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civilian dictatorship**  
— Dele Momodu warns



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# Natasha: Appeal court strikes out Akpabio's motions, slams N100,000 fine

By Damilola Olufemi



**T**he Abuja Division of the Court of Appeal has struck out two motions filed by Senate President Godswill Akpabio, ordering him to pay ₦100,000 in costs.

The three-member panel, led by Justice Hamman Barka, delivered the ruling on May 21, 2025, after Akpabio applied to withdraw the motions.

The motions, dated March 3 and March 25, 2025, with suit numbers C V / 3 9 5 / M 1 / 2 0 2 5 a n d CV/395/M2/2025, respectively, listed Akpabio as the appellant.

His appeal was against Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, the Clerk of the National Assembly, the Senate, and Senator Neda Imasuem, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges, and Public Petitions.

Akpabio's application sought several reliefs, including: "An order of this Honourable Court enlarging the time within which the Appellant/Applicant may seek leave to appeal against the decision of the Federal High Court, Abuja Judicial Division in Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/384/2025 between Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan v. Clerk of the National Assembly and 3 Others (Coram: Honourable Justice Obiora Atuegwu Egwuatu), delivered on March 10, 2025, on grounds of mixed law and fact as contained in the proposed Notice of Appeal."

**Akpabio requests**

He also requested: "An order of this Honourable Court granting leave to the Appellant/Applicant to appeal against the decision of the Federal High Court... delivered on March 10, 2025, on grounds of mixed law and fact as contained in the proposed Notice of

Appeal attached as Exhibit B."

In addition, Akpabio asked for "An order enlarging the time within which the Appellant/Applicant may file their Notice of Appeal," as well as "An order staying further proceedings in Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/384/2025 pending the hearing and determination of the appeal before this Honourable Court."

Ruling on the matter, the Appeal Court stated: "Application seeking to withdraw the two motions dated and filed on 20/3/2025 and 25/3/2025 is granted and the motions are struck out."

The court further ruled, "Costs of ₦100,000 are awarded to the 1st Respondent. Appeal No. CA/ABJ/PRE/ROA/CV/395M/2025 to be deleted."

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8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
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9X4	137,875.00
9X3	112,875.00
8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
5X2	32,916.50
4X4	52,666.50
4X3	39,499.50
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## CONTACT US

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

**E-mail Address:**  
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# Democracy Day: Tinubu cancels nationwide broadcast, to address nation from NASS

By Damilola Olufemi

President of Nigeria, Bola Tinubu, has cancelled his planned nationwide broadcast for Nigeria's 26th Democracy Day anniversary.

Upon the cancellation, the president has opted to deliver his speech directly from the National Assembly.

The announcement was made on Wednesday by Segun Imohiosen, Director of Information and Public Relations, who explained that the adjustment was due to his scheduled appearance at a joint session of the National Assembly on Thursday.

“Due to President Bola Tinubu’s scheduled attendance at the National Assembly Joint Session, the Presidential National Broadcast on June 12 has been cancelled. President Tinubu will deliver his address from the National Assembly,” Imohiosen stated.

Other events of the Day will proceed as scheduled, according to the statement.

New Daily Prime earlier reported that the former governor of Lagos state was scheduled to address Nigerians at 7 am on Thursday as part of the events marking this year’s celebrations before proceeding to the National Assembly complex for a special joint session scheduled at noon.

However, in a latest development, cancelling the nationwide address by the president, the traditional military parade of the Democracy Day has also been cancelled with no reason



given.

The president will still participate in a joint session of the National Assembly at 12 noon, while a public lecture will follow later in the day at 4 pm at the State House Conference Centre in Abuja.

Abdulkakeem Adeoye, who signed the revised program on behalf of the Director of Information & Public Relations at the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, outlined the updated the schedule.

“The Inter-Ministerial Committee wishes to announce the following developments on the 26th Democracy Day celebration:

1. Presidential National Broadcast on June 12, 2025, at 7 a.m.
2. No Democracy Day Parade.
3. H.E. President Bola Tinubu is to attend the National Assembly Joint Session at noon.

4. Public Lecture on Democracy Day Celebration at the State House Conference Centre, Abuja. Time: 4 pm.

Theme: Consolidating on the Gains of Nigeria’s Democracy: Necessity of Enduring Reforms,” the statement read.

Tinubu’s third Democracy Day

The 2025 commemoration is Tinubu’s third Democracy Day since assuming office in 2023 after a fiercely contested presidential election.

What is Democracy Day?

Democracy Day is a national holiday in Nigeria celebrated on May 29 until 2018. It is now commemorated on June 12 in honour of MKO Abiola, a celebrated voice for democracy, and the presumed winner of the annulled 1993 presidential elections, held on the same date, in Nigeria.



# Amaechi to APC: You cannot support failure

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Former Minister of Transportation and two-term Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi, has expressed readiness to support the formation of a broad opposition alliance to challenge President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the 2027 general elections, citing worsening economic hardship and insecurity across the country.

Amaechi, who ran in the 2022 APC presidential primaries, positioning himself as a candidate with proven governance and national experience, said current national conditions demanded “real change” — and warned that loyalty to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) should not mean blind support for government failures.

“If the government is failing the country, you don’t just go along because you’re in the same party. You know that’s not right,” Amaechi said in an interview with the BBC, as reported by Daily Trust.

While not formally declaring another presidential run, Amaechi left the door open, stating, “Certainly, I believe I can make a meaningful contribution.

”The former governor’s remarks come less than a month after APC leaders endorsed President Tinubu as the party’s sole candidate for 2027. However, Amaechi stressed that constructive criticism was essential and that Nigerians expected the truth from their leaders.

He painted a grim picture of the current economic reality, decrying rising hunger and poverty. He shared a personal account of encountering a corpse by the roadside — a tragedy he linked to worsening food insecurity.

“People are dying. People are starving. I myself am feeling the effects of hunger. The truth is, I’m also feeling the hunger,” he said.



Amaechi confirmed that he was in talks with other political figures and concerned Nigerians to form a potential united front aimed at restoring national direction.

“We’re thinking that if we come together and win the election, the country will certainly witness change,” he added.

His comments come amid similar coalition-building efforts by opposition heavyweights, including Atiku Abubakar of the PDP and Peter Obi of the Labour Party. Former Kaduna State governor Nasir El-Rufai, once a key Tinubu campaigner, has also hinted at supporting an opposition alliance.

Yet, some analysts warn of growing one-party dominance, as several opposition politicians have defected to the APC in recent months. Reflecting on national challenges, Amaechi cited growing insecurity and educational decline.

He recalled that during his tenure as Chairman of the Nigeria Governors’ Forum, the number of out-of-school children was around 10 million. “The number has since increased,” he lamented.

He also highlighted persistent crises: the farmer-herder conflict, rampant kidnappings for ransom, and the lingering Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast.

“I’ve always said that Boko Haram is not a religious crisis. Many of those involved are doing it out of desperation and hunger,” Amaechi argued.

Despite government claims of progress, insecurity remains a key concern. A recent report by Nigeria’s National Human Rights Commission revealed that 570 people were killed in April 2025 alone.

On questions about his current political influence, particularly in Rivers State, Amaechi dismissed suggestions of waning clout.

“Go to Port Harcourt and ask around — from the airport, you’ll see for yourself,” he said.

As Nigeria heads toward the 2027 elections, Amaechi’s comments mark a clear signal that key political realignments may be taking shape — and that voices within the APC itself are preparing to chart alternative courses in the face of growing national discontent.

# 'Nigerians fully prepared, ready for June 12 national protest' - Organisers

By Friday Omosola

Organisers of the planned nationwide protest scheduled for 12 June have declared that Nigerians across the country are fully mobilised and prepared to take to the streets.

On June 2, 2025, announced that June 12, 2025, would be a national day of protest in Nigeria.

The civil rights campaigner movement decries the escalating insecurity, press attacks, and economic hardship faced by Nigerians across the country

Speaking exclusively to The New Daily Prime, National Coordinator of the Take It Back Movement (TIBM), Juwon Sanyaolu, cited rising public frustration over worsening economic hardship, insecurity, and governance failures.

“So as we announced, the protests will be happening across the states of the federation, including the FCT, So, and I can assure that Nigerians are sufficiently mobilised, both online and offline, will be storming the streets to protest the complete breakdown in democratic governance in the country”, he said.

Sanyaolu further stated that with regard to security provisions, it is not the responsibility of protesters to provide security for themselves, but rather the duty of the police.

Protest has gained wide awareness



He urged Nigerian security agencies to carry out their duties under the law.

“So that is the job of the police and is the reason the taxpayers are funding the police to provide that security for protesters who are exercising their constitutional rights to protest. Anything outside of that will be criminal and we prepare to challenge them or its whole all lawful means at our disposal.

