three hours for the firemen to fully extinguish the blaze due to the massive accumulation of herbs, which intensified the fire.

NDLEA nabs brothers at Lagos airport with 5kg cocaine bound for India

By Helen Okechukwu

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has arrested two brothers at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Ikeja, Lagos, for attempting to smuggle 5 kilograms of cocaine to India.

The suspects, John Abugu, 43, and Kenneth Abugu, 31, were caught on Thursday, 3 April 3, with the illicit drug concealed in the walls of their suitcases.

This was contained in a statement shared by Femi Babafemi, the Director, Media & Advocacy on Sunday.

According to the NDLEA, the brothers claimed they were traveling for medical treatment, but a search by operatives revealed whitish powdery substances later confirmed to be cocaine.

On the same day, NDLEA officers at MMIA also arrested a 20-year-old Ghanaian-British national, Parker Darren Hazekia Osei, with 19.4kg of Loud, a potent strain of cannabis.

The drugs were found packed in 36 parcels inside a large suitcase. Osei, who claims to be a Computer Science student at East London University, said he left the UK for Bangkok about a week ago and picked up the consignment there for delivery in Nigeria.

He was arrested upon arrival on an Ethiopian Airlines flight at the E-arrival hall of the Lagos airport.

Read Also: NDLEA nabs Nollywood filmmaker for drug offences

In a separate operation in Kogi State, NDLEA officers arrested a 33-year-old woman, Ngozi Ogili, with 3kg of methamphetamine.

She was caught on 31 March, while traveling in a commercial bus from Lagos to Abuja along the Okene-Lokoja highway.



A follow-up operation at the delivery point in Apo mechanic area of Abuja led to the seizure of additional quantities of Loud and Colorado, two synthetic strains of cannabis.

On 5 April, a 75-year-old man, Nna Nnanna Felix, in Abia State was arrested with 1.6kg of skunk during a raid at Umunteke Asa in Ukwa West Local Government Area.

Meanwhile, another suspect, David Chinemerem, 21, was also arrested on 1 April, with 2,050 ampoules of pentazocine at 7 Nnajiog Lane, Umuode Road, Aba.

Further operations in Yobe State led to the arrest of Abdullahi Adamu on Saturday, 5 April, along the Potiskum-Damaturu road. NDLEA operatives found 381 bottles of codeine syrup and 108 tablets of tramadol in his possession.

In Anambra State, raids at the Osogbo motor park, Onitsha, and a house in Oba, Idemili LGA, led to the arrest of Obinna Sunday and the seizure of 195,000 pills of tramadol. Another suspect, Ugochukwu Ojalanonye, was found with 4.2kg of codeine syrup and 5.4kg of pentazocine.

Also, 51-year-old Sunday Ayogu was



arrested in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) on April 3, at Wuse Market with 25kg of skunk and 90.4g of methamphetamine.

While in Cross River State, two women—Faith Effiong Etim, 64, and Victoria Asuquo Etim, 40—were arrested during a raid on cannabis farms in Esuk-Odot community, Odukpani LGA. Over 250,000 kilograms of cannabis were destroyed across more than 100 hectares of farmland during the operation, which was supported by the Nigerian Army.

The agency also continued its War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) campaign across the country with sensitization programmes in schools, religious centers, workplaces, and communities.

NDLEA Chairman and Chief Executive, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd), commended officers across the MMIA, Special Operations Unit, and various state commands for their efforts.

He highlighted the importance of balancing drug supply reduction with public education and rehabilitation to win the fight against drug abuse in Nigeria.

Amadou Bagayoko of music duo, Amadou & Mariam dies aged 70

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Malian singer and guitarist, who sold millions of albums with his wife, Mariam Doumbia, had been ill for a while, say family

The guitarist and singer Amadou Bagayoko of the Malian music duo Amadou & Mariam has died aged 70 after an illness, his family said, paying tribute to the Grammy-nominated blind musician.

Amadou and his wife, Mariam Doumbia, formed a group whose blend of traditional Malian music with rock guitars and western blues sold millions of albums across the world.

Among other achievements the couple, who met at the institute for the young blind in the Malian capital, Bamako, composed the official song for the 2006 football World Cup in Germany and played at the closing ceremony concert for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.

“He had been ill for a while,” Amadou’s son-in-law Youssouf Fadiga told Agence-France Presse.

Their France-based manager, Yannick Tardy, who had spoken to Mariam by phone, said Amadou had been taken to a clinic after feeling fatigue, and had died later that day.

Confirming the musician’s death to AFP, the Malian culture minister, Mamou Daffé, said he felt “dismay” at the loss.



After meeting in 1976, when Amadou was 21 and Mariam 18, the pair discovered they had similar tastes in music.

They began touring together from the 1980s, mixing traditional west African instruments such as the kora and balafon with the Pink Floyd and James Brown records from their youth.

They sang songs to raise awareness of the problems facing their peers living with blindness and disabilities.

A few decades later their 2004 album, *Dimanche à Bamako* (Sunday in Bamako), brought them worldwide success backed up by the title track.

Amadou and Mariam became one of Africa’s bestselling duos, playing alongside the likes of Damon Albarn of Blur and Gorillaz, and the Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour – a childhood

idol.

They played at festivals including Glastonbury, shared bills with Coldplay, U2 and Stevie Wonder, and played for Barack Obama at the concert marking the US president’s Nobel Peace prize award.

“There were many musicians, many artists there. And Barack Obama came to meet us,” Amadou told AFP in a 2024 interview.

“We talked a bit. Barack Obama told us that he liked our music. Malian music, too. We were very, very happy,” Mariam added.

Besides a Grammy nomination in 2010, Amadou & Mariam won prizes at the BBC radio awards and France’s Victoires de la Musique.

Amadou Bagayoko is survived by three children.

I still live like a poor man everyday – Kizz Daniel

By Oluwatosin Ologun



Nigerian singer Kizz Daniel has admitted that despite his fame and success in the entertainment business, he still lives like a poor man.

According to the ‘Buga’ singer, he doesn’t chase money anymore, saying he’s now being chased by money instead.

It all started when Kizz Daniel stirred a conversation online with a post saying that money does not bring happiness.

He talked about the paradoxical relationship between wealth and happiness, questioning why joy seems to disappear once money arrives.

He asked, “Why when money comes, happiness dey always comot?” He added that many wealthy individuals live in sadness despite their riches.

He therefore advised his followers to look past the fake love and happiness often portrayed online.

A netizen reacted to the post with a question directed at the singer: “So, in other words, you are saying money doesn’t bring happiness?? But you’re chasing it every blessed day.”

Kizz Daniel responded by clarifying that he still lives like a poor man despite his status as one of the most commercially successful singers in Nigeria.

He said, “Lol ... I still live like a poor man every day. Na money dey chase me instead.”

Kizz Daniel said that while he is not discouraging hustle, he warned that wealth often comes with its own set of challenges.

He said, “Guys, I’m not saying don’t chase money, I’m just saying with money comes problems. People wey get am no go tell una the truth cuz they want to feel superior.”

Kizz Daniel’s public expression of his take on money and happiness comes days before the release of his highly anticipated album, “Uncle K”.

Tariffs will 'reset power of United States of America' – Commerce Secretary

By Dave Oludare Oso



Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said Sunday that President Trump's reciprocal tariffs will take effect later this week, suggesting they aren't open to negotiation after the announcement sent shockwaves through the investment world and sparked recession fears.

