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# FG designates flood prevention national security imperative with new proactive strategy

By Friday Omosola

**T**he Federal Government (FG) has elevated flood prevention to a national security priority, announcing a strategic shift from reactive disaster management to an early, coordinated response mechanism.

This new approach is encapsulated in a recently unveiled Anticipatory Action Framework on Floods, presented to Vice President Kashim Shettima at the Presidential Villa in Abuja yesterday.

The comprehensive framework incorporates scientific and traditional data-gathering methodologies, establishes clear triggers for early action, and includes a consolidated budget dedicated to flood response.

Its core objective is to bolster resilience within Nigerian states and communities particularly susceptible to seasonal flooding.

Receiving the draft framework and consolidated budget from the Anticipatory Action Task Force (AATF), Shettima underscored the nation's imperative to 'believe in science' and pursue a proactive roadmap for disaster prevention.

"Disasters are security issues. Over the years, we have only been reacting instead of practising proactive disaster management. By seizing this initiative, and believing in science, we have carried out all the due processes of finding a roadmap," he stated.

He commended President Bola Tinubu for his leadership in disaster preparedness and acknowledged the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) for its coordinating role.

Shettima also pledged to mobilise key national stakeholders to support the new initiative, emphasising collective resource marshalling to address these critical issues.



Prof. Nentawe Goshwe Yilwatda, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, described the framework as a 'paradigm shift' in disaster management.

"We are shifting from reaction to recovery. We are also shifting from losses to prevention", the Minister explained.

He cited devastating statistics from 2004, where floods displaced approximately 1.2 million people, destroyed about 1.3 million hectares of arable farmland, and incurred over \$1 billion in losses.

"If we can allocate just one per cent of that money, we can save much more than we lost," he posited.

Echoing the call for urgency, National Security Adviser (NSA) Nuhu Ribadu stressed the necessity for swift and proactive measures.

While acknowledging that natural disasters are often beyond human control, Ribadu emphasised that 'reaction is ours.'

He added, "This is what matters the most, the ability for us to get ready for a situation that is not under our control. Despite all the resources one has, as long

as one is not in a position to anticipate and be able to react, one is likely going to suffer the worst consequences of natural disasters."

Providing further insight into the AATF's efforts, Inna Audu, Special Assistant to the President on Humanitarian Affairs and Development Partners, detailed the task force's adherence to a defined timeline since March.

This included the inauguration of the AATF, a validation workshop, and the completion of data collection through both scientific and traditional methods to ensure evidence-based decision-making.

She also revealed the establishment of a Strategic Communication Working Group, operating under the NSA's office within the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) and led by Major General Adamu Garba Laka.

This group is tasked with implementing a multi-tiered communication and advocacy plan, utilising information from the Trigger Group to ensure states, local government areas, and communities are well-informed, engaged, and prepared to act on early warning triggers.

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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
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# FG completes landmark review of AfCFTA implementation, reaffirms regional trade leadership

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Federal Government of Nigeria has concluded its inaugural five-year implementation review of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), marking a pivotal moment in the country's ongoing efforts to harness the full potential of intra-African trade and position itself as a leading regional economic force.

The comprehensive review, in line with Article 28 of the AfCFTA Agreement, evaluated Nigeria's performance in delivering on its obligations under the trade pact, particularly in relation to key protocols on trade in goods, trade in services, and dispute resolution.

The assessment was spearheaded by the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, under the leadership of Minister Dr Jumoke Oduwole, with financial and technical backing from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Africa.

In a statement released on Wednesday, the Ministry noted that the review reflects Nigeria's commitment to regional economic integration and its ambition to build a diversified, inclusive, and globally competitive economy.

Dr Oduwole, who initiated the review process, stressed its significance in gauging progress, identifying institutional gaps, and strengthening Nigeria's readiness for deeper trade ties across the continent.

"Our unwavering commitment to the implementation of the AfCFTA is rooted in the conviction that continental economic integration, driven by trade, is essential for Africa's collective prosperity and global competitiveness," she said.

"Nigeria is strategically positioned to serve as an innovation, production, and trade hub within the AfCFTA market."

The review follows the formation of the AfCFTA Central Coordination Committee (CCC) in March 2025, also inaugurated by Oduwole. The CCC brings together over 20 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), alongside representatives from the private sector, and functions as Nigeria's national platform for implementation, negotiation, and domestication of AfCFTA obligations.

Each participating institution was tasked



with assessing its policy alignment, institutional capacity, and implementation performance. The result was a set of concrete and actionable policy recommendations aimed at enhancing Nigeria's trade preparedness.

Oduwole highlighted three key takeaways from the review:

The scale and complexity of AfCFTA demand a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach.

Achieving Nigeria's goals under the agreement requires targeted investments in institutional capacity.

Innovation, agility, and evidence-based policymaking must underpin Nigeria's implementation strategy.

The assessment identified several areas needing urgent attention, including improved inter-agency coordination, greater engagement with the private sector, and ongoing capacity-building. Policy misalignments and logistical challenges were also flagged as barriers to full implementation.

"We are not just reviewing for the sake of compliance," Oduwole said. "The recommendations from this review will shape the CCC's work programme, establish performance benchmarks, and fine-tune our national strategy."

In her foreword to the report, Oduwole expressed gratitude to the UNDP and the

CCC for their strategic input and reaffirmed Nigeria's dedication to reforms and accountability.

She noted that the review aligns with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, which emphasises economic diversification through non-oil exports and deeper participation in Africa's continental trade initiatives.

Looking ahead, the Minister revealed plans to undertake a forward-looking assessment of Phase II AfCFTA Protocols, covering Investment, Intellectual Property Rights, Competition Policy, Digital Trade, and Women and Youth in Trade.

Oduwole also encouraged other AfCFTA member states to conduct similar evaluations and expressed Nigeria's willingness to share its experience in the spirit of pan-African cooperation.

"Nigeria will continue to lead with vision, expertise and resolve," she concluded.

"Our objective is clear: to ensure that the AfCFTA serves as a catalyst for economic transformation and sustainable development—not only for Nigeria, but for the entire African continent."

The completion of the review is seen as a significant step in Nigeria's AfCFTA journey and a testament to the country's ambition to play a leadership role in shaping Africa's economic future.



# Reps launches wide-ranging inquiry into downstream oil sector challenges

By Friday Omosola



**T**he House of Representatives Committee on Petroleum Resources (Downstream) has initiated a comprehensive investigation into critical issues plaguing Nigeria's downstream oil sector.

The probe will scrutinise various aspects, including the contentious turnaround maintenance of national refineries, the acquisition of OVH Energy, and growing concerns about market dominance by the Dangote Refinery.

Committee Chairman Ikenga Ugochinyere announced the inquiry during a press conference in Abuja yesterday.

He expressed dismay over the repeated shutdowns of the Port Harcourt and Warri refineries, particularly after much fanfare surrounded their supposed return to production.

"We are not out to protect anybody. If anybody is found to have been engaged in corrupt activities, the law should be allowed its course," Ugochinyere stated, emphasising the committee's

commitment to accountability.

The committee also revealed it would investigate the hurdles faced by local and modular refineries in acquiring crude oil, questioning why domestic refiners must reportedly travel to Switzerland to negotiate local crude supplies.

Ugochinyere indicated the House's intent to uncover what went wrong with the refinery maintenance, especially given the reputable company involved.

He stressed that a thorough understanding of these issues would precede any consideration of selling or privatising the refineries.

Numerous petitions regarding the petroleum sector have prompted the lawmakers to seek lasting solutions, particularly concerning the consistent supply of feedstock for modular and other local refineries.

Ugochinyere noted that refinery owners, oil marketers, and retailers have voiced concerns about policies that could negatively impact their significant

investments, specifically citing allegations of the Dangote Refinery's plans to monopolise petroleum product transportation and retail.

This alleged takeover, stakeholders warned, has generated considerable tension across the country.

Furthermore, the committee will revisit the investigation into the acquisition of OVH and address complaints from NNPC retail staff.

Ugochinyere explained that the House had previously rejected an earlier report on this matter and mandated a renewed investigation.

Finally, the committee plans to explore amendments to the Petroleum Industry Act to address emerging issues not currently covered by the legislation.

This initiative aims to strengthen the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) and enhance the overall downstream petroleum sector.

# Kwankwaso accuses Tinubu of developing Southern region, marginalising North

By Damilola Olufemi

**F**ormer Kano State Governor and leader of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP), Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, has accused President Bola Tinubu's administration of marginalising the northern region in the allocation of national resources.

Speaking during the Kano State Stakeholders' Dialogue on the 2025 Constitutional Amendment on Thursday, Kwankwaso expressed concern over what he described as a lopsided distribution of federal funds in favour of the South.

"Let me advise the Federal Government on the distribution of federal resources," Kwankwaso said. "From the information available to us, it's like most of the national budget is now tilting in one direction in this country."

The former presidential candidate criticised the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) for allegedly prioritising infrastructure in the southern parts of the country while neglecting the North, which he said suffers from insecurity, poverty, and poor infrastructure.

"Let me advise those who are struggling by all means to take everything to remember that some of the issues that we have in this part of the country today have to do with the lack of enough resources and mismanagement of the little that comes in," he said. "That is why we have insecurity, we have poverty and so on. It is happening here mainly, but like a desert, it would go everywhere."