“I would say that indeed the protest has gained wide awareness amongst Nigerians who are at home and abroad. So I would acknowledge that with us are over 133 million Nigerians that are languishing in abject poverty, thousands of students that are victims of fear, many of them drop out, and those who are going to be indebted by the egregious student loan scam, I like to call it a scam, not a scheme.”

Sanyaolu further stated that Nigerians are firmly standing behind TIBM, including thousands displaced by regional insecurity across the country, approximately 460,000 in Benue State and over 60,000 in Plateau State.

He added that Nigeria has effectively become a crime scene, stressing that citizens are victims of oppression, with millions expressing solidarity with the movement.

“We are going to be marching tomorrow in protest. I think that will be my conclusion for now. Thank you. Yeah, in Lagos, we’ll be marching. I will be marching for Maryland, although I will acknowledge that there are various protest locations that we have announced in Lagos, but I’ll be marching for Maryland,” he said.



# Nigeria sliding into civilian dictatorship — Dele Momodu warns

By Damilola Olufemi

**A** Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chieftain, Dele Momodu, has raised alarm over Nigeria's deteriorating democratic environment, warning that the country is dangerously veering towards a civilian dictatorship.

Speaking on Wednesday on Channels Television's The Morning Brief, the former presidential aspirant of the party lamented the steady erosion of democratic principles, particularly in the build-up to this year's Democracy Day.

"I'm very happy that today coincides with the lead-up to June 12 (Democracy Day), so that if we still have any iota of conscience left, we'll realise we have damaged this democracy," he said.

"The summary of it all is that on the eve of June 12, Nigeria is virtually back to civilian dictators who don't care how you feel or what you think. Nigerians are hungry.

"We've damaged this democracy, and I hope we've not damaged it beyond repair because the audacity, the effrontery of this set of politicians—whether in the executive, legislature, or local government—is unbelievable."

Reflecting on the sacrifices made by pro-democracy activists during the June 12 struggle, Momodu added: "All those who suffered for this democracy—especially those who are now in heaven—if they can see us, they would be crying."

Wike is behaving like Nigeria's founding father – Dele Momodu

Turning to the internal wrangling within the PDP, Momodu criticised the influence of FCT Minister Nyesom Wike, accusing him of attempting to control the party's 2027 presidential ticket.

"It sounds ridiculous that one man, who should be busy in Abuja, is dictating where the PDP presidential ticket should go in 2027. What Wike is doing is a rehash of what he did in Rivers State—and he is doing so with the backing of those at the top," Momodu stated.

He questioned Wike's democratic credentials, saying: "Where was Wike during the June 12 struggle? Who knew him then? But today, he speaks as if he's the founding



father of Nigeria."

Commenting on the recent political turmoil in Rivers State, Momodu suggested that Wike's refusal to relinquish control led to an unprecedented state of emergency declaration.

"A major crisis of monumental dimension was orchestrated and aggravated by one man. Just because he wouldn't go away quietly, a state of emergency had to be declared. It's unprecedented in Nigeria's history," he remarked.

He accused Wike of effectively hijacking the PDP through backdoor politics: "What he's doing now is tantamount to staging a coup against the party that made him everything he is today. He does not have the moral right to dictate the direction of the PDP."

Slams Tinubu over 'busybodies' remark

Momodu also took a swipe at President Bola Tinubu over his remarks during Tuesday's commissioning of the refurbished Abuja International Conference Centre.

"I listened to the President refer to concerned Nigerians as 'busybodies' and 'bystanders.'

Who is a bystander in his own country? All because of one man—Wike," he said.

"Wike was dancing after commissioning a centre said to have cost over ₦30 billion. Right now, it feels like we have two presidents in Nigeria."

Meanwhile, despite the PDP's internal divisions, Dele Momodu firmly rejected the idea of defecting to the ruling APC, a route several PDP governors have taken.

"If I wanted to join the APC, I wouldn't be speaking to you like this. I'd be giving excuses, like the rest. But my soul is out of PDP—I cannot sit in a room where one man dictates to adults who have served Nigeria all their lives," Momodu declared.

Dele Momodu warned that unless urgent reforms are made to strengthen Nigeria's political system and restore true democratic values, the country risks slipping further into authoritarian rule.

"PDP is part of its own problem, no doubt. But people like Wike, doing what they do with impunity, are taking us dangerously backwards.



# Tinubu says APC ready to receive Wike whenever he joins

By Friday Omosola



**P**resident Bola Tinubu has expressed readiness to receive the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, into the All Progressives Congress (APC) if he chooses to formally defect from the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

He spoke at the commissioning of the Arterial Road N16 and other infrastructure projects in the Katampe District of Abuja.

Mr Tinubu praised Mr Wike's dedication to public service and playfully referenced a popular chant from the minister's past political rallies.

"Nyesom Wike is not officially a member of our party—at least, not yet," Tinubu remarked.

"But the moment he decides to join the progressives, we will gladly receive him. After all, we enjoy singing, 'as e dey pain dem, e dey sweet us.'"

The comment elicited laughter from the crowd, including Mr Wike himself, highlighting the continued cordial rapport between the two politicians.

Mr Wike, a PDP stalwart, drew national attention during the 2023 elections when he endorsed Mr Tinubu's presidential bid, despite remaining in the opposition party.

Following Mr Tinubu's victory, Mr Wike accepted a ministerial role in the APC-led government and was sworn in as FCT Minister in August 2023—a move that further fractured the PDP and sparked intense internal debate.

His increasingly close alignment with Mr Tinubu's administration has been the subject of widespread political analysis.

After losing the PDP's 2022 presidential ticket, the former Rivers State governor withheld support from the party's nominee, Atiku Abubakar, deepening tensions within the party ranks.

Since then, Wike has not only pledged allegiance to Mr Tinubu's leadership but also vowed to lead his re-election campaign in Rivers State.

During a recent media chat on 3 June, he declared, "I am a valuable political

asset. I'll spearhead President Tinubu's re-election drive in Rivers State."

Mr Wike's overtures towards the APC have triggered both praise and criticism, particularly from PDP figures like Bode George and Dele Momodu, who view his actions as undermining party unity.

The PDP has continued to grapple with internal divisions since its 2023 electoral loss, with Mr Wike emerging as a polarising yet influential player in its post-election dynamics.

On Monday, the FCT Minister once again dominated headlines after advocating for the PDP's 2027 presidential ticket to be zoned to the South.

Speaking on behalf of a group identified as the 'Concerned Stakeholders of the PDP', the 57-year-old emphasised the importance of fairness and regional balance in future leadership decisions.

The group's statement also addressed internal governance issues within the party, insisting that only the National Secretary, Senator Sam Anyanwu, possessed the legal authority to issue notices for national-level meetings.

# Oyo govt postpones Adire carnival, exhibition

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



**T**he Oyo State Government has announced the postponement of the Adire Carnival and Exhibition, which was originally scheduled to hold on Friday, 20th June 2025.

The announcement was made in a statement issued on Wednesday by the Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Dotun Oyelade, on behalf of the Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, Dr Wasiu Olatunbosun.

According to Olatunbosun, the decision to postpone the event was taken to ensure it meets global best practices and delivers a seamless, high-quality experience for attendees and guests.

He assured the public that a new date would be announced in due course and that all stakeholders would be

informed accordingly.

The commissioner reaffirmed the administration's commitment to promoting and preserving cultural heritage, stating that tourism remains a priority under Governor Seyi Makinde's Omituntun 2.0 Roadmap for Sustainable Development.

"The State Government recognises tourism as a vital driver of economic growth, job creation, and internally generated revenue," he said.

He cited the successful hosting of events such as the World Twins Festival, Egungun Festival, Iyake International Festival, and Aso-Ofi Festival as examples of the administration's cultural achievements.

Highlighting the impact of the Aso-

Ofi Festival, Olatunbosun noted that the state had introduced a policy encouraging civil and public servants to wear Aso-Ofi, revitalising indigenous textile production and reinforcing Oyo's image as the "Manchester of Indigenous Textile Production."

He explained that the planned Adire Carnival, organised in collaboration with BIZRAIT and Adire Odua, was part of the ongoing efforts to showcase local craftsmanship. However, the postponement was necessary to uphold the state's cultural reputation.

Olatunbosun expressed gratitude to all partners and the public for their understanding and support as preparations continue for a rescheduled event.



# Ekiti official resigns, slams Gov. Oyebanji

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



A member of the Ekiti State Waste Management Board, Mr Wale Ade-Oba, has announced his resignation from the Biodun Oyebanji-led administration, citing dissatisfaction with the state government's performance and direction.