"The tariffs are coming. He announced that, and he wasn't kidding," Lutnick said of Trump on "Face the Nation with Margaret Brennan."

Last week, the president announced 10% tariffs on imports from all countries, along with increasing levies on dozens of countries that charge higher taxes on American exports, which are set to go into effect this week.

Meanwhile, financial markets saw their worst week since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, while Trump urged Americans to "hang tough."

Lutnick defended the president's newly

announced tariffs on Sunday, arguing that the policies will help protect American factories and "reset the power of the United States of America."

"This is a national security issue," Lutnick said, pointing to shortcomings in American manufacturing of things like medicines, ships and semiconductors, while adding that "we've got to start to protect ourselves."

The tariffs come after Trump previously delayed tariffs on Canada and Mexico amid negotiations with the countries over immigration policies. But Lutnick said that "there is no postponing" the new round of tariffs, saying "the president has made it crystal, crystal clear — this is the policy."

Lutnick acknowledged that "it is going to be a big change." But he argued that "the rest of the world has been ripping us off for all these many years," saying the president is "not going to take it anymore."

"This is the moment that the United States of America takes hold of itself, and Donald Trump has been talking about this his whole life," Lutnick said. "This is Donald Trump's agenda, and we're all here to help him execute."

Sen. John Barrasso, a Wyoming Republican who also appeared on "Face the Nation" Sunday, said tariffs are about a "monumental change in the direction of our government."

And he stressed that they're part of a larger picture that includes an effort by congressional Republicans to approve legislation unlocking key components of Trump's agenda, including extending his 2017 tax cuts.

"We have a comprehensive economic plan to get to a strong, healthy, growing economy for the American people," Barrasso said, calling the tariffs a "tool."

SAVAGE! Putin's fresh attack on Ukraine kills 9 children

By Dave Oludare Oso

Volodymyr Zelensky said the attack on the Ukrainian capital proves Russia “intends to continue the war and the killing”.

Russian air strikes hit the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, on Sunday, killing one person and injuring three others, while the death toll from Friday's devastating attack on Kryvyi Rih rose to 19, including nine children.

The Kyiv victim was found near the epicentre of the strike in the Darnytskyi district, where fires broke out in multiple non-residential areas, causing severe damage to buildings and cars.

In a statement on social media, Ukrainian



President Volodymyr Zelensky suggested the intensifying Russian attacks showed there is still insufficient international pressure on Moscow.

He said Russia has launched more than 1,460 guided aerial bombs, nearly 670 attack drones and more than 30 missiles at Ukraine in the past week alone.



Zelensky said: “These attacks are (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's response to all international diplomatic efforts. Each of our partners – the United States, all of Europe, the entire world — has seen that Russia intends to continue the war and the killing.”

Starmer vows to 'shelter British business from the storm' of US tariffs

By Dave Oludare Oso

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said his government is ready to use industrial policy to mitigate the impact of the tariffs that the Trump administration just imposed, adding that all options are being considered in Britain's response.

“We stand ready to use industrial policy to help shelter British business from the storm,” Starmer wrote in an op-ed published late Saturday in the Telegraph.

“Some people may feel uncomfortable about ... the idea the state should intervene directly,” the prime minister admitted. “But we simply cannot cling on to old sentiments when the world is turning this fast,” he said.

Starmer promised to “turbocharge” plans to improve the country's competitiveness this week.



On Wednesday, the U.S. imposed a baseline tariff of 10 percent on all U.K. imports, scuttling initial hopes that the country could secure an exemption from U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff campaign.

In his op-ed, Starmer said “the immediate priority is to keep calm and fight for the

best deal,” adding that all options are still on the table.

Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch backed the U.K. government's policy, saying on Sky that not retaliating “as a first response is the correct thing to do.”

“Retaliatory tariffs just escalate trade wars,” Badenoch said.

Starmer spoke with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Sunday to discuss the response to the U.S. tariffs.

Von der Leyen emphasized the EU's determination to work with partners “in responding to this new reality for the global economy,” according to a readout from the Commission.

Lammy attacks Badenoch for 'cheerleading' after Israel bans two Labour MPs

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

David Lammy has attacked Kemi Badenoch over "cheerleading" for Israel after it denied entry to two Labour MPs.

Yuan Yang and Abtisam Mohamed were deported on Saturday, after the Israeli immigration ministry said they planned to spread "anti-Israel hatred."

The decision was labelled "unacceptable" by Mr Lammy, the Foreign Secretary, who said he had raised it with his Israeli counterparts.

But Mrs Badenoch defended Israel's right to deny the MPs entry in an interview on Sunday and said that she had not been surprised.

The Conservative leader told Sky's Sunday Morning with Trevor Phillips: "I think that every country should be able to control its borders, and that's what Israel is doing, as far as I understand.

"They gave reasons why they didn't believe that those people should come in based on their laws. And it's really important that we respect other countries enforcing their borders.

"Those Labour MPs, according to the Israelis, were coming in to do something that they were not allowed to do, and so I respect that decision."

Asked whether denying Ms Yang and Ms Mohamed entry seemed "a bit odd", she replied: "I'm not surprised."

Lammy denounced Mrs Badenoch's remarks in a post on X and insisted he would stand by his position.

Tagging the Tory leader in his post, he said: "It's disgraceful you are cheerleading another country for detaining and deporting two British MPs. Do you say the same about Tory MPs



banned from China?

"This Government will continue to stand up for the rights of our MPs to speak their mind, whatever their party."

Responding to Lammy, Badenoch said: "Unlike China, Israel is our ally and a democracy. A good foreign secretary would be able to make that distinction.

"Perhaps Labour MPs could put UK national interest first and do their jobs instead of campaigning for airports in Kashmir or promoting Hamas propaganda in parliament.

Ms Mohamed and Ms Yang, who became MPs last year, had travelled to Israel as part of a wider British parliamentary delegation.

Since entering the Commons, they have both been highly critical of Israel's actions during the war in Gaza following the Oct 7 2023 terror attacks by Hamas.

Ms Mohamed voiced her support for a controversial judgment by the International Court of Justice last July, echoing its calls for Israel to "evacuate settlements and pay reparations".

In February, she organised a cross-party letter signed by 61 MPs and peers that urged the UK to ban the import of "all

goods made in whole or in part in Israel's illegal settlements".

Ms Mohamed further criticised Israel for restarting its war with Hamas on Mar 18 with a series of strikes that killed several senior Hamas officials.

The Palestinian health ministry, which is run by Hamas, said more than 400 people had died in the bombings.

"From midnight onwards, Israel breached the ceasefire in Gaza, killing 356 Palestinians, mostly women, children, and elderly," Ms Mohamed said.

"Tents, homes, and shelters bombed indiscriminately. Families buried under rubble, hospitals overwhelmed, bodies everywhere. Gaza is bleeding, and the world stays silent."

Ms Yang called for sanctions on Israeli ministers in January, telling MPs: "We would like more action and we do not think the current action is enough."

Defending its decision, the Embassy of Israel to the UK said: "Israel will not permit the entry of individuals who act against the state and its citizens, promote calls for its boycott, falsely accuse it or call for sanctions against its ministers and public officials.

Senior Trump officials give conflicting lines on tariffs after markets turmoil

By Dave Oludare Oso

Senior officials within Donald Trump's administration officials gave conflicting messages on Sunday about the US president's global tariffs that have caused a meltdown in stock markets, prompted warnings of a world recession and provoked rare expressions of dissent from within his Republican party.