Kwankwaso cited his recent road journey from Abuja to Kano, which he described as "terrible," to illustrate the neglect of critical infrastructure in the North. He noted that despite the project starting during the early years of APC rule, the road remains in deplorable condition.

"Yesterday, I was to come by air, but unfortunately, my airline decided to shift our takeoff from 3pm to 8pm. I had to come by road. From Abuja to Kaduna to Kano was a hell. Terrible. Very bad road," he said.

He added, "Now, we are told that there is a



road from the South to the East. We support infrastructure anywhere in this country...and any other thing that is good for the masses. But a situation where the government is taking our resources and dumping it in one part of the country and other parts of the country are left just like that—I don't believe that is the right thing to do by the government itself."

Kwankwaso calls for balanced approach  
Kwankwaso urged the Tinubu-led administration to adopt a more balanced approach to governance and development.

"This is the time for the government to change, to convince our people that the government is not just on one side of the country," he added.

The remarks come at a politically sensitive time as the 2027 general election draws near. Kwankwaso, a major northern political figure with a strong grassroots following through his Kwankwasiyya movement, has become a central figure in alliance talks across party lines.

His recent closed-door meeting with President Tinubu at the Aso Rock Villa has sparked speculation of a possible

alliance ahead of 2027. Analysts suggest the APC is seeking to consolidate support in Kano and other northern states to outmanoeuvre the rising opposition bloc comprising Atiku Abubakar, Peter Obi, and the African Democratic Congress (ADC).

In the 2023 presidential election, Kano proved to be a key battleground, with Kwankwaso emerging as the clear winner in the state, securing 997,279 votes. Tinubu followed with 517,341, while Atiku and Obi garnered 131,716 and 28,513 votes, respectively.

Nationally, Kwankwaso placed fourth in the election with 1,496,687 votes, behind Tinubu (8,794,726), Atiku (6,984,520), and Obi (6,101,533).

Currently, the NNPP controls the Kano governorship under Abba Kabir Yusuf, Kwankwaso's political protégé, though the APC retains influence in the state, particularly at the senatorial level.

Kwankwaso's rising political value has made him a coveted figure as parties prepare for the high-stakes 2027 contest.



# PDP leaders hail turnout at NEC meeting, reaffirm unity ahead of 2027

By Damilola Olufemi

Leaders and stakeholders of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) expressed optimism and renewed confidence on Thursday as the party successfully held its 101st National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting at the Wadata Plaza Secretariat in Abuja.

The gathering, which marked a significant moment in the PDP's ongoing efforts to reposition itself, saw the attendance of six governors, including Bauchi State Governor and PDP Governors' Forum Chairman, Senator Bala Mohammed, and Osun State Governor, Senator Ademola Adeleke.

Representatives from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) were also present at the meeting.

After months of postponed attempts and defections to the All Progressives Congress (APC) and other opposition alignments, the PDP viewed the successful convening of the NEC as a major step forward in its rebuilding process.

"The composition of this NEC attests to the fact that the PDP is still one and waxing stronger. We look forward to our national convention, flowing from here," declared Acting National Chairman, Ambassador Umar Damagum, during his opening address.

Damagum acknowledged recent internal struggles, noting that while some members had left and returned, others insisted they never departed. He praised the turnout as a signal that party unity was within reach.

Former Kaduna State Governor, Senator Ahmed Makarfi, who represented BoT Chairman Senator Adolphus Wabara, shared a message of encouragement from the party's Board of Trustees.

"Many believed this meeting would never hold, but today we have proved the doubters wrong," said Makarfi, who serves as BoT Secretary. He emphasised the party's ability to overcome internal



divisions and stage a "successful national convention" ahead of the 2027 elections.

"Nigeria is waiting for us," he added. "As we rebuild trust, we must also be mindful of our statements to avoid igniting unnecessary tensions."

In a strong show of commitment, the PDP Governors' Forum reaffirmed its "undiluted" support for the party, while also expressing disappointment over members who left prematurely.

"Some of our people were impatient and walked away before we began this rebuilding. Sadly, they have missed the opportunity to be part of the PDP's resurgence," Bala Mohammed stated. He reiterated that although the party remains open to returnees, it would no longer tolerate indiscipline.

"Our doors are open, but indiscipline won't be accommodated. That's what weakened us before," he said.

Mohammed also expressed gratitude to the party's founding fathers for their continued involvement and stressed the need for loyalty and unity over personal grudges.

Senate Minority Leader Senator Abba Moro and House of Representatives

Caucus Leader Hon. Kingsley Chinda assured the gathering of the lawmakers' commitment to strengthening party cohesion.

"Those who remain in the PDP must be clear that they're here to serve the people and not merely looking for where to survive politically," Moro stated.

As of the time of this report, the NEC meeting continued behind closed doors with expectations high for decisive resolutions that would set the stage for the upcoming national convention and 2027 general elections.

PDP postpones national convention to November

The National Elective Convention of the Peoples Democratic Party, earlier scheduled to hold in August in Kano State, has been shifted to November 15 and 16, 2025.

The National Publicity Secretary of the PDP, Debo Ologunagba, made this known while speaking at a press conference in Abuja on Thursday shortly after its 101st National Executive Committee meeting.

According to him, the November meeting will be held in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.



# Nentawe Yilwatda succeeds Ganduje as APC National Chairman

By Friday Omosola

**T**he Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Nentawe Yilwatda, has been named the new National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

His selection and subsequent election by the party's National Executive Committee (NEC) took place during a meeting in Abuja on Thursday.

He succeeded and took over the leadership of the party from Abdullahi Ganduje, who resigned from the chairmanship in June, citing personal reasons.

Yilwatda's nomination was put forth by Governor Hope Uzodimma of Imo State, who chairs the Progressive Governors' Forum, and was seconded by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abbas Tajudeen.

Members of the NEC then approved the motion through a voice vote.

Yilwatda's ascent to this pivotal role comes as the APC seeks to solidify its influence at the federal level and expand its control within various states, especially those where governors from opposition parties have recently joined the ruling party.

The 56-year-old, who hails from Plateau State, was appointed to his ministerial position by President Bola Tinubu late last year.

He was among seven individuals nominated on October 23, 2023, and sworn into office on November 4 of the same year.

The New Daily Prime reported that following Ganduje's departure, Ali Dalori, the party's Deputy National Chairman (North) was designated to manage the party's affairs.

Ganduje himself had assumed the APC leadership in August 2023, succeeding Abdullahi Adamu, another former



governor who also resigned from the position.

Prior to his chairmanship, Ganduje served as governor of Kano State (a North-West state) from 2015 to 2023.

In January of this year, Tinubu also appointed Ganduje as the Board Chairman of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN).

## Yilwatda

Yilwatda is an engineer and academic who emerged as the APC flagbearer in the 2023 gubernatorial election in Plateau State but lost to Caleb Mutfwang of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

He challenged the victory of the PDP but after the Supreme Court upheld Mutfwang's win, he accepted the verdict.

Between July 2017 and December 2021, he served as the Resident Electoral Commissioner in Benue State.

Prior to that, he held the position of

Director of ICT at the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, where he worked for 12 years.

During the 2023 general elections, Yilwatda was appointed as the coordinator of the Tinubu/Shettima Campaign Organisation in Plateau State.

He maintains a close political alliance with former Plateau State Governor, Simon Lalong.

Following Lalong's election as senator representing Plateau South Senatorial District, the state's ministerial slot became vacant.

In response, several party chieftains and political groups rallied behind Yilwatda, urging his nomination as Lalong's replacement.

Tinubu subsequently nominated him for a ministerial role.

After undergoing screening by the National Assembly, he was sworn in as the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs on 24th October 2024.

# Amaechi: Coalition will back ADC presidential candidate in 2027

By Damilola Olufemi



**F**ormer Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, has pledged that leaders of the newly formed opposition coalition will fully back whoever emerges as the presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in the 2027 elections.

Speaking in Port Harcourt on Wednesday, the former Rivers State governor emphasised the coalition's commitment to a credible selection process.

"The moment anybody emerges from the primary, all of us will support; that's the agreement," Amaechi told journalists.

"We insist on a free and fair, transparent primary," he added.

Amaechi, a former stalwart of the All Progressives Congress (APC), also aimed at the current administration, highlighting the rising hardship and hunger across the country.

Amaechi calls on Rivers to support party

He urged the people of Rivers State to throw their support behind the ADC and work towards unseating the ruling party in the next general elections.

"Every Rivers man who thinks good of the state and country should move to register with the new party and ensure that we remove the current government and stop the hunger that everybody is suffering from," he said.

The ADC has become the coalition's chosen platform to challenge President Bola Tinubu's expected re-election bid. The group includes several high-profile politicians such as former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and former Anambra State governor Peter Obi, both of whom ran for president in 2023.

Other notable figures backing the movement are former Senate President David Mark and ex-Kaduna State governor Nasir El-Rufai. Mark, now serving as the coalition's interim chairman, declared at its unveiling on July 2 that the alliance aims to "save the country's democracy" and prevent Nigeria from slipping into a one-party system.



# “Let’s not abandon a ship in need of repairs” – Saraki urges PDP members to stay united

By **Gbenga Olaleye**



**F**ormer Senate President, Dr Bukola Saraki, has called on members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to remain committed to the party despite its current internal challenges, emphasising the importance of unity, ideological consistency, and collective responsibility in rebuilding Nigeria’s foremost opposition party.