In a statement released on Tuesday, Ade-Oba criticised Governor Oyebanji for what he described as a lack of meaningful development across the state despite significant budgetary allocations.

He accused the governor of being frequently absent from the state and pursuing an “unclear agenda,” which he claims has led to ineffective governance and

neglect of loyal party members.

“I believe the administration hasn't delivered meaningful development to many local government areas, including mine, Irepodun/Ifelodun,” Ade-Oba said.

He also expressed frustration over the treatment of party members, alleging that those who contributed to the party's electoral success were being overlooked in favour of opposition figures.

“Our party members are being overlooked and undervalued despite their hard work and dedication to the party's success,” he said.

Ade-Oba further declared his

support for the Pro-Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Mr Kayode Ojo, whom he described as a visionary leader with the potential to transform Ekiti State.

“Engr. Kayode Ojo's leadership style and vision for Ekiti resonate with me. I believe his administration would prioritise the needs of our people, recognise the efforts of our party members, and drive development across all local government areas,” he stated.

He urged others to join him in seeking a change in leadership, pledging to work towards what he called a “brighter future” for the state.



# Yesufu to Tinubu: 'This is not normal'

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Prominent sociopolitical activist, Aisha Yesufu, has criticised President Bola Tinubu following the renaming of the International Conference Centre (ICC) in Abuja after him.

The facility, recently renovated by the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Administration, was officially renamed the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre and unveiled by the President on Tuesday.

Speaking at the commissioning, the Minister of the FCT, Nyesom Wike,



said the renovation was necessary as the previous state of the centre was an

embarrassment to Nigeria in the eyes of the international community.

He accused former managers of mismanaging the facility and pledged an end to such negligence.

However, in a post on X (formerly Twitter), Yesufu reacted strongly to the renaming, describing the move as excessive and unnecessary.

"Tinubu has poverty mentality and abandonment issue. This is not normal," she wrote.

# NCS CG inspects Ibadan trade facilities, pledges support for customs efficiency

By Friday Omosola

The Comptroller General of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Bashir Adeniyi, has reaffirmed the agency's commitment to trade facilitation and operational efficiency during a working visit to the Oyo/Osun Area Command in Ibadan.

During the visit, Adeniyi inspected the Ibadan Train Station Terminal and assessed a prospective private bonded warehouse.

Once operational, the bonded facility is expected to improve cargo clearance and streamline trade logistics within the region.

Speaking at the site, he said, "The warehouse will complement ongoing efforts to decongest seaports and expedite the movement of goods to their final destinations. This aligns with our broader goal of simplifying customs procedures and promoting legitimate trade."

While welcoming the CG, the Customs Area Controller of the Oyo/Osun Command, Joseph Adelaja, reported a revenue collection of ₦28.05 billion between February and May 2025, an



increase from ₦23.84 billion recorded during the same period last year.

He also disclosed the seizure of prohibited goods valued at over ₦917 million in Duty Paid Value.

Despite the command's achievements, Adelaja highlighted several operational challenges, including inadequate manpower, a shortage of functional vehicles, and poor electricity supply at the barracks.

He appealed for the deployment of 80 junior officers and the provision of 16 additional vehicles to enhance field operations.

In response, Adeniyi assured that the service headquarters would consider the requests, emphasising the importance of continuous professional development.

He urged officers to remain committed and well-informed in fulfilling the agency's mandate.

# 2027: Posters of broadcaster Hamzat Oriyomi flood Ibadan

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



Posters of popular Ibadan-based broadcaster, Hamzat Oriyomi, have appeared across the city, sparking speculation about a possible political ambition ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The posters, bearing the slogan “2027 Oyo npe o” (Oyo is calling you), feature a black portrait of the veteran Yoruba broadcaster. However, they do not indicate the specific political office he may be seeking.

In a video posted by a support group on Wednesday, the founder of Agidigbo FM was seen engaging warmly with a crowd at an event, where supporters

repeatedly urged him to “answer the call” of the people.

“Okiki (Hamzat), Oyo is calling you. Answer their call,” a supporter said, reflecting the groundswell of encouragement for him to enter politics.

A statement from the campaign’s official social media page responded to criticism about Hamzat’s shift from media to politics, stating, “The claim that ‘governance is more than speaking into a microphone’ reflects a misunderstanding of leadership. Broadcasting is rooted in communication, empathy, and connection—traits that are fundamental to good

governance.”

It added that leadership should not be judged by profession but by “vision, courage, and commitment to service”, calling on Dr Oriyomi Hamzat to heed what it described as a “clarion call”.

In another viral video, local influencer Funny Thinker was also seen publicly urging Hamzat to contest in 2027, saying, “Okiki, the son of Hamzat, we are calling you, please answer us in 2027.”

Hamzat responded playfully, “You will all be alright.”



# Rivers 2025 budget makes room for suspended Governor's return

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



**T**he Sole Administrator of Rivers State, retired Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas, has revealed that the proposed N1.48 trillion 2025 budget makes provision for the return of suspended Governor Siminalayi Fubara and other political officeholders.

Speaking in Abuja on Wednesday while appearing before the House of Representatives Ad-Hoc Committee on Rivers State Oversight, Ibas said the budget anticipates a restoration of constitutional governance in the state, following the emergency rule declared earlier this year.

“The draft budget prudently retains provisions for the offices

and functions of suspended political actors, some of whom have already drawn on allocated resources in the first quarter and are expected to resume their duties at the expiration of the emergency period,” Ibas stated.

The proposed 2025 budget, he explained, aligns with the Rivers State Development Plan 2017–2027 and is built around a strategic and integrated framework aimed at boosting internally generated revenues, accelerating infrastructure development, enhancing human capital, and fostering inclusive economic growth across all sectors.

However, the Sole Administrator

also expressed concern over limited cooperation from the suspended state officials, noting that his administration has struggled to obtain adequate data on past expenditures.

“There has been a lack of access to comprehensive information, which has hindered our ability to fully capture spending details and projections,” he said.

It will be recalled that on 18 March, President Bola Tinubu declared a six-month state of emergency in Rivers State, suspending Governor Fubara and several key officials in response to escalating political instability and administrative paralysis.



# CBEX fraud case: Court to rule on bail of detained Crypto operators June 30

By Friday Omosola

Justice Emeka Nwite of the Federal High Court in Abuja has scheduled 30 June to deliver a ruling on the bail applications filed by three promoters of Crypto Bridge Exchange (CBEX), currently in detention over their alleged involvement in a \$1 billion fraud scheme.

The judge fixed the date after hearing arguments from lawyers representing the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and defence counsel.

Both parties adopted their written submissions and presented oral arguments for and against the bail request.

The EFCC had earlier secured a court order on 24 April permitting the arrest and detention of six CBEX operators in connection with the ongoing fraud investigation.

The order followed an ex parte motion filed by the Commission's counsel, Fadila Yusuf, who explained that the suspects' detention was necessary to allow for thorough investigations and possible prosecution.

The individuals named in the investigation include Adefowora Abiodun Olanipekun, Adefowora Oluwanisola, Emmanuel Uko, Seyi Oloyede, Awwerosuo Otorudo, and Chukwuebuka Ehirim.

At the resumed hearing, counsel for Abiodun, Babatunde Busari, and lawyer for the 5th and 6th defendants, Justice Otorudo, informed the court that they had filed separate bail applications.

Otorudo's application, on behalf of Otorudo and Ehirim, was dated 8 May and submitted a day later.

Busari noted that although the EFCC served a counter affidavit that morning, the defence was prepared to proceed.

His bail motion relied on constitutional provisions and sections of the

Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), arguing for the release of his client from EFCC custody on liberal terms, pending any formal charges.

According to Busari, Abiodun voluntarily presented himself for questioning on 28 April, having notified the EFCC of his willingness to cooperate two days earlier.

He added that Abiodun has been held for over 40 days without formal charges, a period that exceeds the statutory 14-day remand window, even with an extension.

He stressed that Abiodun, who is reportedly battling a serious health condition, has not been brought before any court, and there is no valid justification for his continued detention.

Busari also challenged the EFCC's claim that Abiodun might abscond, citing his voluntary surrender as proof of good faith.

Otorudo, representing the 5th and 6th defendants, made similar submissions.

He urged the court to vary the original

remand order and release his clients on bail, noting that both voluntarily submitted themselves for investigation on 25 April and have remained in custody since.

He assured the court of their willingness to cooperate with the investigation and attend all court proceedings. He also argued that the allegations, while serious, are bailable under Nigerian law.

Opposing the bail motions, EFCC counsel Yusuf filed a counter affidavit with accompanying exhibits, urging the court to reject the applications.