Cabinet members fanned out across Sunday's political talk shows armed with talking points on Trump's 10% across-the-board tariff on almost all US imports, with higher rates targeted at about 60 countries. If the intention was to calm nerves with a clear statement of intent, then it backfired as top officials gave starkly contrasting signals.

Howard Lutnick, the billionaire commerce secretary, struck an aggressive note on CBS News's Face the Nation in which he portrayed the tariffs as here to stay.

Asked whether there was a chance that tariffs would be postponed to allow countries to negotiate a deal with Washington, he replied: "There is no postponing – they are definitely going to stay in place for days and weeks, that is sort of obvious."

Lutnick added that Trump intended to "reset global trade".

"The president has made it crystal, crystal clear," he said.

However, two other cabinet members gave the opposite take, suggesting that negotiations with individual countries were very much on the cards.

Scott Bessent, the treasury secretary, told Meet the Press on NBC News that Trump had "created maximum leverage for himself, and more than 50 countries have approached the administration about lowering their non-tariff trade barriers, lowering their tariffs, stopping currency manipulation".

The agriculture secretary, Brooke Rollins, echoed Bessent by flagging up possible talks. "We've got 50 countries that are burning the phone lines into the White House," she told



CNN's State of the Union.

The scale of Trump's tariffs have sent shockwaves around the world, catching US investors as well as top Republican politicians by surprise. In just two days last week, more than \$6tn was wiped off Wall Street's market value.

Trump told US consumers in a post on his Truth Social network to "hang tough, it won't be easy, but the end result will be historic". Yet as he spent the weekend golfing at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, his unprecedented tax increase goaded senior Republicans to speak out, in a vanishingly rare display of criticism of their leader.

Trump's former vice-president Mike Pence denounced the tariffs as the "largest peacetime tax hike in US history". Thom Tillis, the Republican senator from North Carolina, said: "Anyone who says there may be a little bit of pain before we get things right needs to talk to farmers who are one crop away from bankruptcy."

Ted Cruz, senator from Texas, warned of a "bloodbath" for Republicans in the 2026 midterm elections should the tariffs force the US into recession.

Democrats are detecting opportunity in such unusual challenges to Trump from within his

own party. Adam Schiff, the Democratic senator from California, floated on Meet the Press what sounded like a draft campaign strategy for the midterms.

"If we head into a recession, it will be the Trump recession," he said. Of Trump, Schiff also said: "He's wrecking our economy."

Tim Walz, the governor of Minnesota who ran as the Democrats' vice-presidential candidate in last November's defeat to Trump, called the tariffs "really, really terrifying" on State of the Union. He warned that if you punish dependable trading partners like Mexico and Canada, "they don't come back overnight."

As the tariffs kick in, analysts are increasingly pointing to the chances of a recession, which is normally assessed as being two consecutive quarters of falling GDP. The head of economic research at JP Morgan, Bruce Kasman, has raised the probability of global recession to 60%, a figure that he included in a memo titled There Will Be Blood.

Larry Summers, US treasury secretary during Bill Clinton's presidency, called the tariffs the "biggest self-inflicted wound we've put on our economy in history". Speaking on ABC News's This Week, he gave his own estimate of the total loss to US consumers at \$30tn – equivalent to doubling petrol prices at the pump.

Russian spy sensors found hidden in UK waters

By **Fatimah Idera**

Russian sensors suspected of trying to spy on British nuclear submarines are reported to have been found hidden in the seas around the UK.

The British military made the discovery after a number of them washed ashore and were located by the Royal Navy, minehunter ships. They are being seen as a potential threat to national security.

The situation has not previously been made public but it has been reported and was looking to try and collect intelligence on the UK's four Vanguard class submarines, which carry nuclear missiles.

At least one of the submarines is at sea as part of Britain's continuous at-sea deterrent.

Moscow has a fleet of specialist submarines which are reported to be better equipped than Britain and its Nato allies in terms of both seabed warfare and espionage.

The Ministry of Defence suspects Russia deployed the spy gear as part of a wider campaign of greyzone warfare, targeting cables, pipelines and undersea assets.

Last year, Russian ships were repeatedly spotted near sensitive infrastructure — including the Yantar, a suspected spy vessel seen lurking around pipelines and internet cables in the Irish Sea in November.

Royal Navy warships and RAF Poseidon spy planes shadowed the Yantar as it hovered over deep-sea cables between Dublin and Liverpool.

That same month, RAF fighter jets were scrambled to intercept a Russian warplane over the North Sea.



Throughout the conflict with Ukraine, Russia has been stepping up surveillance and sabotage of underwater internet connections, energy pipelines and military cables, which are key to the West.

In 15 months, there have been at least 11 internet cables that have suffered damage in the Baltic Sea, partly because anchors have been dragged across the seabed by ships.

“You really need to keep the [engine] power on to drag, so it is a deliberate act,” a defence insider said.

Nordic Warden, a reaction system that uses AI to track the whereabouts of the Russian shadow fleet, was triggered by the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force when a cable between Estonia and Finland was damaged in December.

A senior serving British military figure added: “There should be no doubt, there is a war raging in the Atlantic. This is a game of cat and mouse that has continued since the ending of the Cold War, and is now heating up again. We are seeing phenomenal amounts of Russian activity.”

Russia's spy ship Yantar drew attention when it appeared close to UK shores last

year and its underwater research programme is largely overseen by the Main Directorate for Deep-Sea Research (Gugl).

“It's a bit like the space race,” said one senior UK source. “This is a world clouded in secrecy and subterfuge, it's very hard to get absolute clarity. But there's enough smoke to suggest something is on fire somewhere.”

A senior official said: “We've got to play by the rules of the game. But whereas before we were playing it nicely, now we're being more muscular.”

An MoD spokesman said: “We are committed to enhancing the security of critical offshore infrastructure.

“Alongside our NATO and Joint Expeditionary Force allies, we are strengthening our response to ensure that Russian ships and aircraft cannot operate in secrecy near the UK or near NATO territory, harnessing new technologies like AI and coordinating patrols with our allies.

“And our continuous-at-sea nuclear deterrent continues to patrol the world's oceans undetected as it has done for 56 years.”

US revokes all visas held by South Sudanese passport holders

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Trump administration is revoking all visas held by South Sudanese passport holders over the African nation's failure to accept repatriated citizens.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio made the announcement Sunday, calling the action part of the administration's efforts to ramp up immigration enforcement.



"Effective immediately, the United States Department of State is taking actions to revoke all visas held by South Sudanese passport holders and prevent further issuance to prevent entry into the United States by South Sudanese passport holders," Rubio said in a press statement.

"Every country must accept the return of its citizens in a timely manner when another country, including the United States, seeks to remove them," the statement read.

Rubio added that the new stringent policy will only be reviewed when South Sudan is in cooperation

with the Trump administration's policy.

In a post on X, Rubio further added, "Our efforts to engage diplomatically with the South Sudanese Government have been rebuffed.

"Effective immediately, all visa appointments are cancelled, no new visas will be issued, no existing visas will be effective, and hence NO ONE from South Sudan will be entering the United States on a visa until this matter is resolved," Rubio concluded in the post.

South Sudan currently operates

under a transitional government that is seeking to avoid an all-out civil war in the Central African nation. It was not clear how many South Sudanese citizens in the US this would affect.

Mediators met in capital city Juba earlier this week to avert the possible civil conflagration that was reignited after First Vice President Riek Machar was placed under house arrest.