In a statement posted on his official Facebook page on Wednesday, Saraki reflected on his participation in a PDP Consultative Conference convened by one of the party’s founding fathers, Professor Jerry Gana.

“It was an honour to join the founding fathers and stakeholders of our great party, the Peoples Democratic Party, today at the Consultative Conference,” Saraki wrote.

Highlighting the PDP’s track record during its 16 years in power, Saraki recalled how Nigeria became Africa’s largest economy under its leadership and experienced stronger national cohesion. He warned against abandoning the party over frustration or political convenience.

“Let’s not abandon a ship in need of repairs. If you must leave, let it be on ideology, not anger,” he stated. “The ultimate goal must be to put Nigeria first and rise above the propaganda designed to divide us as a party.”

Saraki commended Professor Gana for initiating what he described as a “family meeting” of party elders and reaffirmed his unwavering loyalty to the PDP, declaring he would never walk away from the party.

“The PDP was built on solid foundations. Its founders handed it over to us with trust. God forbid that we become the generation that lets it fall apart,” he said.

Calling on party faithful to remain focused and united, Saraki urged all PDP members to prioritise Nigeria’s future over personal grievances and internal strife.

“I urge all true patriots of the PDP to agree that for the greater good of Nigeria, leaving is not an option,” he concluded.

Saraki’s remarks come amid renewed concerns about growing defections and factional disagreements within the PDP, as the party grapples with its role in a changing political landscape ahead of future national elections.



# Lawmakers or Lawbreakers? Nigerians slam Senate over Natasha suspension

By: Damilola Olufemi, Fatimah Idera and Helen Okechukwu

The ongoing controversy between Senate President Godswill Akpabio and Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan has brought to the forefront deep-seated issues of power dynamics and institutional accountability within Nigeria's Senate.

The latest in the saga was Natasha gaining access to the National Assembly complex in Abuja on Tuesday, 22nd of July, 2025, after being denied initially.

The senator, currently under a six-month suspension imposed by the Senate, had vowed to return to legislative duties, citing a court ruling which, according to her, supported her reinstatement.

Her attempt to resume on Tuesday was initially blocked, as security operatives stopped her convoy from entering the premises. Senator Natasha, who was in a black vehicle, was turned back, along with another car ahead of hers that carried activist Aisha Yesufu.

The Senate had issued a stern warning to suspended Kogi senator, Natasha, advising her not to attempt a return to the National Assembly ahead of the expiration of her suspension.

Senator Yemi Adaramodu, Chair of the Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, made this clear in a statement released on Sunday, saying there is no valid court ruling compelling the Senate to reinstate Akpoti-Uduaghan immediately.

"The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria wishes to reaffirm, for the third time, that there is no subsisting court order mandating the Senate to recall Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan before the expiration of her suspension," Adaramodu stated.

Reacting to the controversy, Adeola Kikelomo, a woman activist, shares her reaction to the saga and its implications for Nigeria's system, saying, "It's essential to create a safe and respectful environment for women in politics and governance."

The implications of this saga are far-reaching and multifaceted. According to Kikelomo, the disregard for court verdicts and the suspension of Senator Natasha raise serious concerns about the rule of law and



democratic principles in Nigeria.

"If the Senate can disregard a court verdict, it undermines the rule of law and sets a dangerous precedent for other institutions," she added.

Although the Senate denied the existence of a court verdict ordering the embattled senator's return, this newspaper's efforts to obtain a certified copy of the judgment from Senator Natasha were unsuccessful.

As the situation continues to unfold, calls for greater accountability and transparency within Nigeria's Senate institutions are growing louder. The controversy has sparked widespread debate and concern, with many questioning the Senate's commitment to upholding the rule of law and respecting the authority of the judiciary.

Nigerians react

Wemimo Oluwalade, an X user (formerly known as Twitter), urged Nigerians and other activists like Oby Ezekwesili to lend their support and make themselves available as Senator Natasha enters the building. Oluwalade wrote, "Please, all well-meaning women in Nigeria should be mobilised to follow her to the National Assembly. @obyezeks @AishaYesufu. Senator Akpabio doesn't own the National Assembly. The court has spoken. They cannot continue to deny Kogi Central its representation at the NA."

Another user, Og Chrissy, noted that it is time to rise up and say enough to all forms of oppression, stating, "Real men shouldn't be intimidated by the growth of women. No woman should be humiliated because one man wants to boost his ego. Nigeria belongs to all of us, not to a few."

Adegoke said, "I just hope Natasha isn't further victimised post her return to the Senate. As a young political aspirant, I can say that the next generation is watching, and how our few female leaders are treated will translate to the turnout of young women in politics. So I appeal to our leaders."

Speaking against the choice to escort Natasha to the National Assembly, many X users had also faulted Aisha Yesufu.

@idyenoh said "This word we stand by you na em kpai MKO Abiola. BE CAREFUL SE.NATASHA."

@Tmone\_123 explained that "With your dirty stinky hijab stand by nonsense, You'll be put to jail just try nonsense at the national assembly na that time you go know say government dey with that oriburuku wey the life of the failed genders like you dey parade themselves up and down."

@generous0211 added that "Aisha Yesufu has turned to political thug."

# Yilwatda promises bold moves, eyes more opposition govs

By Friday Omosola

Freshly installed All Progressives Congress (APC) Chairman, Nentawe Yilwatda, declared his intention to implement decisive policies and actively recruit more governors from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and other opposition factions into the ruling party.

Yilwatda said this during an appearance on Channels Television's 'Politics Today' program, just hours after his confirmation as the APC's new leader in Abuja.

"My immediate priority is that the party is united," Yilwatda affirmed, indicating a commitment to internal cohesion.

He also pledged to coordinate the APC's efforts to fully implement its manifesto.

The new APC chairman outlined his strategy to expand the party's influence, stating he would 'invest in legwork' to persuade more governors from rival parties to join the APC fold.

Yilwatda brings a diverse background to



his new role.

A registered engineer with COREN and a community developer, he previously served as a lecturer at the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State.

The Plateau State native also has experience as a former Resident Electoral

Commissioner for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

He was appointed Minister of Humanitarian Affairs by President Bola Tinubu in October 2024, a position he held until his emergence as the APC National Chairman on Thursday.

# PDP govs, party leaders meet in Abuja ahead of NEC session

By Damilola Olufemi

Bauchi State Governor and Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governors' Forum, Bala Mohammed, on Wednesday convened a strategic caucus meeting at the Bauchi State Governor's Lodge in Abuja, ahead of the party's crucial National Executive Committee (NEC) session slated for Thursday (today).

Present at the PDP caucus meeting

The closed-door meeting brought together five sitting governors—Seyi Makinde (Oyo), Caleb Mutwang (Plateau), Ahmadu Fintiri (Adamawa), Dauda Lawal (Zamfara), and host Bala Mohammed—as well as top national party figures.

Also in attendance were PDP Acting National Chairman, Umar Damagun; National Secretary, Senator Samuel



Anyanwu; and several members of the party's Board of Trustees (BoT).

Sources say the session aimed to align party stakeholders and forge consensus ahead of the NEC meeting, where key decisions of the National Working Committee (NWC), including

arrangements for the forthcoming national elective convention, are expected to be ratified.

The gathering is part of efforts to consolidate party unity and reposition the PDP ahead of the 2027 general elections.



# Osun governor's aide calls Senators' defection to APC a "miscalculation"

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Senior Special Adviser on Media to the Osun State Governor, Hezekiah Bamiji, has criticised the recent defection of Senators Francis Fadahunsi (Osun East) and Olubiyi Fadeyi (Osun Central) from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC), describing the move as a strategic misstep.

Speaking on The Morning Brief, a Channels Television programme aired Thursday, Bamiji said the senators acted on unfounded rumours that Governor Ademola Adeleke intended to defect to the APC, and in doing so, fell into what he called "a trap" laid by the ruling party at the federal level.

"Maybe what I can say is a kind of miscalculation on the part of the lawmakers," Bamiji stated.

"The rumour perhaps overwhelmed them, thinking that the governor was coming. They felt they were Abuja politicians and should be faster than the governor."

He stressed that Governor Adeleke, as the PDP leader in Osun State, had given no indication of leaving the party and



maintained that good governance in the state does not require a shift in party allegiance.

"Even if the governor was going to move, did they ask the governor any questions?" Bamiji asked. "Yes, the APC set a trap for them, and they entered."

He also questioned whether the senators had consulted their constituents before making the switch, suggesting a lack of due process in the decision.

Their defection, announced on Wednesday, was part of a wave that saw four PDP senators cross over to the APC, increasing the ruling party's Senate majority to 70 members, while reducing the PDP's presence in the chamber to 28.

The development is seen as a further consolidation of power for the APC in the 10th National Assembly, which began in June 2023.

## PDP govs, party leaders meet in Abuja ahead of NEC session

By Damilola Olufemi

The National Elective Convention of the Peoples Democratic Party, earlier scheduled to hold in August in Kano State, has been shifted to November 15 and 16, 2025, for the election of new National Working Committee (NWC) members.

The National Publicity Secretary of the PDP, Debo Ologunagba, made this known while speaking at a press conference in Abuja on Thursday shortly after its 101st National Executive Committee meeting.