She emphasised that the suspects are being investigated for allegedly obtaining over \$1 billion—an amount she noted surpasses the annual budgets of some Nigerian states.

Yusuf also informed the court that the EFCC continues to receive fresh petitions from alleged victims of the scam. While acknowledging that bail is at the discretion of the court, she urged Justice Nwite to exercise that discretion cautiously, given the gravity of the allegations.



# Delta police nab couple for alleged criminal act, recover firearms

By Helen Okechukwu

In a continued effort to strengthen public safety and curb criminal activities in Delta State, the state's Police Command has apprehended a 40-year-old man and his wife (name withheld) in connection with alleged cultism and armed robbery in the state capital, Asaba.

This announcement was made available on Wednesday via the Delta police command spokesperson, Bright Edafe.

The arrest, which took place on 9 June, followed a strategic intelligence-led operation conducted by officers of the Command's DOPS Buffalo Team, under the leadership of Deputy Superintendent (DSP) Charles Evboifo.

Acting on credible information, the team stormed a local food canteen known to serve as a hideout for suspected cultists.

During the raid, the suspect, identified as Kingsley Ugochukwu, attempted to evade arrest and discreetly discarded a locally made Beretta pistol. The weapon was subsequently



recovered by the police team.

According to Edafe, during initial interrogation, Ugochukwu made a suspicious phone call to his wife.

This action prompted investigators to widen the scope of the inquiry. Further investigation revealed that the suspect had instructed his wife to retrieve and conceal another firearm—a single-barrel long-range gun—hidden in their bedroom.

Acting on this lead, police operatives arrested the suspect's wife, whose confession led them to an uncompleted building where the second weapon was recovered.

Delta police CP reiterates tackling crime

In response to the arrest, the Commissioner of Police (CP) Abaniwonda Olufemi reiterated the Command's unwavering commitment to tackling crime and safeguarding communities across the state.

He called on residents to support law enforcement efforts by sharing timely and credible information that could aid police operations.

Also, the Command urges residents to report suspicious activities to the control room via the phone lines made available: 08036684974, 08114895600 and 08025666914.

# Nigeria's trade surplus hits N5.17tn in Q1 2025 amid rising non-oil exports

By Damilola Olufemi

**N**igeria recorded a trade surplus of N5.17 trillion in the first quarter of 2025, marking a 51.07% jump from the N3.42 trillion posted in the final quarter of 2024.

The figures were contained in the Foreign Trade in Goods Statistics report released on Wednesday.

“The merchandise trade balance for Q1 2025 remained positive at N5,172.31bn, indicating an increase of 51.07 per cent compared to the value recorded in the preceding quarter,” the report stated.

The strong surplus was largely driven by steady export growth despite global headwinds and rising import costs.

According to the report, total trade for the first quarter stood at N36.02 trillion, representing a 6.19% rise from the same period last year, The PUNCH reports.

Exports accounted for N20.60 trillion of total trade, reflecting a 7.42% increase year-on-year. Crude oil remained Nigeria's top export earner, though crude oil revenues dipped 16.35% compared to Q1 2024.

Despite the drop, crude oil still generated N12.96 trillion, making up 62.89% of Nigeria's export earnings.

The decline in oil revenue was partially offset by impressive growth in non-oil exports, especially in agriculture. Export earnings from agricultural products surged by 64.65% to N1.70 trillion from N1.04 trillion a



year earlier.

Products such as cocoa beans, cashew nuts, and sesame seeds led the increase, with Europe and Asia remaining key markets for Nigerian agricultural exports.

On the import side, Nigeria brought in N15.43 trillion worth of goods in Q1 2025, up 4.59% from Q1 2024 but 7.02% lower than the previous quarter.

Nigeria, largest oil-importing partner

China retained its position as Nigeria's largest import partner, supplying 30.19% of total imports, followed by India and the United States.

Top imports included petroleum products, industrial machinery, and raw materials. Agricultural imports also rose, climbing 12.52% to N1.04 trillion due to sustained demand for food and

farming inputs.

Nigeria's trade with African countries remained robust, with exports to the continent totalling N1.85 trillion. South Africa, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Togo, and Ghana were Nigeria's key export destinations in Africa, with petroleum products dominating the shipments.

Imports from Africa reached N766.82 billion, primarily made up of petroleum imports from Angola and South Africa, underscoring ongoing energy trade within the continent.

While crude oil still accounts for the bulk of Nigeria's exports, signs of diversification are emerging. Exports of manufactured goods rose by 9.58% to N294.43 billion. Items such as unwrought aluminium alloys, dredgers, and cathodes contributed to the growth.



# Researchers discover how bowel cancer can be tackled among youth

By **Helen Okechukwu**



**A** new study has found that bowel cancer cells can “shapeshift” into skin or muscle cells, helping them spread more easily around the body.

The study, led by experts from the University of Edinburgh and the Cancer Research United Kingdom (UK) Scotland Centre, found that bowel cancer cells can change their form.

These cells can start acting like skin or muscle cells, which helps them survive and move to other parts of the body. This change in cell type is known as cellular plasticity.

Normally, cells in the bowel stick to their original role. But in aggressive cases of cancer, these cells lose their identity and become more like skin or muscle cells, which are stronger and tougher. This helps the cancer grow and spread more easily.

The research team also looked at a gene

called *Atrx*, which is linked to fast-spreading bowel cancer. When this gene is lost, the cancer is more likely to travel from the bowel to places like the liver, lymph nodes and diaphragm.

Dr. Kevin Myant, one of the main researchers, said it is important to understand how bowel cancer spreads, especially with more young people being affected. He explained that stopping the cells from changing shape could help make current treatments work better.

Dr. Patrizia Cammareri, another lead scientist, added that skin cells are built to survive harsh conditions. So, if cancer cells copy them, it may help them spread through the body more easily.

**What is bowel cancer**

Bowel cancer is the second biggest cause of cancer deaths in the UK, with around 16,800 lives lost each year. In Scotland alone, about 4,000 people are

diagnosed every year.

New studies also show that bowel cancer is rising in people aged 25 to 49 in many countries, with young women in Scotland and England seeing the fastest increases.

Dr. Catherine Elliott from Cancer Research UK said this discovery could lead to better ways to stop cancer from spreading, which is often when it becomes most dangerous.

According to the Independent report, the study has been published in the science journal *Nature* and received funding from the Medical Research Council and the European Research Council.

It also supports the CRC-STARs programme, which brings together over 40 experts to find kinder and more effective treatments for bowel cancer.

# UK experts urge patients to take genetic cancer test to reduce future risk

By **Helen Okechukwu**



**H**ealth experts in the United Kingdom (UK) are urging cancer patients and their families to undergo genetic testing following a new study that highlights serious gaps in the detection of Lynch syndrome, a rare inherited condition linked to several types of cancer.

The research, carried out by the University of Edinburgh, shows that although most womb cancer patients had their tumours tested for Lynch syndrome markers, many were not referred for further genetic testing.

This means that patients who could be at risk of developing more cancers, as well as their family members, may be left unaware of the condition.

Lynch syndrome increases the risk

of cancers in the bowel, womb, and ovaries. It is caused by a genetic mutation that affects the body's ability to repair DNA, potentially leading to uncontrolled cell growth.

Current NHS guidelines recommend that patients diagnosed with womb or bowel cancer should have their tumours tested for signs of Lynch syndrome.

If these markers are found, the patient should then be offered further genetic testing through a blood test. This helps confirm the diagnosis and provides families with important information about their potential cancer risks.

Study data of cancer patients  
The study looked at data from 2,500 womb cancer patients across the UK and Ireland between 2022 and 2023.

While 91% of patients had tumour tests, the results were often not passed on to the wider medical team. As a result, many patients missed out on referrals for genetic counselling and follow-up tests.

Out of 181 patients who qualified for further testing, only 64% were referred. Of those, less than half completed the genetic test, often due to long waiting times and follow-up delays.

Experts are calling for urgent improvements in the system to ensure patients who are at risk are identified early. Without proper referral and testing, many individuals and their families remain unaware of their vulnerability to cancer and miss the chance to take preventive steps.



# Bella Shmurda urges Nigerian artistes to create meaningful music

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian singer Bella Shmurda has urged fellow musicians to make meaningful music and live lives that young people can look up to.

Speaking on the Afrobeats Intelligence podcast, the popular artist emphasised the importance of artists thinking beyond fame and wealth.

He believes that music should convey a message and serve as a tool for positive change. According to him, many artists today have lost sight of this responsibility.

## Criticism of Western influence

Shmurda did not hold back in his critique of the Nigerian music industry. He said it had absorbed too many bad habits from the West, especially from American hip-hop culture. He warned that this foreign influence was affecting Nigerian youth in harmful ways.