Machar was detained after weeks of fighting which broke out on Mar. 3, between the military and the White Army militia, which occupies a part of the country known as the Upper Nile.

Washington worries Trump could bail out Zuckerberg

By Dave Oludare Oso

Less than two weeks before the start of a landmark antitrust trial against tech giant Meta, the growing relationship between President Donald Trump and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg is stoking fears in Washington that the White House could pull the plug on the whole case.

The trial, scheduled for April 14, is the culmination of a nearly six-year investigation and legal battle. Launched by the Federal Trade Commission during Trump's first term and advanced by former President Joe Biden's antitrust enforcers, it could ultimately force Meta to sell off Instagram and WhatsApp — a colossally expensive and complex maneuver that would effectively dismantle the \$1.3 trillion company.

The FTC rarely abandons an ongoing antitrust case, regardless of who's in the White House.

But a series of events over the past week has the Washington antitrust world buzzing about the fate of the case — worried that the tech industry's new closeness with Trump, and specifically Meta's rapid-fire concessions to Republicans over the past few months, could pay dividends by eliminating Washington's threat to break up the social media giant.

On Wednesday, Zuckerberg unexpectedly sat down with Trump in the Oval Office, reportedly to appeal for a settlement of the antitrust case.

That same day, FTC Chair Andrew Ferguson, now in charge of the case, told reporters at an event that the agency was "raring to go" against Meta. Then, asked directly if he would drop the case at Trump's direction, he said he would "obey lawful orders" — and otherwise refused to entertain the hypothetical.

Trump gave Ferguson unilateral power over the FTC's decisions by abruptly firing the agency's two Democratic commissioners in



mid-March — an unprecedented move that clears the way for Ferguson and his sole GOP colleague to make partisan decisions with no Democratic opposition.

FTC spokespeople did not respond when asked to comment on concerns that Trump could order Ferguson to drop the Meta case, or if there had been any communications between Ferguson and Trump on the issue.

Doha Mekki, a former Department of Justice antitrust official who served in the first Trump term as well as under Biden, said it was "worrisome" that Zuckerberg had met directly with Trump, "on the eve of trial, no less."

Asked about Wednesday's sit-down, Meta spokesperson Andy Stone said Zuckerberg is "continuing the meetings he's been holding with the administration on American technology leadership."

He would not say if the upcoming FTC trial was discussed.

A White House spokesperson did not respond to questions asking whether Trump would try to force FTC Chair Andrew Ferguson into a settlement, or what the president would ask from Meta in return.

Under the old rules of Washington, a pullback on the case shouldn't even be possible. The FTC has a long history of operating independently of the White House.

But when Trump fired the agency's two Democratic commissioners last month, he cleared the way for the FTC's remaining two Republicans to withdraw the Meta case or enter into a settlement at his request.

"Each of those would require commission action, and so you would need to take a vote," former FTC Chair Lina Khan told reporters at an antitrust summit convened by the venture-capital firm Y Combinator on Wednesday. "It is still messy, but it definitely eases the path for them to do something like that."

"Facebook would prefer this case just went away very conveniently, so I wouldn't be surprised if there was pressure being applied," said Khan.

Her concerns were echoed by an unlikely ally who also spoke at the summit — Steve Bannon, the influential far-right figure who served as Trump's chief strategist during his first term.

"This is not a random event that Zuckerberg happens to be in the Oval Office while this thing's being done," Bannon told reporters on Wednesday.

While expressing hope that Trump won't cave, he said the president is "under tremendous pressure [from] Big Tech oligarchs."

"It's a constant battle," said Bannon.

Musk hopes US, EU get to 'zero-tariff situation'

By Dave Oludare Oso

Just days after Trump launched his trade war, Musk envisions a transatlantic free-trade zone 'at the end of the day.'

Tesla CEO and U.S. government official Elon Musk on Saturday backed eventually ending all tariffs and creating a free-trade zone between the U.S. and the European Union, just days after U.S. President Donald Trump slapped hefty tariffs on the EU and most of the rest of the world.

Musk's comments, made in a video-streamed interview at a congress organized by Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini and his far-right League party, followed Trump's imposition of a 20 percent tariff on all imports from the EU.

"At the end of the day, I hope it is agreed that both Europe and the United States should move ideally in my view to a zero-tariff situation, effectively creating a free-trade zone," Musk said.

It's a sign of dissent from Musk with the current U.S. administration policy. Musk has been leading cost-cutting efforts in the U.S. government through his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and is a close Trump adviser.

NEW DAILY PRIME on Wednesday reported that Trump has told his inner circle that Musk would step away from his government role in the coming weeks.



Musk's Tesla has been underperforming in recent months, and the carmaker's share price has almost halved since December. The company last week posted a far steeper-than-expected decline in car deliveries in the first quarter, with sales collapsing in several European markets — a sign that Musk's political activities could impact his companies.

The Tesla CEO lost billions in the wake of Trump's Tuesday tariff announcement. Tesla relies on imported parts from China, which Trump slammed with a 34 percent tariff.

In Saturday's interview, Musk also said he wanted "more freedom of people to move between Europe and North America."

Musk also attacked Europe's

regulatory burden and said it was kept in place to protect some very large companies.

"There are too many rules and regulations that make it very difficult to create a company and do too much to protect large companies at the expense of small to medium-sized companies," he said. Brussels is "amplifying" that, and "radical deregulation is necessary," Musk said.

Separately, Musk took an apparent swing at senior White House aide Peter Navarro — one of the chief cheerleaders of Trump's tariff plans.

In the early hours of Saturday morning, Musk seemed to take jabs at Navarro on his social media platform X under a video in which he explained the Trump administration's logic in levying tariffs during a CNN appearance.

Drug-sniffing dogs find record haul of cocaine hidden aboard ship

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

South Korea discovered and seized two tons of cocaine hidden aboard a Norwegian-flagged vessel, authorities told AFP on Sunday, marking the country's largest drug bust to date.

The Korea Coast Guard said they had found two tons of what they suspect to be pure cocaine on a Norwegian-flagged ship which had departed from Mexico and made stops in Ecuador, Panama and China.

The operation was launched after South Korean authorities received intelligence from U.S. agencies — the FBI and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) — that the vessel was carrying hidden narcotics.

The Korea Coast Guard and Korea Customs Service coordinated a large-scale search operation “consisting of a joint search team of 90 officers... along with two drug-sniffing dog units,” the Korea Coast Guard said.

After the vessel docked at an east coast port in South Korea, the team immediately boarded the vessel and “discovered a hidden compartment behind the ship’s engine room.”

The drugs were packed in 56 sacks, each holding some 30 to 40 kilograms (about 66 to 88 pounds) of the drug, authorities said, bringing the total haul to around two tons.

“Preliminary field tests confirmed the substances as suspected cocaine,” the Korea Coast Guard official told AFP.



“The seizure is the largest in history, about five times bigger than the previous record which was 404 kilograms of methamphetamine,” a Korea Customs Service official told AFP.

The estimated street value is \$697 million, they added.

Authorities have launched a joint investigation team to question the vessel’s captain and crew about the origin and intended destination of the drugs, and the route used to transport them.

Investigators also said they are looking into potential ties to international drug trafficking syndicates and will expand cooperation with the FBI and HSI.

South Korea has long ranked among

the countries with low drug use globally, thanks to its strict laws and strong social stigma.