According to him, the November meeting will be held in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.



State Governor's Lodge in Abuja, ahead of the NEC meeting slated for Thursday (today).

Present at the PDP caucus meeting

The closed-door meeting brought together five sitting governors—Seyi Makinde (Oyo), Caleb Mutfwang (Plateau), Ahmadu Fintiri (Adamawa), Dauda Lawal (Zamfara), and host Bala Mohammed—as well as top national party figures.

Earlier, Bauchi State Governor and Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governors' Forum, Bala Mohammed, on Wednesday, convened a strategic caucus meeting at the Bauchi

Also in attendance were PDP Acting National Chairman, Umar Damagun; National Secretary, Senator Samuel Anyanwu; and several members of the party's Board of Trustees (BoT).



# Yilwatda: 10 things to know about Humanitarian minister turned APC national chair

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**O**n July 24, 2025, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda was unanimously elected by the National Executive Committee to lead the All Progressives Congress (APC). He steps into the role following the resignation of Dr. Abdullahi Ganduje.

New Daily Prime highlights things you need to know about the new APC Chairman.

## 10 things to know Yilwatda

1. Born on August 8, 1968, in Dungung, Kanke Local Government Area of Plateau State, he comes from a Christian family rooted in service. His parents, the late Reverend and Mrs. Toma Yilwatda, laid the foundation for a life of integrity and impact.

2. He earned a degree in Electrical/Electronic Engineering from the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, followed by

a Master's at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University and a PhD in Digital Systems Engineering from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

3. Appointed in October 2024, Yilwatda has been at the helm of one of Nigeria's most people-centred ministries, designing interventions to reduce poverty and uplift vulnerable communities nationwide.

4. A former lecturer and long-serving ICT Director at the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, he spent over a decade modernising digital systems in higher education.

5. A Christian with deep personal values, Prof. Yilwatda is married to Dr. Martina Goshwe.

6. With nearly 30 years of consulting experience, Yilwatda has worked across sectors, with international development partners, government agencies, and the

private sector, on projects focused on governance, systems design, and community development.

7. From 2017 to 2021, he served as the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner in Benue State, where he earned a reputation for fairness, transparency, and professionalism.

8. He completed advanced training in e-governance at the United Nations University in Macau, China.

9. In the last general election, he was the APC Governorship Candidate for Plateau State. Though he didn't win, the campaign boosted his political profile.

10. Before his chairmanship position, he was the Humanitarian minister under the Bola Tinubu administration

# APC rejects Adeleke due to widespread concerns – Chieftain

By Damilola Olufemi

A member of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Osun State, Jamiu Olawumi, has alleged that Governor Ademola Adeleke made unsuccessful efforts to cross over to the ruling party from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which he currently belongs to.

Speaking on Channels Television's The Morning Brief on Thursday, Olawumi claimed that the APC leadership turned down the governor's approach based on internal consultations and widespread concerns.

"The reasons for our rebuffing them are the results of our findings — civil servants who were being made second-class citizens against their counterparts from Ede were all pleading that we should not allow Governor Adeleke to come to the APC," he said.

Olawumi pointed to a PDP communiqué issued in Osun State 72 hours earlier as evidence of Adeleke's alleged lobbying, describing it as a confirmation of the governor's intent to switch parties.

He further argued that even if Adeleke had been admitted into the APC, he would not have assumed any leadership position in the state's party structure. "If he comes to the APC, he cannot be a leader to Chief Adebisi Akande, of course," Olawumi said. "So, nobody is talking about when he comes to the APC, he will not be our leader. Leader of whom? In the PDP, a governor might be the party leader; in the APC, it might not be the same."

Response to Adeleke's aide on defection of senators

Reacting to claims by Governor Adeleke's media aide, Hezekiah Bamiji, that the recent defection of Senators Francis Fadahunsi and Olubiyi Fadeyi to the APC was a misstep, Olawumi said the lawmakers were simply distancing themselves



from what he described as poor leadership.

"The people who defected entered into a trap? No. They abandoned the PDP. Responsible leadership should thrive on integrity," he stated. "This is a governor of almost three years in Osun State, who has lost a high degree of integrity in public governance, and those senators and House of Reps members will not wait to be part of the mess."

Meanwhile, amid widespread speculation over his political future, Governor Adeleke reaffirmed his commitment to the PDP in a statement shared via his official X handle on Tuesday. He disclosed that he had been unanimously endorsed by the party's leadership for a second term in 2026.

"I remain in the PDP, the party that gave me the platform to serve the good people of Osun. I have been unanimously endorsed by the Osun PDP for a second term in 2026,"

Adeleke said.

In the same statement, the governor also expressed support for President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid in 2027, describing him as a "proud son of our state."

"Our party in Osun has also endorsed President Tinubu for re-election in 2027," he added. "PDP remains the most popular and trusted party across Osun State."

The remarks followed a private visit to President Tinubu's residence in Ikoyi, Lagos, on June 3, 2025, by Governor Adeleke, his brother Adedeji Adeleke, and their nephew, music star Davido.

On Wednesday, the Senate officially recorded the defection of Fadahunsi and Fadeyi from the PDP to the APC—an event the governor's media aide described as a political miscalculation.

# WHO declares Timor-Leste free from Malaria

By Helen Okechukwu



**T**he World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared Timor-Leste malaria-free — a major public health victory for the young nation, which has prioritised the disease since gaining independence in 2002.

Timor-Leste is now the 47th country, and the third in the WHO South-East Asia region after the Maldives and Sri Lanka, to achieve malaria-free status.

The certification shared on Thursday confirms there has been no local transmission for at least three consecutive years.

“Timor-Leste’s success shows that with strong leadership, smart health strategies, and investment, malaria can be beaten,” said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

From High Burden to Elimination

In 2006, the country recorded over 223,000 malaria cases. By 2021, that number had dropped to zero. This turnaround began with the launch of the National Malaria Programme in 2003. Despite limited staff, the programme laid strong foundations through early planning, technical guidance, and community engagement.

Timor-Leste introduced rapid diagnostic tests, effective malaria treatments, and widespread distribution of insecticide-treated nets. With support from the Global Fund, vector control and indoor spraying campaigns were expanded nationwide.

“We did it. Malaria has been one of our most relentless enemies – silent, persistent, and deadly,” said Dr Élia António de Araújo dos Reis Amaral, Minister of Health. “From 223 000 cases to zero – this elimination honours every life lost and every life

now saved. This is a story of commitment and resilience. We must safeguard this victory with continued vigilance and community action to prevent malaria’s re-entry”

A real-time case tracking system and well-trained health workers have helped ensure rapid detection and response, especially at borders. Health services are free at the point of care, supported by a three-tier health system and mobile clinics reaching rural areas.

Dr Arvind Mathur, WHO Representative to Timor-Leste, called the achievement “a national triumph.”

While the country celebrates this milestone, WHO stresses the importance of ongoing vigilance to prevent reintroduction. Timor-Leste’s success stands as an example for others, proving that elimination is possible with sustained effort and partnership.



# ‘Pete Edochie is my junior colleague’, Yemi Solade claims

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nollywood actor Yemi Solade has revealed that he began his acting career before legendary actor Pete Edochie, despite being younger.

The 65-year-old made this known during an appearance on the show *Father's Path* with Tope, where he reflected on his long journey in the Nigerian film industry, especially within the Yoruba-language sector.

“I’m senior to Pete Edochie in acting,” he stated. “I started before him, even though he’s older than me. I was 17 years old in 1977 when I represented Nigeria as the youngest actor. I’ve spent 48 years in the industry and I’m still going strong.”

Solade used the opportunity to highlight the rich history of Yoruba theatre and its contribution to what is now known as Nollywood. He pushed back against claims that other segments of the industry were the true pioneers of Nigerian home videos and the broader Nollywood movement.

He explained that long before the rise of what is now referred to as Nollywood, Yoruba filmmakers were already making films on celluloid and performing to large audiences.

According to Solade, Yoruba theatre legends like Hubert Ogunde, Baba Sala, Ade Afolayan (father of Kunle Afolayan), and Ola Balogun laid the groundwork for the industry. He also credited the first Nigerian home video to Ade Ajiboye, popularly known as Big Abass.

“We’ve been doing it for years,” he said. “There was celluloid film. We had Ogunde, Baba Sala, Ade Afolayan, and Dr. Ola Balogun, who is still alive today. Most of those pioneers are gone now, but their legacy remains.”

Solade speaks on home video era  
Solade clarified that the Yoruba industry was active long before the home video era began. However, because they did not initially document



their work on video cassettes, their efforts were not as visible or recognised in later years.

“When home videos started, it was more of an experiment,” he said. “People like Muyideen Alade Aromire came in with camcorders and started recording our plays. They would document them on VHS tapes, stack them on shelves in stores, and sell them to customers. That’s how the home video culture began.”

He noted that the commercial aspect of the home video boom gave other regions the advantage in shaping the public narrative around Nollywood’s origin.

“My people in the Yoruba industry didn’t record much,” Solade admitted. “That’s why others began to claim they started the industry. But it’s not true. We were here before them.”

He also pointed out that the Yoruba actors of that era were more focused on performing than on media relations. In contrast, other parts of the industry embraced the media early on, helping to amplify their visibility and influence.