“Our industry is no longer about the art,” he said. “It’s all about shining, shining jewellery, flashy cars. Everyone is copying the American lifestyle, and it’s causing many young people to lose focus.”

## Lamenting the new trends

He expressed concern about how these trends have changed the face of Nigerian music. According to him, music rollouts now focus more on displaying wealth than promoting substance.

“Nowadays, some artists don’t even have a proper message behind their songs,” he said. “The rollout plan is just about showing off cars and jewellery. But where’s the purpose? What are we telling the youth? What are we giving them to believe in?”

He pointed out that many young people are inspired to become musicians not because of a deep



passion, but because they want quick fame and riches.

## Challenge to fellow artists

Bella Shmurda used the podcast as a platform to challenge his colleagues. He asked them to think about the kind of legacy they want to leave behind.

“In the long run, it’s all about legacy,” he said. “What will people remember you for? Will it be the diamonds you wore or the lives you changed?”

He stressed that music should be more than a way to chase material success. It should be about impact. Artists, he said, should make sure their songs speak to people and help them find meaning.

## Leading by example

To show his commitment to this message, Shmurda shared that he made a personal choice to stop wearing jewellery. He explained that he wanted to move away from the distractions of fame and return to the message that started his career.

“I stopped wearing jewellery at some point,” he said. “I felt like that wasn’t my purpose. I came out with Vision 2020, that was a song with a clear

message. It was purposeful. That’s what I want to be known for.”

## A call for change in the industry

Bella Shmurda’s message comes at a time when many fans and critics are asking questions about the values promoted by the Afrobeats scene.

With more artists leaning into extravagant lifestyles, the concern is growing about what kind of role models today’s stars are becoming.

Shmurda is calling for a shift. He believes that artists should remember their roots, focus on their craft, and understand the influence they have on their audience, especially the youth.

“We need to do better,” he said. “Let’s give people real reasons to love music again. Let’s show them that music can inspire, heal, and change lives.”

## Conclusion

Bella Shmurda’s words are a wake-up call to the Nigerian music industry. As he speaks out against the growing trend of materialism and empty fame, he reminds everyone that music is a powerful force. It can shape lives and guide the next generation, but only if artists choose to lead with purpose.

# Yeni Kuti, PDP chieftain Sowunmi clash on TV over Tinubu's visit

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

A heated exchange unfolded on live television between veteran media personality Yeni Kuti and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chieftain Segun Sowunmi.

The clash followed Sowunmi's recent visit to President Bola Tinubu at his Lagos residence, an unexpected move that has sparked online debate.

Sowunmi, a former spokesman for Atiku Abubakar during the 2023 presidential election, has long been known as a strong critic of Tinubu and the All Progressives Congress (APC). His surprise visit over the weekend raised eyebrows, with many on social media questioning his political motives.

## Visit to Tinubu triggers reactions

Sowunmi's visit to Tinubu was first reported by The New Daily Prime. The report stated that the PDP chieftain met the president privately at his residence in Lagos. No official reason was given for the visit, but photos and short clips of the meeting quickly made their way to the internet.

The reactions were swift and sharp. Critics accused Sowunmi of double standards. Some suggested that the visit was a sign of a possible defection to the APC. Others simply expressed disappointment, recalling Sowunmi's past remarks against the ruling party.

## TV appearance turns heated

On Tuesday, Sowunmi appeared as a guest on the popular morning show *Your View*, which airs on TVC. During the segment, Yeni Kuti, one of the show's co-hosts, questioned him directly about his recent visit.

"You've had a lot of criticism for the president, now your tune seems to have changed," Kuti said. "So when is your own move? When are you leaving the PDP to join APC?"

The question, though asked with a smile, struck a nerve.

Sowunmi replied sharply, "Although I cannot see who is asking those questions,



I didn't come to your programme so you can try to be cheeky with me. Stop that."

His tone prompted a quick response from Kuti. Calm but firm, she said, "I can't be cheeky with you because I'm sure that I'm older than you."

In what appeared to be an attempt to soften the moment, Sowunmi responded with a change in tone. "Oh sister oo! My Auntie! I take that back. Please don't be angry."

But the damage was already done. Kuti clapped back, "I'm not your auntie."

## Online reactions pour in

The clip of the TV exchange went viral within hours. On X (formerly Twitter) and other social media platforms, users debated the tone and timing of Sowunmi's visit as well as the exchange on *Your View*.

Some sided with Kuti, praising her for asking a direct question. "She asked what everyone wanted to know," one user posted. Others criticised Sowunmi for being "defensive" and "condescending."

Meanwhile, a few defended Sowunmi, saying there was nothing wrong with visiting the president regardless of party lines. "Dialogue should not be demonised," one comment read.

## A deeper political meaning?

While Sowunmi has not officially declared any intention to leave the PDP, his recent actions have raised questions about where his loyalties now lie. Political analysts suggest that visits like these often signal upcoming moves, especially in Nigeria's dynamic political space.

Neither Tinubu's camp nor the PDP has issued a formal statement regarding the visit.

## Yeni Kuti remains unfazed

Yeni Kuti, daughter of late Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti and a respected broadcaster, has remained calm through the public debate. Known for her straightforward opinions and seasoned presence on screen, she did not back down during the on-air disagreement.

She later reposted clips of the exchange, without additional comment, allowing the audience to form their own opinions.

## Conclusion

The clash between Yeni Kuti and Segun Sowunmi reflects growing tensions within Nigeria's political and media circles. As the nation moves further into Tinubu's presidency, shifts in party allegiance and public scrutiny will likely continue. For now, one thing is clear: any move by high-profile figures like Sowunmi will not go unnoticed, especially when cameras are rolling.



# Toke Makinwa's ex-husband Ayida reveals battling depression after divorce

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**M**aje Ayida, a well-known fitness entrepreneur and former husband of Nollywood actress Toke Makinwa, has spoken publicly about the difficult mental health struggles he faced following their very public divorce.

He revealed how the breakup left him battling depression and withdrawing from the world around him.

Ayida shared his story recently while speaking at a church event in the United Kingdom. A video clip of his testimony quickly went viral on social media, capturing the attention of many who empathised with his honesty and courage.

## The impact of a public divorce

Ayida explained that the divorce took a heavy toll on him because it was widely covered by the media. The constant public scrutiny and criticism made him feel isolated and ashamed. He said the shame affected not just his self-esteem but also his sense of family legacy.

"I want to be honest about what I went through," Ayida said. "My divorce was very public, and it left me feeling very alone. I withdrew from society because I was ashamed. I felt like I had let down my family's name."

The fitness expert described how the shame pushed him into hiding. He avoided social interactions and stayed home most of the time. His work, which had been a source of pride and identity, suffered badly.

## Losing work and motivation

Ayida admitted that the depression made it extremely difficult for him to continue with his daily routine. He lost focus and motivation. "I stopped going to work," he said. "It was hard to get up in the morning because I felt like there was no point. Everyone already had an opinion about me."

As a man who identified strongly with his career, losing business deals and work opportunities became a serious problem. "Your work is your identity. When I started losing work, it became a real issue for me," he explained.

The downward spiral continued for weeks and months. Ayida revealed that he essentially checked out of life for an entire



year to try and heal.

## A year in the dark

During that year, Ayida battled insomnia and paranoia. He found it hard to sleep and often imagined that people were talking about him or staring when he stepped outside. This fear forced him back into the safety of his home.

"The feeling of hopelessness was overwhelming," he said. "Even when I was silent, there was a loud noise in my head. I was in a very dark place. I was on the floor emotionally."

Despite the intense struggle, Ayida made a conscious decision to fight back. "I decided I didn't want to stay in that space," he said. "I had to choose survival."

## Taking accountability and moving forward

Ayida began researching ways to cope with his depression. He found that one of the most important steps was learning to take accountability for his life and decisions.

"At first, taking responsibility made me feel worse," he said. "But it also gave me a direction. I started to take practical steps to recover."

He emphasised that accepting his situation and working through it helped him regain control and rebuild his confidence.

Marriage and legal battles between Ayida and Toke

Maje Ayida and Toke Makinwa married in 2014, but their relationship faced difficulties

and ended in divorce by 2016. The split attracted significant media attention, and tensions continued even after the divorce.

In 2017, Ayida sued Makinwa for N100 million, accusing her of defamation. The case arose after Makinwa published a memoir titled *On Becoming*, in which she detailed her failed marriage to Ayida. Ayida's legal team had previously asked her to remove sections they claimed were defamatory, but she refused.

## Court ruling in favour of Ayida

The legal battle culminated in November 2020 when a Lagos state high court ruled in favour of Ayida. The court ordered that the defendants, Makinwa and her publisher, pay N500,000 each to a charity chosen by Ayida as damages.