The operation follows other major cocaine seizures on ships — and in the open seas — around the globe this year. Just last week, Portuguese police said officers recently confiscated nearly 6.5 tons of cocaine from a semi-submersible vessel, or so-called “narco sub,” intercepted off the Azores while bound for the Iberian peninsula.

In February, divers in Poland discovered more than 220 pounds of cocaine on the bottom of the Baltic Sea. That same month, a semi-submersible vessel loaded with over 5,000 pounds of cocaine was intercepted off the Pacific coast of Colombia.

Man attacks children with meat cleaver before being shot by Police in NY

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Multiple people were attacked with a meat cleaver in Brooklyn on Sunday morning, including several children, before the deranged attacker was shot by police, sources said.

The violence erupted around 10 a.m. on 84th Street, when the man attacked several people, including a woman and three girls between the ages of 8 and 16, before being stopped by the NYPD, the sources told The Post.

“I was watching through the window and the girl covered in blood came out,” said a neighbor who asked to be identified only as Maria. “And then there was another girl. The two girls were just covered in blood.

The violence erupted around 10:30 am on 84th Street.

“I was shaking. I’m still shaking now,” she said. “I don’t usually see them. They just moved here. I lived here seven years and there are a lot of new people moving here.”

Disturbing images from the scene obtained by The Post show at least one of the girls outside the building covered in blood from head to toe — while the suspect is seen being wheeled out on a stretcher.

Cops responding to a 911 call opened fire on the suspect after he



ignored their orders to drop the knife, according to the sources.

The suspect lunged at the cops with the weapon and was shot multiple times, leaving him with life-threatening injuries.

The man attacked at least a half a dozen people, including several kids between the ages of 8 and 16, before being stopped by the NYPD.

All of the wounded people were brought to Maimonides Medical Center. Obtained by the NY Post

“They brought out a guy on a stretcher, all bloody without a shirt,” neighbor Humbert Huerta said. “I don’t know who it was, but they shot him twice. They took him out and put him in the

ambulance. Probably 40 years old.”

All of the wounded were rushed to Maimonides Medical Center, where at least one youngster is now in critical condition, the sources said.

The sources said the mother of at least some of the children was not believed to be home at the time of the incident.

State Assemblyman Lester Chang, who represents the Brooklyn neighborhood, said one of the victims may be a babysitter.

Police were expected to hold a press conference at the scene on Sunday afternoon.

Britain's hypersonic missile test hailed as critical advance for defence

By Fatimah Idera

Britain has completed a successful test of a new engine for hypersonic missiles in what marks a critical step for defence in Europe.

The latest UK hypersonic research, which could see weapons travelling at several thousand miles per hour, has reached a landmark moment after it was established that the new engine would power a cutting-edge hypersonic cruise missile, covering greater ranges than a conventional rocket.

The engine, which successfully demonstrated the performance of high-speed air-breathing – using air for combustion rather than a separate onboard oxygen device – is set to greatly advance the UK's hypersonic weapon capabilities.

The Ministry of Defence revealed that the research, which took place in recent months, aims to support delivery of a hypersonic weapon technology demonstrator by 2030 through the department's Team Hypersonics (UK) programme.

It said the engine will provide a transformational capability that delivers operational advantage for the future UK armed forces.

As part of a joint team led by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the US Air Force Research Laboratory, 233 successful static test runs were conducted at the Nasa Langley Research Centre in Virginia, USA.

The testing was part of the UK's Hypersonic Weapons Programme, which took place over six weeks involving real-time data analysis to refine design aspects and boost propulsive performance, with support from industry partners including UK



SME Gas Dynamics Ltd.

The Telegraph last year revealed that under the previous Conservative government, Britain planned to equip the Armed Forces with a home-grown hypersonic cruise missile by the end of the decade.

To fight adversaries, a missile that could reach speeds exceeding Mach 5 was desired to catch up with China, Russia and the US.

John Healey, the Defence Secretary, said: "We are living in a more dangerous world and it has never been more important for us to innovate and stay ahead of our adversaries, equipping our forces with the technologies of the future.

"This milestone moment on hypersonics research, supported by British scientists and British small businesses, demonstrates another crucial area where we are working in lockstep with the United States to bolster our Armed Forces and strengthen our deterrence."

Dstl's chief executive, Paul Hollinshead, described the milestone as a "critical advancement" in the UK's defence, which "reinforces our standing in the Aukus hypersonic weapon development collaboration".

"The success of these tests highlights the UK's commitment to technological leadership and innovation in this crucial area," he added.

At the end of last year, the UK, the US and Australia reached a deal to accelerate the delivery of "battle-winning" hypersonic missiles.

Under the second pillar of the Aukus submarine pact, it was agreed that the three nations will develop, build and test projectiles that travel five-times faster than the speed of sound.

The countries are pooling expertise and resources to make sure weapons, launchers and defensive systems are delivered ahead of schedule.

Netanyahu heads to Washington for meeting with Trump

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

President Donald Trump will meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Monday, several people familiar with the meeting confirmed to CBS News on Saturday.

The leaders are expected to focus on the latest Israeli military operations in Gaza and new U.S. tariffs announced by Trump against Israel and other countries.

Netanyahu's office later confirmed in a statement that he had received an invitation from Trump and will fly to the U.S. Sunday, saying the two leaders will also discuss "Israeli-Turkish relations, the Iranian threat, and the fight at the International Criminal Court."

"The Prime Minister appreciates the personal and warm relationship with President Trump, and thanks him for inviting him to be the first leader to meet with him after the imposition of global tariffs, just as he was the first leader to meet with him after entering the White House," the statement read.

This would be their second meeting of Trump's second term. The two last met in Washington, D.C. in February, when Trump unveiled his plan for the U.S. to "take over Gaza" and turn it into "the Riviera of the Middle East."

The meeting by the two leaders comes amid a stepped-up offensive in Gaza that the Israeli military said is aimed at putting pressure on Hamas to release the remaining hostages and, eventually, expel the militant group.

Israel announces new corridors

Meanwhile, Israel says it has deployed troops to a newly established security corridor across Southern Gaza. Netanyahu announced the new Morag Corridor on Saturday and suggested it would cut off the southern city of Rafah, which Israel has ordered evacuated, from the rest of Gaza.

A military statement Saturday said troops with the 36th Division had been deployed in the corridor. It was not immediately



clear how many had deployed or where exactly the corridor was located. Morag is the name of a Jewish settlement that once stood between Rafah and Khan Younis, and Netanyahu suggested it would run between the cities.

Maps published by Israeli media showed the new corridor running the width of the narrow coastal strip from east to west.

Netanyahu said it would be "a second Philadelphi corridor," referring to the Gaza side of the border with Egypt further south, which has been under Israeli control since last May.

Israel has also reasserted control over the Netzarim corridor that cuts off the northern third of Gaza, including Gaza City, from the rest of the strip. The Philadelphi and Netzarim corridors run from the Israeli border to the Mediterranean Sea.

Hamas says situation "highly dangerous" for hostages

Hamas, which had long been designated a terrorist organization by Israel and the U.S. even before it carried out the brutal Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel that sparked the war in Gaza, said Friday that Israel's ongoing offensive in Gaza was creating a "highly dangerous" situation for the hostages still held there. It warned that half of the living captives were in areas where the Israeli army had ordered evacuations.

"Half of the living Israeli (hostages) are located in areas that the Israeli occupation army has requested to be

evacuated in recent days," Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas's armed wing, said in a statement, AFP reported. "We have decided not to transfer these (hostages)... but (this situation) is highly dangerous to their lives."