“They had better media engagement,” he said. “Most of our Yoruba actors weren’t formally trained in media relations. They just loved acting and enjoyed it. That gave the others a chance to take credit for what Yoruba actors had already been doing.”

Solade stressed that key figures like Adebayo Salami (also known as Oga Bello) and Jide Kosoko are still alive and can confirm the early contributions of Yoruba actors to Nigeria’s film culture.

“We all worked together,” he said. “People like Adebayo Salami can tell you stories that go deeper than mine. He’s older and was there even before me. Jide Kosoko, too. These are legends who helped shape the Yoruba film tradition.”

The actor made it clear that while Nollywood has become a national brand, it is important to recognise the foundational role played by Yoruba performers and producers.

“Nollywood didn’t start in a vacuum,” he said. “There were pioneers before the cameras started rolling for home videos. We laid the bricks.”

# Wizkid becomes first African artiste to surpass 9 billion Spotify streams

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



**N**igerian music star Ayodeji Balogun, popularly known as Wizkid, has made history as the first African artist to surpass 9 billion streams on Spotify across all credits.

This milestone places the Grammy-winning singer in the global spotlight once again, affirming his influence and dominance in the music industry. The total stream count includes both his solo projects and collaborations with other artists around the world.

One of the key drivers of this achievement is Wizkid's international hit song *One Dance*, a 2016 collaboration with Canadian rapper Drake and British singer Kyla.

The track alone has garnered a staggering 3.7 billion streams on Spotify, making it his most-streamed song on the platform.

*One Dance* is also ranked among the top 10 most-streamed songs of all time on Spotify. Furthermore, it holds a Guinness World Record as the first single in history to cross 1 billion streams on the platform, a record that continues to highlight the global appeal of the track.

In addition to *One Dance*, Wizkid has also found major success with his releases. His most-streamed lead single is *Essence*, a soulful Afrobeats track featuring Nigerian singer Tems. Since

its release, *Essence* has gained widespread acclaim and has recorded over 303 million streams on Spotify. The song became a cultural anthem and was even dubbed the "song of the summer" in the United States in 2021, earning a remix with American pop star Justin Bieber.

Wizkid's streaming record is not just a personal triumph; it marks a significant milestone for the entire African music industry. It shows how far Afrobeats and African music in general have come in terms of global reach and influence. Artists from the continent are now competing on the same stage with the biggest names in the world.

Wizkid shines, Taylor Swift gets global rank

While Wizkid continues to break records, global pop icon Taylor Swift still holds the position as the most-streamed artist on Spotify overall, with more than 1.5 billion streams to her name. Nevertheless, Wizkid's achievement is groundbreaking, especially considering the challenges African artists have faced in gaining international recognition.

Since breaking into the mainstream with his debut album *Superstar* in 2011, Wizkid has consistently pushed the boundaries of African music.

His unique sound, which blends

Afrobeats, reggae, R&B, and pop, has helped him build a massive fan base not only in Nigeria but across the globe.

He has worked with several high-profile international artists, including Beyoncé, Justin Bieber, Skepta, Chris Brown, and Damian Marley.

Wizkid's success on Spotify is a reflection of years of hard work, evolution, and strategic collaborations. It also mirrors the growing appetite for African music around the world. Platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube have played a huge role in amplifying the voices of African artists and giving them a platform to shine globally.

The starboy's impact continues to grow, with fans eagerly waiting for his upcoming projects. As the world tunes in, one thing is clear: Wizkid is not just a local champion, he's a global icon.

His latest achievement is more than just a number. It's a symbol of the growing recognition of African talent on the world stage. And with the streaming era in full force, Wizkid's influence is only expected to expand further.

As he continues to set new records and break old ones, Wizkid is paving the way for a new generation of African artists to dream bigger and reach higher.



# Nancy Isime shares story of hardship during early career

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**ollywood actress and popular TV host Nancy Isime has opened up about her difficult early days as a young model and event usher.

At just 17 years old, she faced many challenges, including working late-night jobs without reliable transportation to get home. In a candid social media post, Isime revealed how those tough times shaped her journey to success.

Nancy shared that during those early years, she often had to walk long distances late at night or sleep on benches, chairs, or rugs at event venues. "I remember many nights when I had no way to get home after work," she said. "Sometimes, I slept on benches or chairs at events because I was too tired and there was no transport available."

Her family was deeply concerned about her safety during these nights. "My family, especially my dad, worried a lot about me," Nancy recalled. But she added with a smile, "I'm a dangerous gyal, and it's best to let me figure out life my way. Otherwise, the rebellion is quite rebellious."

## Isime hails singer Yemi Alade

During these struggles, Nancy found a much-needed refuge through an unexpected source, Nigerian singer Yemi Alade. The two had met through mutual friends, and Nancy decided to reach out for help.

"I approached Yemi and asked if I could stay with her for a while because I needed a safe place to rest," Nancy said. To her relief, Yemi welcomed her without hesitation. "She let me stay for weeks and never once complained. The peace I found there was overwhelming."

Nancy described Yemi as kind, considerate, and full of positive energy. "Many years later, I still have the softest spot for Yemi. I am forever



grateful to her for being one of the bookmarks of kindness and generosity in my life," she said warmly.

The singer's generosity came at a crucial time. It gave Nancy the stability she needed to continue pursuing her dreams. After gaining admission into university, Nancy was finally able to rent her apartment, conveniently located in the same building as Yemi's home.

"This was a major turning point for me," Nancy explained. "Being close to Yemi allowed our friendship to grow even stronger." The two stars remain close friends to this day. "My Padi @yemialade, I dey for you for life!" Nancy wrote, showing the deep bond, they share.

Nancy Isime's story is a powerful reminder that success is rarely instant. Behind the glitz and glamour, there are often years of hardship and perseverance. Her journey from

walking home late at night to becoming a celebrated actress and TV personality reflects her strength and determination.

She also highlights the importance of kindness and support from others along the way. Yemi Alade's open heart gave Nancy not just a roof over her head but also hope and peace during a critical moment in her life.

Today, both women continue to shine in their careers, but their friendship stands out as a touching example of generosity and loyalty in the entertainment industry. Nancy's story encourages many young people to keep pushing forward, no matter how tough the path may seem.

The singer's message to her fans and followers is clear: "Life can be hard, but don't give up. Help often comes from unexpected places, and sometimes a simple act of kindness can change your life forever."

# Sean Tizzle pays emotional tribute to late Sound Sultan

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian singer Sean Tizzle has paid a heartfelt tribute to the late music legend, Sound Sultan, three years after his passing.

In a deeply personal message shared on social media, Tizzle reflected on the impact Sound Sultan had on his life and career, describing the late artist as a mentor, guide, and source of inspiration.

Sound Sultan, whose real name was Olanrewaju Fasasi, died in July 2021 after a battle with throat cancer. He was widely celebrated not just for his musical talent but for his humility, activism, and generosity within the Nigerian entertainment industry.

In his emotional post, Sean Tizzle revealed that it took him years to find the courage and words to express the depth of his gratitude. "I was scared the words wouldn't be enough," he admitted. "I've struggled for a long time trying to write something that truly honours you."

The singer, known for hits like *Sho Le*, said Sound Sultan discovered him before fame found him. According to Tizzle, Sultan was one of the first people who believed in his talent and offered support when he was still unknown to the world.

"He saw something in me before the world did," Tizzle wrote. "He didn't just help me find my sound, he taught me how to carry myself, how to be kind, how to be humble even when things are going well."

Tizzle explained that Sound Sultan was more than a music mentor; he was a life teacher. He credited the late singer for teaching him important values like humility, grace, and the power of using one's platform to do more than entertain.

"He didn't just teach me music. He taught me humility, grace, and the



importance of using my voice for more than just melodies," Tizzle said.

The tribute highlighted Sound Sultan's selflessness, noting that he always gave without expecting anything in return. Tizzle described him as someone who lifted others without asking for praise or recognition.

"He gave so much of himself. He supported others without ever needing anything back. He was the kind of person who would check in on you just to make sure you were okay, no matter how busy he was," he wrote.

Sean Tizzle pens emotional message  
Sean Tizzle also expressed deep regret for not sharing his appreciation while Sultan was still alive. "I wish I had said this earlier, to your face," he confessed. "I wish I had hugged you tighter."

He ended the post with an emotional message that captured the pain of loss and the gratitude he still carries. "Now, I say it to the world: Thank you, Sound Sultan. I am because you were. I carry your spirit with me

always."

The tribute has touched many fans and fellow artists, who flooded the comment section with memories of Sound Sultan and praise for Tizzle's honesty. Many noted that the late singer's legacy continues to live on through the people he inspired and the lives he touched.

Sound Sultan was known for using his music to address social issues, from corruption to poverty, always doing so with a unique blend of humour, depth, and cultural insight. His influence extended far beyond the stage, as he mentored several up-and-coming artists and helped shape the sound of modern Nigerian music.

Though his passing left a void in the music industry, tributes like Sean Tizzle's remind fans that Sound Sultan's legacy is still alive. His kindness, creativity, and passion for making meaningful music continue to inspire a new generation of artists.

For Sean Tizzle, the journey continues, but now, with the spirit of his mentor walking beside him.