The court also issued an injunction preventing the continued publication and distribution of the parts of the book containing defamatory content.

## A message of hope

Maje Ayida's openness about his mental health challenges has sparked conversations about the stigma surrounding depression, especially among men in Nigeria. His story shows the importance of acknowledging mental health struggles and seeking help.

Through accountability and persistence, Ayida has worked to rebuild his life and career. His experience encourages others facing similar challenges not to give up, but to find ways to heal and move forward.

# D'banj to take legal action against Marc Anthony over 'Oliver Twist' sample

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian Afrobeats icon D'banj has revealed that his legal team has taken steps against American music legend Marc Anthony.

The reason? Anthony reportedly sampled D'banj's 2012 hit single "Oliver Twist" without permission in his 2024 album.

Marc Anthony used the sample in the lead track of his latest album, "Muevense", which also serves as the title of the album. According to D'banj, the use of his song was done without prior notice or official clearance.

"At first, I was happy", D'banj

Speaking in a recent interview on Adesope Live, D'banj opened up about his reaction when he first heard the song. He admitted that he initially felt honoured that a global star like Marc Anthony would sample his music.

He said,

"Marc Anthony sampling my song was one of my biggest highlights last year. He released an album last year, and the title of the album and the first track were a sample of my song 'Oliver Twist.' I listened to it, and it sounded like a Latin version of my original track."

However, the joy didn't last long. As the situation became clearer, D'banj realised the use of his work hadn't followed the proper legal process. According to him, there was no communication or clearance request from Marc Anthony's team.

No clearance, no contact

D'banj noted that while he respected Marc Anthony as an artist, the fact remained that the song was officially released as the lead single and album title, without clearance. This raised red flags for his legal team.

"At first, I was happy because of who he is. But then my legal team got involved. From a business perspective, this had to be handled. He didn't reach out to me before sampling the track. The song



wasn't cleared, and yet it was put out as the lead single and the title of the album."

D'banj emphasised that while artistic recognition is important, protecting intellectual property is equally vital in today's music industry.

"I don hammer", D'banj reflects on unexpected blessing

Despite the legal issues, D'banj remained upbeat about the turn of events. With a mix of pride and humour, he acknowledged the unexpected benefit of being sampled by a major international star.

"I don hammer... God works in mysterious ways," he said, using a popular Nigerian expression meaning "I've hit success."

He credited the digital age for making it easier to trace and act on such cases. In previous decades, artists often lost out on royalties and credit due to a lack of access or legal awareness. Today, with music streaming platforms and digital tools, it's easier to identify where songs are played and how they're used.

Legal team takes charge

D'banj assured fans that his legal team is now handling the matter professionally. He expressed confidence in the process

and hopes for a proper resolution.

"My legal people are handling it, and I know they are going high," he said. "But deep down, I still admire Marc Anthony. We just have to clear it."

While the case unfolds, the story highlights the growing importance of copyright and sampling rights in the global music industry. As Afrobeats continues to influence music scenes around the world, situations like this are expected to become more common.

The bigger picture

This incident isn't just about two artists; it speaks to broader issues in the music industry. More than ever, international artists are blending sounds across genres and cultures. While this creates exciting collaborations and fusion music, it also raises questions about ownership, rights, and fair compensation.

D'banj's calm yet firm approach reflects a maturing African music industry that is ready to protect its creative output. For many fans and insiders, the situation serves as a lesson in how recognition must go hand-in-hand with respect for the business side of music.

As of now, Marc Anthony has not publicly responded to the claims.



# "Why I disclosed my failed marriage", Biola Bayo opens up

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**ollywood actress Biola Bayo has responded strongly to online trolls who have been mocking her following the breakdown of her marriage.

The actress, known for her roles in several Nigerian films, took to social media to address the backlash and clear the air about her personal life.

In a heartfelt video shared with her followers, Bayo stressed that she is human and deserves compassion rather than harsh criticism. She revealed that she once spoke openly about her marriage to control the narrative around her, but unfortunately, some people turned her honesty against her.

## Controlling the narrative

She explained that she initially chose to share details about her marriage to prevent others from spreading false stories. She wanted to tell her own story first. However, instead of receiving support, she faced harsh judgment and cruel comments from some members of the public.

"I am human," she said calmly in the video. "The other time I posted about my marriage, it was because I didn't want people to tell my story for me, yet you all used it against me."

She also disclosed that she informed her estranged husband about the social media post before sharing it publicly. He was aware of her intentions and understood that she was not the person the trolls claimed she is.

"He knows I am not what people say I am, but God will reward everyone," Biola added.

**Marriage, separation, and co-parenting**  
Biola Bayo first announced her separation earlier this year. She revealed that she and her husband have been living apart since April 2024. Despite the difficulties they have faced, the couple remains



committed to raising their son together.

In her statement, Bayo emphasised that even though their marriage has ended, they are focused on co-parenting their child peacefully. She made it clear that the well-being of their son is their top priority.

"We may not be together anymore, but we are still parents. We want to provide a loving and stable environment for our son," she said.

## The emotional toll

The actress also opened up about the emotional toll the separation has taken on her. She admitted to struggling in private, often crying late into the night over the past 14 months. Despite this pain, she has maintained a strong and positive image in public.

Bayo's honesty about her feelings highlights the pressure many public figures face to appear flawless, even while battling personal challenges.

"It has been very hard," she confessed. "I cry almost every night, but I put on a strong face for the world to see."

**Faith and support help her cope**  
Throughout this difficult period, she has found comfort in her faith. She credits her belief in God for giving her strength and hope.

Additionally, she expressed gratitude for the support she has received from fans and colleagues. Their encouragement has helped her stay resilient despite the negativity.

"I thank God for my faith. It keeps me going," she said. "Also, I appreciate everyone who has stood by me and shown me love."

## Biola Bayo call for compassion

The actress urged the public to show more kindness and understanding to people going through tough times. She reminded everyone that behind every story is a real person with feelings.

"We all make mistakes," she said softly. "But we should remember to be human to one another."

Her message was clear: no one deserves to be mocked or judged harshly, especially when dealing with pain.

Biola Bayo's candid response sheds light on the challenges of navigating personal struggles under public scrutiny. Her determination to protect her story, prioritise her child, and lean on faith offers an inspiring example for others facing similar hardships. As she moves forward, she hopes for peace, understanding, and respect from the public and the media alike.

# Vatican announces first Chinese bishop under Pope Leo XIV

By Oluwatosin Ologun

The Vatican announced Wednesday the first appointment of a Chinese bishop under Leo XIV, signalling the new pope's support for a controversial accord on nominations struck by his predecessor with Beijing.

The Holy See expressed "satisfaction" at the recognition by China of the appointment of Joseph Lin Yuntuan as auxiliary bishop of Fuzhou, capital of the southeastern Fujian province. The pope made the nomination on June 5.

"This event represents further fruit of the dialogue between the Holy See and the Chinese authorities and is an important step in the communal journey of the diocese," it said in a statement.

The Vatican and China's Communist leadership do not have formal diplomatic relations, as the Holy See recognises Taiwan while Beijing claims the self-ruled island as its own territory.



But in a historic deal, they agreed in 2018 to allow both sides a say in the naming of bishops in China, which has about 12 million Catholics.

The deal — whose text has never been made public — has drawn criticism within the Church, with some seeing it as allowing the Communist government a

stranglehold over the country's Catholics.

Yet as Pope Francis sought to make inroads for the Church in China, the deal was renewed several times, most recently in October 2024, for four years.

Francis died on April 21 after 12 years as head of the world's 1.4 billion Catholics, and Leo was elected in a conclave of cardinals on May 8.

Between the death of one pope and the naming of another, Beijing proceeded with the "election" of two bishops in the dioceses of Shanghai and Xinxiang.

Commentators have viewed that move as an attempt by the Chinese Communist Party to take advantage of the institutional vacuum in the Vatican to assert its authority over the Church in China.

# U.S. manufacturing company exits South African market after 78 years

By Fatimah Idera

The American multinational tyre manufacturer Goodyear has announced plans to close its manufacturing operations in Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa, marking the end of a facility that has been in operation since 1947.

According to a report by BusinessTech South Africa, Goodyear will maintain its presence in the country through sales and distribution channels, including its Hi-Q Retail network, but will cease all local manufacturing activities.

The Nelson Mandela Bay plant currently employs around 900 people directly, with many more jobs supported across its value chain, including in logistics, security, catering, and maintenance. The closure is part of a broader restructuring strategy for Goodyear's Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) operations, as the company adapts to shifting global market demands.