Hamas says it will only release the remaining 59 hostages — 24 of whom are believed to be alive — in exchange for the release of more Palestinian prisoners, a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli pullout from Gaza. The group has rejected demands that it lay down its arms or leave the territory.

Israel has issued sweeping evacuation orders for parts of northern Gaza ahead of expected expansions in its ground operations. The U.N. humanitarian office said around 280,000 Palestinians have been displaced since Israel abruptly ended a ceasefire with Hamas last month that had been brokered by the U.S., Egypt and Qatar.

To pressure Hamas, Israel has imposed a monthlong blockade on food, fuel and humanitarian aid that has left civilians facing acute shortages as supplies dwindle — a tactic that rights groups say is a war crime.

Israel said earlier this week that enough food had entered Gaza during a six-week truce to sustain the territory's roughly 2 million Palestinians for a long time.

UK bans £2.2bn 'sneaky' fees, fake reviews for online products

By Dave Oludare Oso

Sneaky fees estimated to cost consumers £2.2 billion a year are to be banned from today (Sunday) under new UK consumer protection laws.

Businesses, including travel websites, ticket agencies and food delivery apps, will be required to include any mandatory fees in the headline price. Research has found these fees can be more than 25% of the product price.

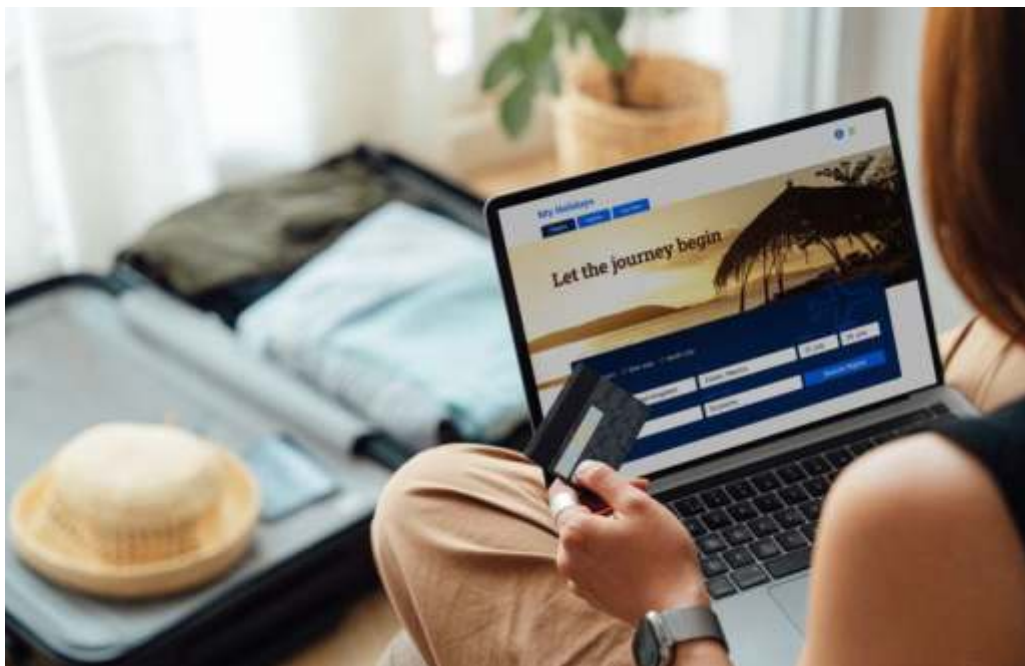
The ban comes into force under reforms in the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumer Act 2024, passed under the previous government. The new laws also impose bans on the use or commissioning of fake reviews.

A report for the Department for Business and Trade in September 2023 found that in the entertainment sector, 45% of providers included at least one mandatory "dripped" fee.

The figures were 21% for the holiday and hospitality sector and 3% for retail, excluding delivery charges. It also found consumers are commonly required to click through 10 website pages or more before they can finally make the chosen purchase. They can face a range of optional purchases and mandatory fees before finally being able to complete the transaction.

Under the new requirements, a one-time installation fee for broadband must be included in the total price. Any administration or booking fees on ticket websites must also be flagged upfront.

The new laws only cover unavoidable fees. Optional fees, such as airline seats and luggage upgrades for flights, are not included.



Justin Madders, minister for employment rights, competition and markets, said: "From today consumers can confidently make purchases knowing they are protected against fake reviews and dripped pricing.

Justin Madders, minister for employment rights, competition and markets

"These changes will give consumers more power and control over their hard-earned cash, as well as help to establish a level playing field by deterring bad actors that undercut compliant businesses."

The value of positive online reviews has spawned a small industry in generating glowing, but fake endorsements of products and services. These now face a crackdown, which will be enforced by the Competition and Markets Authority.

A research study published by the Department for Business and Trade in April 2023 found that at least one in 10 of all product reviews on third party e-commerce platforms are likely to be fake – most positive and designed to encourage consumer purchases.

Officials say the new laws will prevent

diners turning up to a restaurant with 5-star reviews "only to be served 1-star quality food". It will also reduce the chances of ordering a product that never turns up or does not resemble the marketing materials, despite glowing reviews.

Amazon has filed multiple lawsuits against brokers who attempt to facilitate fake reviews, often in exchange for money or free products. The online retailer says it has successfully stopped millions of fake reviews from being posted on its platform.

Reviews were found to be used by 90% of consumers and contributed to the £217bn spent in online retail markets in 2023, according to the Department for Business and Trade.

Businesses will now be accountable for the reviews on their pages, and will be legally required to take steps to prevent and remove the publication of fake reviews.

Ministers say that the laws will also help prevent compliant businesses from being undercut by those seeking to unfairly profit from consumers with hidden additional prices and fake reviews.

UK police charge comedian Russell Brand with rape, sexual assaults

By **Fatimah Idera**

British police on Friday charged Russell Brand with rape and sexual assault following an 18-month investigation sparked when four women alleged they had been assaulted by the controversial comedian.

London's Metropolitan Police force said Brand, 50, faces one count of rape, one of indecent assault, one of oral rape and two of sexual assault.

Brand denied engaging in "non-consensual" sexual activity.

The alleged offenses involve four women and took place between 1999 and 2005 — one in the English seaside town of Bournemouth and the other three in the Westminster area of central London.

Brand, who was once one of Britain's most high-profile broadcasters and is the former husband of U.S. pop singer Katy Perry, denied the allegations when they first emerged in 2023 and said he had never had non-consensual sex.

After the charges, Brand said on X that while he had been a fool when he was younger, "what I never was was a rapist. I have never engaged in non-consensual activity". He started his message by describing the law being used as "a kind of weapon".

Police said Brand, who lives in Oxfordshire, southern England, was charged with one count of rape, one count of indecent assault, one count of oral rape and two counts of sexual assault.

Brand is due to appear in a London court for a first hearing on May 2,



police said.

In the 2000s, he was a regular on British screens, known for his flamboyant style and appearance. He worked for the BBC and starred in a number of films including "Get Him to the Greek" before marrying Perry in 2010. They divorced 14 months later.

By the early 2020s he had faded from mainstream culture, appearing primarily on his internet channel where he airs his views on U.S. politics and free speech.

In September 2023, he returned to the headlines when the Sunday Times newspaper and Channel 4 TV's documentary show "Dispatches" reported the rape allegations.