# Tacha blasts youths over national silence

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Reality TV personality and media influencer, Anita Natacha Akide, popularly known as Tacha, has sparked online conversation after sharply criticising Nigerian youths for what she describes as their apathy towards the nation's development.

In a strongly worded post shared on X (formerly Twitter), Tacha expressed her deep disappointment with the current generation, describing them as "cowardly" and unwilling to make sacrifices for the country's progress.

She contrasted today's youth with earlier generations who, she said, risked their lives fighting for political and social change.

According to her, the priorities of many young Nigerians today are misplaced. She argued that rather than participating in national discourse, contributing to governance, or standing up for social justice, many are more interested in seeking visas to leave the country, creating online content, and chasing popularity on social media.

"Listen," she wrote, "my generation of Nigerians are the dumbest and most cowardly. Funny how we blame the ones before us for ruining Nigeria. Ex-President Buhari, in his 20s, was part of a coup, fighting for what he believed in. What are today's 20-year-olds up to? Japa (a slang for fleeing the country)."

She continued, "Believe me when I say, we've not just failed the next generation, we've buried it."

Tacha's post has since drawn mixed reactions across social media. While some supported her blunt critique, others argued that the challenges facing young Nigerians are more complex and go beyond a lack of courage or patriotism.

Tacha maintains ground. Still, Tacha stood her ground, noting that she was not targeting individuals but addressing a widespread issue. "This tweet is not about me or anyone in particular," she clarified. "It's about a



whole generation that is too afraid to prioritise the nation's interest over their comfort."

She also responded to critics who questioned her contributions to national development. "Y'all ask, 'what have you done?' I've used my voice. I speak, I show up, I refuse to be quiet," she wrote.

Tacha's comments reflect a growing tension in the national conversation about youth responsibility, civic engagement, and the direction of Nigeria's future. While it is true that many young Nigerians are vocal on social media, actively participating in movements like #EndSARS, critics say that digital engagement is not always followed by consistent action on the ground.

By referencing historical figures such as former military leaders who took bold, though controversial actions in their youth, Tacha appears to call for a more fearless and committed generation. However, many observers argue that Nigeria's political and economic landscape today presents a different kind of struggle, one where survival often takes precedence over activism.

In response to her tweet, several young Nigerians pushed back, highlighting the harsh realities they face from

unemployment to insecurity, which they claim make it difficult to focus on patriotism when basic needs remain unmet.

Nevertheless, Tacha's remarks have reignited debate on the role of youth in national development and what it means to be patriotic in the current socio-economic climate.

Her post comes at a time when many young Nigerians are increasingly looking for opportunities abroad, citing a lack of trust in leadership, poor governance, and limited prospects at home. The trend, known as Japa, has become a popular escape route for many skilled professionals and students.

Despite the backlash, Tacha's comments have forced a moment of introspection. Whether or not one agrees with her approach, her message touches on a crucial question: what role should today's youth play in shaping Nigeria's future, and are they doing enough?

As the conversation continues, one thing is clear: the younger generation remains at the heart of Nigeria's hope for change. Whether through activism, innovation, or civic participation, the choices they make today will shape the nation's tomorrow.

# 'Igbo men struggle in politics', Pete Edochie

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nollywood actor Pete Edochie has made a bold statement about the political challenges facing Igbo men in Nigeria.

In a recent interview, Edochie said that many Igbo men are not successful in politics because they cannot tolerate betrayal, a trait he believes is common and often necessary in the world of politics.

Speaking on Afia TV, the respected actor shared his thoughts on the nature of politics and why Igbo men, in his view, often find it difficult to navigate the political system. According to Edochie, politics demands a level of tolerance for treachery, a trait he says the average Igbo man does not possess.

"An Igbo man is not a good politician," Edochie stated. "And I will tell you why. People who are used to politics, or the treachery that comes with it, can overlook many things. But the Igbo man is not built that way."

He went on to explain that once an Igbo person experiences betrayal in a political alliance, they tend to withdraw and cut ties completely. This, he believes, prevents them from building long-term political relationships that are often necessary to thrive in Nigeria's political environment.

"If you hurt the Igbo man once in politics, he will never allow you to hurt him again," Edochie said. "He will pull back and stay away. That's the average Igbo man. He is not made to handle political betrayal over and over again."

Edochie added that this mindset has caused many Igbo politicians to sever ties with key political allies, weakening their chances of staying relevant or advancing their political careers.

Edochie speaks on unwillingness to forgive or move past betrayal  
In a political system where strategic partnerships often determine success,



Edochie believes that this unwillingness to forgive or move past betrayal puts Igbo politicians at a disadvantage.

"In politics, people betray each other all the time," he noted. "But in many parts of the country, people still shake hands and keep moving forward. The Igbo man doesn't do that. Once you betray him, that's the end of the relationship."

The actor's comments have sparked conversations on social media, with many Nigerians sharing their opinions on the topic. Some agreed with Edochie's point of view, while others argued that the challenges facing Igbo politicians go beyond issues of character and personal values. Some pointed to historical, economic, and structural factors that have also played a role in limiting Igbo representation and influence in national politics.

Despite the debates, Edochie's remarks have drawn attention to the complex nature of politics in Nigeria, where loyalty, negotiation, and compromise often play a bigger role than ideology or trust.

Pete Edochie, known for his iconic roles in Nigerian films, is also admired for his outspokenness on cultural and

national issues. Over the years, he has remained a strong voice in public discourse, often sharing his views on politics, society, and the future of Nigeria.

In this latest interview, he urged for more reflection on how cultural values and personal beliefs shape the way people engage with politics. While he praised the honesty and principles that many Igbo people hold dear, he also stressed that politics is not a field where such values always guarantee success.

"You need to understand what you're going into," Edochie said. "Politics is not for the faint-hearted. It's a game of strategy, patience, and sometimes betrayal. If you're not ready for that, you may not go far."

His comments come at a time when many Nigerians are calling for greater unity, understanding, and inclusion in politics, especially among the country's major ethnic groups.

As the 77-year-old actor continues to lend his voice to national issues, his remarks serve as a reminder of the need for both personal integrity and political maturity in building a stronger and more inclusive Nigeria.



# Wrestling legend Hulk Hogan dies at 71 after battling 'cardiac arrest'

By Damilola Olufemi



**H**ulk Hogan, the towering titan who helped catapult professional wrestling into mainstream popularity during the 1980s, has died at the age of 71, according to multiple U.S. media reports on Thursday.

NBC News, citing Hogan's longtime manager Chris Volo, confirmed that the wrestling icon passed away at his Florida home. Entertainment outlet TMZ also reported the development, referencing sources and emergency calls indicating a cardiac arrest.

Known for his imposing 6'7" frame, trademark blond moustache, and red-and-yellow bandana, Hogan—born Terry Bollea—was a cultural phenomenon. His larger-than-life persona and electrifying charisma helped transform wrestling into a global spectacle, earning him household-name status far beyond the squared circle.

"Hulkamania" wasn't just a wrestling catchphrase—it was a movement that swept through arenas, living rooms, and even movie

theatres. Hogan made his debut in the World Wrestling Federation (now WWE) in 1979, but truly became a national icon by the mid-1980s, sharing the spotlight with legends like Andre the Giant and "Rowdy" Roddy Piper.

His crossover success included film roles in *Rocky III* and *No Holds Barred*, as well as guest appearances on popular TV shows like *Baywatch*. Hogan was enshrined in the WWE Hall of Fame in 2005, cementing his place in sports entertainment history.

"WWE is saddened to learn WWE Hall of Famer Hulk Hogan has passed away. One of pop culture's most recognisable figures, Hogan helped WWE achieve global recognition in the 1980s," the organisation posted on social media. "WWE extends its condolences to Hogan's family, friends, and fans."

Despite his fame, Hogan's life was not without controversy. In 2015, he was removed from WWE's Hall of Fame following the leak of a video in which he used racist language.

Hogan later issued a public apology, and WWE reinstated him years later.

## About Hulk Hogan

In recent times, Hogan had been a vocal supporter of former President Donald Trump. At the 2024 Republican National Convention, he took to the stage, ripping his shirt off to reveal a Trump-Vance tank top.

"With our leader up there, my hero, that gladiator, we're gonna bring America back together," Hogan told the crowd in July 2024.

Hogan's health had reportedly declined in his later years, due in part to the physical toll of his decades-long wrestling career. He was married three times and fathered two children, Brooke and Nick, with his first wife, Linda.

Though his life had its ups and downs, Hogan's legacy as one of wrestling's most transformative figures remains undisputed.

# Chinese star Zhang Yiyang executed for murder of teen girlfriend

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**C**hinese actor and pop singer Zhang Yiyang has been executed by firing squad after being found guilty of murdering his underage girlfriend.

The shocking news, confirmed by the Intermediate People's Court of Xianyang in Shaanxi Province, has stirred national attention and marked a grim chapter in China's entertainment history.

Zhang, once known for his rising fame in the music and film industry, became the first celebrity in China to be publicly executed. The court released details of his execution in July 2025, months after the sentence was carried out on December 18, 2024.

According to the court's statement, the murder took place in 2022 during a violent encounter between Zhang and his 16-year-old girlfriend. The two had been in a relationship since September 2021. However, their romance turned sour when the girl reportedly attempted to end the relationship following a disagreement.