The restructuring process has been initiated in line with South Africa's Labour Relations Act and will be overseen by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (CCMA).



In a statement, Goodyear expressed gratitude to its South African workforce and pledged to handle the transition responsibly.

"This proposal is in no way a reflection of the commendable efforts or the years of dedication of our South Africa team, for which we are grateful," the company said.

"We recognise our responsibilities towards our employees and their families and are firmly committed to acting fairly and providing them with appropriate support."

While Goodyear did not explicitly link the closure to political developments, the announcement comes amid rising tension between the United States and South Africa over the country's controversial Expropriation Act, which permits land seizure without compensation in an effort to address historic inequalities from the apartheid era.

Goodyear South Africa operates under Goodyear Tyre & Rubber Holdings and forms part of the company's emerging markets cluster.



# Immigration: Despite Trump threats, protests spread across U.S.

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Protests against Donald Trump's harsh immigration policies spread Wednesday across the United States despite a military-backed crackdown in Los Angeles and threats by the hard-right Republican president to use "heavy force."

In Los Angeles, where the unrest began last Friday, an overnight curfew intended to keep people out of the downtown area was largely effective, with police arresting around 25 people who had refused to leave.

Officers patrolled near government buildings, and storekeepers boarded up windows to protect against vandalism.

But the area was quiet Wednesday.

"I would say for the most part everything is hunky dory right here at Ground Zero," protester Lynn Sturgis, 66, a retired school teacher, told AFP.

"Our city is not at all on fire, it's not burning down, as our terrible leader is trying to tell you."

Around 1,000 troops from the 4,700 that Trump ordered to the city were actively guarding facilities and working alongside ICE agents, said Scott Sherman, Deputy Commanding General Army North, who is leading operations.

The rest — including 700 active duty Marines — were mustering, or undergoing training in dealing with civil disturbances, he said.

The Pentagon has said the deployment will cost taxpayers \$134 million.

The mostly peaceful protests ignited over a sudden escalation in efforts to apprehend migrants who were in the country illegally.

Pockets of violence — including the burning of self-driving taxis and hurling stones at police — triggered a massive response from authorities using tear gas and other crowd-control weapons.

Trump won the election last year partly



on promises to combat what he claims is an "invasion" by undocumented migrants.

He is now seizing the opportunity to make political capital, ordering the California National Guard to deploy despite Governor Gavin Newsom's objections, the first time a US president has taken such action in decades.

"If our troops didn't go into Los Angeles, it would be burning to the ground right now," Trump insisted on social media Wednesday.

The White House doubled down on that rhetoric.

"President Trump will never allow mob rule to prevail in America," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told a briefing.

Governor Newsom, a Democrat, has charged that Trump is seeking to escalate the confrontation for political gain.

"Democracy is under assault right before our eyes," he said in a televised address late Tuesday. "California may be first, but it clearly won't end here."

Nationwide protests growing  
Despite Trump's threats to deploy the

National Guard to other Democratic-run states over the objections of governors, protesters appear undeterred.

Thousands marched in New York and Chicago late Tuesday.

Republican Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced he was deploying the state's National Guard to counter a protest announced for San Antonio on Wednesday.

Demonstrations were also planned Wednesday in New York, Seattle and Las Vegas ahead of what organizers say will be a nationwide "No Kings" movement on Saturday, when Trump will attend a highly unusual military parade in the US capital.

In a speech at an Army base on Tuesday, Trump warned that any protests during the Washington parade would face "very heavy force."

The parade, featuring warplanes and tanks, has been organized to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the US Army but also happens to be the day of Trump's 79th birthday.

The last large military parade in Washington was in 1991 after the first Gulf War.

# Meta launches 8-month AI accelerator program for startups

By **Fatimah Idera**



**M**eta has announced the launch of the Llama Impact Accelerator, an eight-month artificial intelligence (AI) programme designed to support Nigerian startups leveraging AI to address local challenges.

The initiative is being rolled out in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy (FMCIDE), the National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (NCAIR), and the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA).

According to Meta, the programme is aimed at early-stage startups building AI-powered tools using its open-source Llama models. The focus will be on four key sectors:

agriculture, healthcare, security and safety, and a wildcard category for other high-impact sectors.

The accelerator will kick off with a six-week incubation phase, where selected teams will receive intensive technical training, mentorship from AI professionals, and insights from industry leaders. This will be followed by six months of extended support, including continued access to technical resources and development opportunities.

The Meta's Head of Public Policy for Anglophone West Africa, Sade Dada emphasized the company's commitment to inclusive innovation.

"By making open-source AI more accessible and relevant to local

challenges, we aim to enable the development of solutions that can drive national development and positively impact communities," she said.

Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Bosun Tijani, welcomed the initiative, calling it a timely investment in Nigeria's growing AI ecosystem.

"We see AI as a key driver for national development, and this programme by Meta will equip innovators with the right tools and guidance to tackle some of our most pressing issues," he stated.

However Applications are open until June 27, 2025, and interested startups are encouraged to apply.



# Elon Musk admits criticism of Trump 'went too far'

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

**B**illionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk has admitted that some of his recent social media posts attacking U.S. President Donald Trump "went too far," in what appears to be an attempt to de-escalate tensions between the two men.

The statement, shared on Musk's X platform (formerly Twitter) on Wednesday, comes after a week of public hostility that saw both figures exchanging personal insults over Trump's controversial tax and spending bill.

"I regret some of my posts about President Donald Trump last week. They went too far," Musk wrote, without specifying which comments he was referring to. The Tesla and SpaceX CEO had previously described Trump's flagship tax package as a "disgusting abomination" and voiced support for impeachment efforts.

Musk has since deleted some of his most critical posts, signaling a possible thaw in relations between two of America's most powerful figures. Sources close to the billionaire said Musk's anger had begun to cool and that he was considering ways to repair the relationship — a move many observers say could be aimed at protecting his sprawling business interests.

Following Musk's post, Tesla shares rose 2.3% in pre-market trading, suggesting investor relief at the softer tone.

"The conciliatory tone from Musk recently might indicate his desire to protect his businesses in light of the position he has found himself in," said Mamta Valechha, a consumer discretionary analyst at Tesla investor Quilter Cheviot.

Matthew Britzman, a shareholder analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown, added: "It still feels unlikely that we'll see these two giant personalities so closely intertwined again, but it's in neither's best interest to let the drama continue."

Shawn Campbell, an adviser at Camelthorn Investments, echoed this view: "There is a possibility their relationship could be restored, but it's unlikely to return to where it once was. The stakes are enormous, with billions of dollars in government contracts on the line, not to mention regulatory and tax



implications."

Elon Musk and President Trump Fallout Over Tax Bill

Musk, whose companies have significant dealings with the U.S. government, had publicly bankrolled a large part of Trump's 2024 re-election campaign, contributing nearly \$300 million and helping Republicans retain control of the House and reclaim the Senate.

Trump had, in turn, appointed Musk to lead a special government initiative to downsize the federal workforce and cut spending. However, Musk resigned from that role late last month after branding Trump's new tax legislation "too expensive" and a threat to his work at the Department of Government Efficiency.

The public falling-out escalated over the weekend, with Trump declaring on Saturday that their relationship was "over" and warning of "serious consequences" if Musk funded Democratic candidates opposing Republicans who supported the bill.

Trump also ruled out repairing ties with Musk, saying there would be "no reconciliation."

However, in a more measured tone on Monday, Trump told reporters that he would not object if Musk reached out and said he had no plans to cut off SpaceX's Starlink satellite services currently used by the White House. He did suggest that he might consider moving Tesla vehicles off government sites.

"We had a good relationship, and I just wish him well," Trump said.

In response, Musk posted a heart emoji under a video clip of Trump's remarks on X, in what appeared to be an olive branch.

Market Reaction

The public spat had initially cost Tesla over \$150 billion in market value last Thursday alone. However, following Musk's conciliatory post, the company's stock had recovered most of its losses by Wednesday.

"The market reaction tells you how concerned investors were about this feud," said one Wall Street analyst. "A détente — even a partial one — is welcome news."

It remains to be seen whether Musk and Trump will fully mend their relationship. Analysts say both figures have strong incentives to move past the row.

"The world's richest man and the leader of the most powerful nation — their interests are too interconnected to let personal animosity dictate outcomes," said Campbell.

For now, observers say Musk's latest post suggests a calculated effort to de-escalate tensions and safeguard Tesla and SpaceX's lucrative relationships with the U.S. government.

As one analyst put it: "At the end of the day, Musk is a pragmatist."

# City seal £46.5m Reijnders deal ahead of Club world cup

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

**M**anchester City have completed the signing of Dutch midfielder Tijjani Reijnders from AC Milan for an initial £46.5m, strengthening Pep Guardiola's midfield ahead of this month's Club World Cup in the United States.