They said four women had accused Brand of sexual assaults, including a rape, between 2006 and 2013. London's Met police opened a sex crimes investigation some weeks later.

Brand said then he "absolutely refuted" the allegations.

"These allegations pertain to the time when I was working in the mainstream, when I was in the newspapers all the time, when I was in the movies. And as I've written about extensively in my books, I was very, very promiscuous," he said.

Police said the investigation remains open and urged anyone with relevant information to contact the force.

Known for his unbridled and risqué standup routines, Brand hosted shows on radio and television, wrote memoirs charting his battles with drugs and alcohol, appeared in several Hollywood movies and was briefly married to pop star Katy Perry between 2010 and 2012.

In recent years, Brand has largely disappeared from mainstream media but has built up a large following online with videos mixing wellness and conspiracy theories. He recently said he had moved to the United States.

Former New York Post editor, Bob McManus dies at 81

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Bob McManus, the wry and eminently fair voice of the New York Post for over a decade, died Saturday at NYU Langone Hospital. He was 81.

McManus was a Postie for 29 years — the last 12 as the influential editorial page editor, where government waste, public and private corruption, and hypocrisy in all its forms felt the “pain of his withering gaze,” as the paper noted when he retired in 2013.

“He was a journalist’s journalist,” said former Post state editor Fredric U. Dicker.

McManus died three days short of his 82nd birthday of complications from bile duct cancer, his family said.

Robert LaVelle McManus Jr. was born in Buffalo, the oldest of nine siblings to Robert L. McManus Sr. and Jeanette Manning. He was introduced to journalism early in life by his father, an award-winning reporter at Binghamton and Albany newspapers who went on to become a top aide and press secretary for the late Gov. Nelson Rockefeller.

“Bob had memories of going to work with his dad on Saturdays,” said Mary McManus, his wife of 24 years. “Newspapers were in his blood.”

McManus was raised in Binghamton and, after a bout with polio at 12, moved to Albany with his family. He graduated Vincentian Institute high school, where by his own admission he was “academically undistinguished,” his wife said.

He was always a hard worker — in high school he finagled a full-time job as manager of the “pets and plants” department at W.T. Grants department store while a student.

After graduation he enlisted in the US Navy and served four years — first on a destroyer, the USS Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., and then on a submarine, the USS Sablefish. He was proud of his time in the highly-selective “silent service,” and was



a member of the NYC Base of the United States Submarine Veterans.

He returned to Albany, and got his first crack at the news business, as a copy boy at the morning Times Union, while he took classes at Siena College.

He quickly moved up the ranks to become an award-winning investigative reporter, exposing corruption and malfeasance on topics like snow removal and Medicaid, friends and family recalled.

Longtime friend EJ McMahon, an adjunct fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, described McManus’ writing style as “pithy amalgam of Damon Runyon, Raymond Chandler and Red Smith.”

“He was the last of a dying breed in what’s left of journalism — underneath the editorial writer and columnist was an old-school, no-nonsense reporter, a stickler for accuracy and fairness.”

He became the Albany paper’s city editor and projects editor in the 1970s before being persuaded in 1984 by Dicker to move to Manhattan and join the New York Post’s editorial page. In 2000, he was named editorial page editor.

McManus was “always after the truth, and never let his personal views, or his abiding cynicism, get in the way of that pursuit,” Dicker said.

The month before the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, McManus ran an editorial thundering that Washington was fundamentally ignoring al Qaeda despite escalating attacks. With Ground Zero still burning, he felt obliged to postpone his wedding for a month, recalled his successor, current Post Editorial Page Editor Mark Cunningham.

“Bob was a pro; a sharp classic dresser; an avid reader all across his ridiculously wide range of interests; a guy who loved to craft a good line; a man who cared about the truth and despised phonies; always aware that our mission is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable,” recalled Cunningham.

He especially “loved” giving opinions about George Pataki’s 12-year tenure as governor, and was sometimes quick to needle Pataki by inserting “blah, blah, blah” whenever writing editorials discussing the administration’s rationale on state policy issues, recalled his wife.

Manchester derby ends in frustrating 0-0 stalemate

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Old Trafford witnessed a subdued Manchester derby as Manchester United and Manchester City battled to an uneventful 0-0 draw, a result that reflected the struggles of both sides in a season marred by inconsistency and unmet expectations.

Played out in front of a packed crowd of 73,738, the match lacked the drama and flair historically associated with one of English football's fiercest rivalries. With both teams needing a win for vastly different reasons — United to climb out of mid-table obscurity and City to secure a vital Champions League spot — neither side managed to find the quality needed in the final third.

City Threaten, but Onana Stands Tall

City, fifth in the table and feeling the pressure from Newcastle United just behind them with two games in hand, came closest to breaking the deadlock through Omar Marmoush. However, the Egyptian forward failed to convert two clear chances, both denied by United goalkeeper Andre Onana, who turned in a solid performance despite some nervy moments.

Kevin De Bruyne, playing his final Manchester derby at Old Trafford after announcing his upcoming exit at the end of the season, showed flashes of his old brilliance. Operating in the No. 10 role, he crafted half-chances and attempted several incisive passes, but lacked the sharpness that once made him the Premier League's most feared playmaker.

At 33, the Belgian captain's influence seems to be waning, and Sunday's match served as a poignant reminder of the passing of an era for City fans.



United Still Toothless Upfront

For United, the story was all too familiar. A promising start saw Alejandro Garnacho storm down the flank in the opening seconds, only to be brought down just outside the box by Ruben Dias. That early spark, however, failed to ignite a sustained attacking threat.

Joshua Zirkzee came closest late in the game, meeting a cross from Patrick Dorgu with a sharp effort that forced a save from Ederson. But like so many United attacks this season, it ended without a goal.

The Red Devils have now failed to score in 11 of their 31 league games this campaign — a damning statistic that highlights their dire need for a clinical striker. Rasmus Hojlund started the match but barely got a sniff of goal, while midfielders Manuel Ugarte and Dorgu squandered half-chances due to poor technique and hesitation.

Despite a more organized defensive display than in recent outings — with Onana, Lisandro Martínez, and Raphael Varane holding firm — United remain destined for their lowest-ever Premier League points total.

An Emotional Moment Before Kick-Off

Before the action got underway, there was a heartwarming moment that captured the spirit of the game more than anything that followed on the pitch. United captain Bruno Fernandes led out seven-year-old Bobby Moore from Belfast, who became the club's first wheelchair-using mascot.

The invitation followed a viral video of Bobby celebrating a Fernandes goal during a previous derby, and the gesture from the Portuguese international earned admiration from fans of both sides.

Final Thoughts

A draw does little for either team's ambitions. City remain in fifth and now look nervously over their shoulder, knowing that Newcastle could leapfrog them with games in hand. United, meanwhile, continue to drift aimlessly through the second half of the season, with fans and pundits alike calling for a major summer overhaul.

For both clubs, this derby did not ignite title races or cement bragging rights. Instead, it served as a reminder that evolution — and perhaps revolution — is needed at the top and bottom ends of Manchester.

Chelsea facing punishment after breaching UEFA financial rules

By Dave Oludare Oso

Chelsea are facing another ban after breaking UEFA's rules for limits on losses for the 2023/24 season.

Why are Chelsea facing a ban?

According to The Times, the Blues could face a ban from European competitions for breaching limits on financial losses.

The report adds that UEFA did not allow the club to include the sale of the women's team to a sister company for a world record value of £200 million as income.