In a fit of rage, Zhang attacked the teenager with a knife, inflicting fatal injuries to her neck. The court revealed that he slashed her left carotid artery, jugular vein, trachea, and oesophagus. The deep wounds caused heavy bleeding, which ultimately led to her death at the scene.

After committing the brutal crime, Zhang tried to cover his tracks. He took the victim's mobile phone and discarded the murder weapon, along with other related items, in a nearby reservoir. His actions were aimed at destroying evidence and delaying police investigation.

The following day, Zhang attempted to take his own life. He checked into a hotel, where he tried to commit suicide. However, a hotel employee discovered him in time and alerted the authorities. Police arrived quickly and took him into custody.

The investigation was swift and



thorough. Prosecutors presented clear forensic evidence, including the recovered items from the reservoir and bloodstains found on Zhang's clothing. Eyewitness accounts and digital records further linked him to the crime scene. Zhang later confessed during questioning.

The severity of the case, the age of the victim, and the intentional nature of the killing all contributed to the court's decision to impose the death penalty. The court also cited the public interest in justice, particularly due to Zhang's celebrity status, as a reason for making the execution public.

Zhang, a popular name in Chinese pop culture

Before his fall from grace, Zhang Yiyang was a popular name in Chinese pop culture. He had released several hit songs, including *I Only Care About People Who Care About Me*, *So Care About You*, and *Crying Man*. His fan base, largely comprised of young people, saw him as a rising star with a promising future in both music and acting.

Reactions to his execution have been mixed across Chinese social media. While some fans expressed disbelief and sorrow over his tragic downfall, many others praised the justice system for

holding him accountable. Several commentators noted that fame should not shield anyone from facing the consequences of the law.

Legal experts have also weighed in on the significance of the case. Many believe the ruling sends a clear message about China's zero-tolerance stance on violent crimes, regardless of the perpetrator's social standing or public image.

"This is a case where justice was done swiftly and fairly," one legal analyst commented. "It's a reminder that even celebrities are not above the law."

Zhang Yiyang's execution has left a lasting scar on China's entertainment industry. It has also reopened discussions about mental health, anger management, and the hidden struggles behind public personas.

As the country continues to react to the news, many are calling for greater awareness and education on issues surrounding domestic violence and emotional abuse among young people.

The victim's family has remained largely silent, but according to sources close to them, they hope the case will serve as a warning and help prevent similar tragedies in the future.



# Appeals court strikes down Trump's birthright citizenship order as unconstitutional

By Damilola Olufemi

**A** U.S. appeals court on Wednesday declared former President Donald Trump's executive order limiting birthright citizenship unconstitutional, affirming a lower court's decision to halt the directive nationwide.

Trump's controversial order—which sought to deny automatic citizenship to children born on U.S. soil to undocumented immigrants or those on temporary visas—has been locked in legal disputes for months and is currently paused by a federal court.

Last month, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that some lower courts may have overstepped their bounds by issuing nationwide injunctions against several Trump-era policies, including the birthright citizenship order.

Despite that, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a Seattle district judge's nationwide injunction, rejecting claims of judicial overreach. "We conclude that the district court did not abuse its discretion in issuing a universal injunction to give the States complete relief," Judge Ronald Gould stated in the ruling.

Gould argued that limiting the injunction to individual states would have created confusion and made enforcement nearly impossible, particularly if individuals moved across state lines where rules might differ.

The appeals court also agreed with the district court's assessment that Trump's order contradicted the U.S. Constitution. "The district court correctly concluded that the Executive Order's proposed interpretation, denying citizenship to many persons born in the United



States, is unconstitutional. We fully agree," Gould wrote.

The executive order attempted a sweeping reinterpretation of the 14th Amendment by declaring that children born in the U.S. to non-citizens wouldn't automatically be granted citizenship—a move that sparked widespread backlash from legal experts and immigrant rights advocates.

Although the Supreme Court, currently having a 6-3 conservative majority, sidestepped ruling on the constitutionality of the order, it did weigh in on the broader issue of nationwide injunctions. Still, Trump heralded the decision as a "giant win."

The Court also left open a legal pathway for challenging such executive orders through class-action lawsuits. Earlier this month, a federal judge granted class-action status to all potentially affected children and temporarily blocked the order as litigation proceeds.

**Judge blocks Trump's birthright citizenship ban nationwide**

A federal judge in New Hampshire had, in early July, issued a nationwide block on US President Donald Trump's controversial executive order seeking to end birthright citizenship, dealing a significant blow to the policy.

US District Judge Joseph Laplante, ruling from the bench on Thursday, granted a request from immigration rights lawyers to certify a nationwide class comprising children, both born and unborn, who would be stripped of their citizenship under Trump's order. He simultaneously issued a preliminary injunction, indefinitely halting enforcement of the policy.

"This preliminary injunction is not a close call," Laplante said during the hearing. "The deprivation of US citizenship and an abrupt change of longstanding policy, that's irreparable harm. US citizenship is the greatest privilege that exists in the world."

# Asylum seekers allegedly spend welfare payments on gambling

By **Fatimah Idera**

**T**he UK Home Office is investigating reports that thousands of asylum seekers have used government-issued benefits cards in gambling venues, including bookmakers, casinos, and amusement arcades.

According to figures obtained under Freedom of Information laws by Politics Home, 6,537 asylum seekers used their Aspen cards at least once in gambling-related locations over the past year. The Aspen card, issued by the Home Office, is designed to cover essential living costs for the seekers who are not allowed to work while their claims are processed.

The card provides £49.18 per week to the seekers in self-catered accommodation, intended for food, clothing, toiletries, transport, and communications. While the Home Office can track card usage, the system does not currently block transactions based on merchant type.

A Home Office spokesperson said: "The Home Office has a legal obligation to support asylum seekers, including any dependents, who would otherwise be destitute."

However, the department confirmed it is now investigating whether cards are being misused.

Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said the reported misuse is very concerning, adding:

"You shouldn't be able to use Aspen cards for this. Support for asylum seekers is not a large amount about £7 a day and it should be used for essentials."

Figures show that an average of 125 cardholders per week used their cards in gambling venues, with usage



peaking at 227 individuals in one week last November. Notably, 177 asylum seekers used their cards in the Christmas week, despite many gambling venues being closed during that time.

Though the cards cannot be used for online or contactless payments, officials say the data includes cash withdrawals made inside gambling establishments. A Home Office source stated that it is "not possible" to place bets directly using the Aspen cards.

The revelation has sparked strong political reaction. Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp called the situation a "slap in the face to taxpayers," and urged for immediate action, saying:

"These illegal immigrants clearly don't need the money they are given if they are squandering it at casinos and arcades."

Paul Bristow, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, also raised concerns about visible gambling activity among recent arrivals, citing anecdotal evidence from his local area.

Reform UK's deputy leader Richard Tice echoed the criticism, pointing to broader concerns over enforcement and illegal working by some asylum seekers, calling the reports "a slap in the face to hardworking British taxpayers."

Currently, around 80,000 asylum seekers are issued Aspen cards while awaiting a decision on their claims. Many are being accommodated in hotels at public expense, a policy that has faced growing public opposition and protests in areas such as Essex, Norfolk, and London.

The controversy comes amid a broader clampdown on illegal employment. The government recently began sharing the locations of asylum hotels with food delivery platforms like Deliveroo and Uber Eats, to identify asylum seekers working illegally using borrowed or false accounts.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said the move aims to enforce existing rules and reduce abuse of the asylum system while protecting legitimate claimants.



# Family shot in Northern Ireland attack, three die

By **Fatimah Idera**



**A** mother and her two children – a son and a daughter – have been shot dead in a devastating incident in Northern Ireland.

A fourth individual, a man, remains in serious condition in the hospital.

Police have confirmed that all four victims suffered gunshot wounds during the incident, which occurred in the Drummer Road area of Maguiresbridge, County Fermanagh. A murder investigation has been launched.

Superintendent Robert McGowan, speaking in Enniskillen, stated that officers and emergency services were called to the scene around 8:21am on Wednesday morning. Two of the victims were pronounced dead at the scene, while the third died later in hospital.

The Northern Ireland Ambulance

Service (NIAS) responded swiftly, dispatching three emergency ambulances, a rapid response paramedic, two ambulance officers, and an ambulance doctor.

Supt McGowan said: “Earlier this morning, police received a report of an incident in Maguiresbridge. Officers and NIAS colleagues attended a house on Drummeer Road. Tragically, despite best medical efforts, two people were pronounced dead at the scene, and a third passed away in hospital this afternoon. The fourth person remains in serious condition.”

All four victims are believed to be members of the same household.

Expressing condolences, Supt McGowan added: “I want to extend my heartfelt sympathy to the family and loved ones affected by this unimaginable tragedy. This is a quiet rural area, and the shock and sadness will be felt deeply across the

community. Detectives are working at pace to establish the full circumstances surrounding this horrific event.”

Northern Ireland Secretary of State Hilary Benn described the incident as tragic and deeply distressing, urging the public to avoid speculation while police investigations continue.

Local MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, Pat Cullen, echoed the call for calm:

“My thoughts are with the victims and their families. I am in contact with police and urged people not to speculate as officers carry out their work. A number of road closures remain in place around Maguiresbridge.”

A Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) spokesperson confirmed there is no ongoing threat to the public, and further updates will be issued in due course.