Reijnders, 26, arrives on a five-year deal and becomes the fourth new face at the Etihad this summer, joining Rayan Ait-Nouri, Rayan Cherki, and Marcus Bettinelli. The Netherlands international could make his debut on 18 June against Moroccan champions Wydad AC in Philadelphia.

"I'm ecstatic to be signing for Manchester City," said Reijnders. "City are one of the biggest teams in the world, with the best coach, world-class players and outstanding facilities. I want to help the club continue their success under Pep Guardiola."

The midfielder was named Serie A Midfielder of the Season after an impressive 2024/25 campaign with Milan, in which he scored 15 goals across all competitions and stood out despite the club's eighth-place finish and failure to qualify for Europe.

His arrival comes at a time of transition for City. With Kevin de Bruyne departing and long-time midfielders like Bernardo Silva and Mateo Kovacic ageing or injured, Guardiola is reshaping the engine room of a side that finished third in the Premier League and ended the season without silverware for the first time in eight years.

Despite interest in Bayer Leverkusen star Florian Wirtz, City opted to spread their investment, signing Reijnders, Cherki, and Ait-Nouri for a combined fee of around £108m — a



more financially prudent approach compared to Wirtz's £127m price tag.

Reijnders' signing is seen not only as a replacement for De Bruyne, but as a complement to defensive midfielder Rodri. His dynamic, box-to-box style, high stamina, and offensive instincts offer a contrast to the more measured play of his Spanish counterpart.

Edu Rubio, former coach at West Ham and Wolves, believes Reijnders is a perfect fit: "He's a tireless engine who will complement Rodri well. His ability to play in tight spaces and his physicality will be crucial for adapting to the Premier League."

Reijnders was among Serie A's best in multiple metrics last season. He ranked ninth for forward passes, fifth for through balls, and seventh for ball carries over 10 metres. His versatility and ball progression skills will offer Guardiola new tactical options, especially in transitional play.

Crucially, he led all Serie A players in passages of play ending in a shot (205), and ranked second in secondary chances created (49) — evidence of his ability to link midfield and attack

and bring the best out of his teammates.

"Reijnders has improved massively since joining Milan," said Italian journalist Daniele Verri. "He will love working under Guardiola, and his attitude and work rate are exactly what City need during this period of transition."

City's midfield reshuffle could continue, with Calvin Phillips, James McAtee, and Jack Grealish all reportedly available for transfer. Kyle Walker, who spent the latter half of last season on loan, is also expected to leave.

The addition of Reijnders marks a strategic move by City to bolster their squad not just for domestic duties, but to mount a serious challenge in the expanded Club World Cup format. With squad depth now reinforced, Guardiola's men will aim to begin their American adventure on a high.

For Reijnders, the task is clear: help restore City's dominance — and perhaps begin a new era in midfield with the same ambition that brought trophies to Manchester in years past.



# Tuchel backs 'special' Bellingham despite criticism

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

England manager Thomas Tuchel has leapt to the defence of midfielder Jude Bellingham following criticism of the 21-year-old's fiery display in Tuesday night's 3-1 defeat to Senegal, a result that marked Tuchel's first loss in charge of the national team.

Speaking in an interview with TalkSport, Tuchel admitted that even his own mother finds Bellingham's on-field demeanour "repulsive" at times, but insisted the Real Madrid star possesses a rare "edge" that England must learn to harness.

"Sometimes you see the explosion towards referees and the anger in his game," Tuchel explained. "My mum sees that and doesn't understand how I can say he's a nice, intelligent boy. But I know him. He is. He's a special boy."

Bellingham was visibly incensed on Tuesday when VAR chalked off a second-half goal he thought he had scored. At the time, England were trailing 2-1 at the City Ground. Despite his passionate protests, the decision stood, and Senegal later added a third to seal a famous victory.

Tuchel, the former Chelsea and Bayern Munich boss, was quick to temper concern about Bellingham's temperament, emphasising that his fire is not something to be extinguished — but refined.

"He brings an edge which we welcome and is needed if we want



to achieve big things," Tuchel said. "It just needs to be channelled towards the opponent and our goal — not at referees or team-mates."

Bellingham came on as a second-half substitute in a much-rotated England side, with only Harry Kane retaining his starting place from the weekend's win over Andorra. The defeat sparked concerns among supporters, some of whom questioned whether Bellingham's emotional volatility was a liability.

Tuchel dismissed that view outright.

"I struggle to see that," he responded when asked if England might be better off without the midfielder. "It has to be the other way around — how can we get the best version of him? He brings something we don't have in abundance. That hunger, that rage — it's rare."

England remain top of Group K in World Cup qualifying, with nine

points from three matches and no goals conceded. However, Tuchel acknowledged that results like Tuesday's indicate that harmony in the squad is still a work in progress.

"There's a lack of enthusiasm and joy consistently at this level," Tuchel admitted. "We're trying to get the best from this group, but it requires individuals stepping back for the greater good. That chemistry, that connection — we haven't nailed it yet."

With just over a year until the 2026 World Cup, England's path forward is still being shaped. Tuchel has the credentials, but whether he can strike the right balance between passion and control — particularly with influential figures like Bellingham — remains to be seen.

England next face Andorra and Serbia in September, two matches that could further define the trajectory of this new-look Three Lions side under their meticulous German manager.

# Brazil, Ecuador qualify for 2026 World Cup finals

By Oluwatosin Ologun

**B**razil booked their place at the 2026 World Cup in North America on Tuesday with a lackluster 1-0 home victory over Paraguay, the first win of Carlo Ancelotti's reign.

The five-time world champions punched their ticket to the finals in Canada, the United States and Mexico thanks to Vinicius Jr.

The Real Madrid star poked in from close range in the 44th minute in Sao Paulo after a cross from new Manchester United signing Matheus Cunha.

It was the perfect gift for the Italian Ancelotti on his 66th birthday, having seen his new side held 0-0 by Ecuador last week in his first game as coach.

Former Real Madrid boss Ancelotti praised his team's "commitment" and "attitude".

"It was a good match with a very good first half, although obviously we suffered a bit because Paraguay are very solid opponents and we slowed down a bit in the second," he said.

Uruguay's 2-0 win over Venezuela in Montevideo had raised the prospect of qualification for both Brazil and Paraguay at Corinthians Arena.

Paraguay needed only a point to qualify while Brazil knew they could advance with a win.

In the event it was Brazil who seized the opportunity presented by Venezuela's loss with Vinicius scoring the only goal just before half-time.

Brazil had struggled to create many chances up until that point, with Cunha squandering a golden chance in the 35th minute after heading wide from point-blank range.

Cunha made up for it with a key part in the goal, capitalizing on good work from Raphinha to dart into the box and whip in a low cross for Vinicius, who stabbed home the finish.



The win lifted Brazil into third place in the South American standings with 25 points from 16 games, guaranteeing them a top-six finish and an automatic qualifying berth.

Looking ahead to next summer, Ancelotti said he had "a very long list" of 70 players in mind, including Neymar, who was missing with injury.

He added: "I really liked those who were with me in this squad for their commitment, their attitude, and the atmosphere."

The defeat left Paraguay with 24 points, meaning they need one point to secure their first World Cup appearance since 2010.

Surprise package Ecuador joined Brazil by sealing qualification with a point following a 0-0 draw with Peru in Lima.

In other games, Uruguay edged closer to qualification with their win over Venezuela while Chile were eliminated with defeat to Bolivia.

Goals from Rodrigo Aguirre and Giorgian de Arrascaeta secured all three points for Marcelo Bielsa's Uruguay to leave the two-time world champions firmly on course for a place in next year's finals.

Like Paraguay, Uruguay need only a point from their final two games to qualify.

Venezuela, who are bidding to reach the World Cup for the first time in the nation's history, are seventh with 18 points from 16 games.

Argentina, who have already qualified, came from behind to frustrate Colombia with a 1-1 draw in Buenos Aires.

Liverpool star Luis Diaz fired Colombia into the lead with a superb 24th minute goal, and the Colombians were given a further boost midway through the second half when the world champions were reduced to 10 men after Enzo Fernandez's dismissal.

But Colombia's hopes of a vital win were dashed nine minutes from time when Thiago Almada weaved into the box and found the target to level.

The top six finishers in South America qualify automatically for the World Cup, with the seventh-placed team advancing to an intercontinental playoff.

Bolivia defeated Chile 2-0 to end the former South American champions' hopes of qualification.

It is the third straight World Cup that Chile have missed out on.

The loss continues a dramatic fall from grace for "La Roja", who won back-to-back Copa Americas in 2015 and 2016.