It also adds that the club is in talks with the European football governing body which could lead to a fine and a spending plan for the next three years.

The plan includes tougher punishment if they breach the limit again. One punishment they could receive is a ban from European competitions for one season. The outcome of the settlements will be made public in May.

UEFA allows clubs to make losses of a maximum of £170m and Chelsea have made a loss of £358m. At least three other clubs have reportedly breached those rules.

The sale of the women's team and



hotels helped the Blues avoid breaching the Premier League's profit and sustainability rules (PSR).

Since Todd Boehly's takeover in 2022, Chelsea have spent no less than €1.32 billion, per Transfermarkt. Despite the spending spree, performances on the pitch have been below par.

Can Chelsea qualify for Champions League?

Chelsea made a brilliant start to the season under new coach Enzo Maresca. At some point, they were considered Premier League contenders, but a poor run of results saw their hopes quickly vanish.

They are still in contention for the UEFA Conference League and the top four. Maresca's team are fourth in the table with 52 points with eight games remaining.

Champions League football has

become important for teams since the introduction of PSR. Revenue generated from the competition has helped clubs spend more on players.

'We are there [in the top four] – and we have been there all season – so it's our duty to try to finish there. And as I've said, this club belongs in the Champions League so we have to do everything in our hands possible to bring the club there,' the Chelsea boss stressed.

The Blues last won a major trophy in 2021 and could end up with their first trophy this season. They are in the quarter-final of the Conference League and are favourites to lift the trophy.

Nottingham Forest and Manchester City are the favourites to finish the third and fourth spots. Chelsea have a 27.05% chance to finish in the top four.

Liverpool's title hopes intact despite Fulham defeat

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Liverpool's historic unbeaten run has finally come to an end, but despite a 3-1 defeat at Fulham, their quest for a record-equalling 20th top-flight title remains very much on track. With just seven matches left to play, the Reds need a maximum of 11 points to secure the Premier League crown, which could be wrapped up as early as April 20 if results fall in their favor.

Under head coach Arne Slot, Liverpool have dominated the league this season, leading second-placed Arsenal by a comfortable 11 points. Slot acknowledged that the defensive errors that led to their first away defeat of the season were uncharacteristic but remains confident that his team will bounce back in their remaining fixtures.

Despite the loss, Liverpool's position is still secure. Even if Arsenal had matched their points tally from last season, the Reds would still hold a two-point advantage. Many believe that Liverpool's consistency, rather than brilliance, has been the key to their success, with former



players like Gary Neville and Micah Richards praising their efficient, albeit not dazzling, performances.

As the title race heats up, Liverpool's remaining matches include tough fixtures against West Ham, Leicester, Tottenham, Chelsea, Arsenal, Brighton, and Crystal Palace. With just 18 points needed to surpass 90 points, Liverpool are on track to secure their first Premier League title in over 30 years, but they will need to stay focused and avoid further slip-ups. The

Premier League has seen a number of its traditional giants falter, giving Liverpool the perfect opportunity to seize the crown.

Now, the question remains: can Liverpool wrap up the title in record time, or will a late challenge from Arsenal or Manchester City make things more complicated? Only time will tell, but with the Reds' current form, the Premier League title appears to be within their grasp.

Saints' historic slide: Record relegation caps dismal season

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Southampton's painful Premier League campaign has come to a premature but unsurprising end, with a 3-1 defeat at Tottenham confirming their relegation — a full seven matches before the season's end.

In doing so, the Saints have etched an unfortunate place in Premier League history: no team has ever been relegated this early. And now, with just 10 points from 31 games, they are in danger of surpassing Derby County's infamous 2007-08 campaign as the worst in top-flight history.

Manager Ivan Juric, who arrived in December to steady a sinking ship, now finds his own future uncertain. "We'll see what everyone thinks," he said post-match, acknowledging the gravity of the



club's collapse. His 14-game tenure has produced just one win.

Southampton's season began in disarray — eight losses from their first nine games set the tone. The club cycled through three managers, conceding 74 goals and scoring just 23. Those numbers are the worst across all four tiers of English football.

Worse still, Saints' efforts in the transfer market fell flat. Failed bids for targets like Fabio Carvalho and Matt O'Riley, and a lack of experience in key backroom positions, left them underprepared. Mid-season acquisitions underperformed or were swiftly offloaded.

Despite the grim outlook, club captain Jan Bednarek urged the squad to finish strong: "We can't change the past. The only thing we can do is enjoy the last seven games, improve and learn."

Southampton now faces a daunting challenge: avoiding the shame of setting a new low in Premier League history, while beginning the process of rebuilding for life in the Championship.

Maresca's gamble backfires as Chelsea drop points at Brentford

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Surprise turned to frustration as Enzo Maresca's Chelsea side were held to a goalless draw by Brentford on Sunday — a result that extended their winless away run to eight matches and left fans questioning their manager's bold selection choices.

With Champions League qualification hanging in the balance, Maresca opted to rest key figures including Cole Palmer, Nicolas Jackson, Marc Cucurella, and Pedro Neto. In their place came Malo Gusto, Christopher Nkunku, Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall, and Noni Madueke — a quartet that struggled to impose themselves.

Chelsea's lack of firepower in the first half was glaring, registering just one shot on target before the break. The introduction of Palmer and Jackson in the second half injected urgency, with Chelsea improving to 17 shots and four on target by full-time, yet they still couldn't find a breakthrough.

Chants of "attack, attack, attack" echoed from the away end as supporters voiced disapproval of Maresca's cautious approach — one that has become a point of contention during the club's inconsistent campaign.

Despite remaining in fourth place, Chelsea are now under immense pressure with Manchester City, Aston Villa, and Newcastle hot on their heels. A top-five finish may still secure Champions League football, but recent performances have cast doubt on their ability to hold on.

Maresca defended his decision, citing the short turnaround from Thursday's match against Spurs:



"Not all of them were 100%. The plan nearly worked, but the volume probably wasn't enough to win the game."

When pressed on whether squad rotation could have waited for Thursday's Conference League quarter-final against Legia Warsaw, Maresca remained firm:

"I work with the players every day. I do what's best for the club."

Yet Chelsea's away form tells a concerning story. Without a win on the road since December, upcoming trips to Fulham, Newcastle, and Nottingham Forest look daunting. Their home form — five wins in a row — provides a contrast, but away-day woes could derail their European hopes.

More worryingly, Chelsea's attacking woes persist. Palmer is on a lengthy goal drought, Jackson hasn't scored in 10 games, and Jadon Sancho has now gone 20 matches without finding the net in all competitions.

Off the pitch, the stakes are just as high. Financial documents released earlier this week showed Chelsea posted a £128m profit — aided by the £200m internal sale

of their women's team to BlueCo, their parent company. Without it, the club would have recorded a £70m loss, flirting dangerously with the Premier League's financial rules.

Champions League qualification is key to financial sustainability. With no shirt sponsor and mounting interest payments, the revenue from Europe's top competition — and the appeal it offers to elite talent — has never been more important.

"Since day one, our target has been to bring this club back to the Champions League," said Maresca. "We've been in the top four or five all season, and we hope to finish there."

But with fan sentiment beginning to shift and performances on the pitch stuttering, Maresca may soon find his position under greater scrutiny — especially if results don't follow.

As one frustrated fan summed up:

"Legia Warsaw is the match where you rest key players. What a comedown after the exciting Spurs performance."