# Google unveils \$37m initiative to boost AI innovation across Africa

By Friday Omosola

**G**oogle on Thursday announced a significant investment package of \$37 million aimed at accelerating Artificial Intelligence (AI) development across the African continent.

The U.S. technology giant pledged comprehensive support for local AI research and a diverse range of projects, from advanced crop monitoring systems to adapting AI for Africa's many languages.

This commitment also extends to backing promising startups, particularly within the health and education sectors.

James Manyika, a senior vice president at Google, highlighted the continent's growing prominence in the AI landscape during the launch of a new 'AI community centre' in Accra, Ghana's capital.

"Africa is home to some of the most important and inspiring work in AI today," Manyika stated.

This new centre will function as a pivotal hub for training, collaborative efforts, and AI-focused experimentation, including programs designed to enhance AI literacy.

Among the key initiatives introduced is the AI Collaborative for Food Security.

This programme seeks to connect researchers with non-profit organisations to create tools that can improve early detection of hunger, bolster crop resilience, and refine decision-making processes for smallholder farmers.

The ultimate goal is to equip African food systems to better withstand the



increasing pressures from climate change and economic instability.

AI is already making inroads with some African farmers, notably in Nigeria, which boasts a thriving domestic tech industry.

Local agricultural technology firms have emerged, developing solutions to monitor soil conditions for crops and track temperature and humidity on poultry farms.

Google further plans to launch a dedicated financing platform to support AI-driven startups, specifically targeting the agriculture, health, and education sectors.

Through its philanthropic arm, the company has committed \$7 million to expand AI education initiatives in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and Ghana.

To advance linguistic diversity in AI, Google announced \$3 million in funding for Masakhane, a technology

collective focused on developing AI tools for over 40 African languages.

Additionally, two separate \$1 million research grants will be awarded to the African Institute of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence and the Wits Machine Intelligence and Neural Discovery Institute, both located in South Africa.

Ghana's Communications and Digital Technology Minister, Sam George, urged Ghanaians to leverage AI's potential to address local challenges.

He encouraged the use of AI to 'look at how we're going to fix our national challenges such as flooding, waste management and traffic management.'

Google's prior AI efforts in Africa have included projects focused on maternal health technology in Ghana and Nigeria, early wildfire alerts in East Africa, and the development of language models in Accra and Nairobi.



# Wikipedia considers restricting access for UK users

By **Fatimah Idera**

**W**ikipedia may be forced to restrict access for UK users unless key elements of Britain's new Online Safety Act are changed, the High Court has been told.

Lawyers for the Wikimedia Foundation, the non-profit that operates the online encyclopaedia, said the platform could be required to introduce a quota-based system for UK visitors if it is classified as a category one service under the new digital safety legislation.

Services given this classification must meet the strictest standards under the Act, designed to protect children from harmful content and curb the spread of illegal material online.

To avoid falling under the regulation, Wikipedia may consider capping the number of UK users to stay below the seven-million-user threshold that defines a category one platform. This could limit access to the site for British users, especially during peak times.

## Wikipedia reacts with lawsuit

The Wikipedia Foundation has filed a legal challenge against Technology Secretary Peter Kyle, warning that being subject to these rules would impose the same level of oversight intended for large social media companies like Facebook and TikTok.

In its High Court submission, Wikimedia's legal team argued the rules could "cripple the vital exchange of encyclopaedic information," either by restricting access for UK users or by forcing fundamental changes to how Wikipedia operates.

Rupert Paines, counsel for the



foundation, told the court the proposed measures could have very severe impacts, potentially reducing articles to gibberish and making the site unavailable to many users. He emphasised that Wikipedia is fundamentally different from social media platforms, and the legislation was designed to regulate.

If classified as a category one service, Wikipedia could be required to verify the identities of its anonymous volunteer editors, a move the foundation says would undermine its open-editing model. Unverified users might be barred from editing content, which could result in the persistence of unchecked or inaccurate information.

The foundation also warned that the platform's recommendation algorithms, such as tools suggesting new articles for editing and features that allow users to share or forward pages, could bring it within the scope of the legislation.

Wikipedia's legal team said the site might be forced to restrict access for some UK visitors to avoid breaching the law. They wrote: "Wikimedia must weigh imposing a quota-based system for Wikipedia in the UK, depressing average monthly UK users below the category one threshold."

Such a move would "deprive many of Wikipedia's UK users of access to the encyclopaedia as and when they want it," they added.

The Online Safety Act empowers Ofcom, the UK's digital regulator, to enforce the law. Platforms that fail to comply can face fines of up to £18 million or 10% of their global turnover.

While Wikipedia was not initially identified by Ofcom as falling under the rules, the government has argued that its inclusion would be appropriate if the platform meets the defined thresholds. Government lawyers dismissed Wikimedia's concerns as hypothetical.

# ICJ ruling raises risk of climate lawsuits against UK over historic emissions

By Fatimah Idera

The United Kingdom may be exposed to international lawsuits over its historical contribution to climate change, following a groundbreaking advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

In a statement released in The Hague, the ICJ said countries failing to meet their climate obligations could, in certain cases, be held legally accountable by states suffering the consequences of climate change. The ruling also opens the door to legal claims based on historic greenhouse gas emissions, a significant development for industrialised nations like the UK, widely regarded as the birthplace of the industrial revolution.

Although the ICJ's opinion is not legally binding, it carries considerable moral and legal weight and is expected to influence future environmental litigation worldwide.

The UK has previously acted on an ICJ advisory opinion notably when it agreed to begin the process of returning the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, a move in which the current Attorney General, Lord Hermer, played a key role. This has raised concerns among critics that Lord Hermer may support the implementation of the latest ICJ ruling if similar claims are brought against Britain.

Richard Tice, deputy leader of Reform UK, accused Hermer of not acting in the UK's interest. Both the Conservative Party and Reform UK have strongly rejected the ruling, insisting they would refuse to pay any form of climate reparations if in power.

Dame Priti Patel, Shadow Foreign Secretary, criticized the ICJ, claiming it had abandoned its legal mandate and was instead pursuing ideological campaigns under the guise of international law. She urged the Labour Government to dismiss the ruling entirely.

"This is lawfare similar to the Chagos case," Patel said. "It must not be repeated."

Tice added: "We will not be bound by activist courts or ludicrous demands for reparations. The ICJ clearly has an anti-



British agenda."

The ICJ's 133-page opinion was the result of a legal initiative led by a coalition of Pacific island law students and supported by 132 UN member states. It clarified that all countries, regardless of whether they have signed agreements like the 2015 Paris Accord, still have an obligation under broader international law to protect the environment and can be held accountable for failing to do so.

Small island nations, including Vanuatu, one of the most vulnerable to climate impacts, welcomed the decision. Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu's Minister for Climate Change Adaptation, announced plans to push the UN General Assembly to support the ICJ's findings.

"The Global South is paying the price for a crisis it didn't cause," he said. "We must hold high-emitting nations accountable and ensure they contribute to recovery and adaptation efforts."

Legal experts hailed the opinion as a victory for low-lying and developing nations that have long called for legal clarity on states' responsibilities to address climate change. These countries have been disproportionately affected by climate-related disasters but contribute less than 1% of global emissions.

ICJ rejects notion

Judge Yuji Iwasawa, president of the ICJ,

rejected the notion that existing climate agreements such as the Paris Agreement are sufficient to meet international obligations. He emphasized that developing countries have a right to seek compensation for climate damage, including destruction caused by extreme weather events.

The financial implications remain uncertain. While the Foreign Office reiterated that the opinion is non-binding and does not obligate the UK to pay reparations, the economic impact of climate change is substantial. A study published in the journal *Nature* estimated global losses due to climate change at \$2.8 trillion between 2000 and 2019.

Judge Iwasawa acknowledged that assigning precise responsibility for specific climate damages to individual countries would be complex and difficult to prove in court.

A spokesperson for the UK Foreign Office said: "Tackling climate change is and will remain an urgent UK and global priority. Our position remains that this is best achieved through international commitment to the UN's existing climate treaties and mechanisms.

"We will continue to work with global partners, including Brazil ahead of COP30, to address the climate crisis in a way that delivers benefits for the British people."



# WAFCON: Tinubu approves full payment of Super Falcons' allowances

By Oluwatosin Ologun



President Bola Tinubu has approved the immediate and full payment of outstanding allowances and match bonuses for Nigeria's Super Falcons, ensuring the team is financially supported ahead of their Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) final against Morocco on Saturday, 26 July 2025.

The announcement, made on Thursday evening, has been met with widespread approval as players, coaches, and team officials are expected to receive their disbursements by the close of business on Friday.

The National Sports Commission, led by Chairman Shehu Dikko, confirmed that the funds were processed through the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) on 23 July, covering all entitlements up to and including the final match.

This swift action marks a significant shift from past practices, where delays in payments often left athletes waiting long after tournaments concluded. Dikko hailed the move as "policy in

motion," underscoring a renewed commitment to timely support for Nigerian athletes under Tinubu's administration.

The Super Falcons, who secured a hard-fought 2-1 victory over South Africa's Banyana Banyana in the WAFCON semi-finals, are now poised to compete for their 10th continental title.

The team's performance, led by standout players like Michelle Alozie and Rasheedat Ajibade, has sparked national pride, with President Tinubu personally congratulating the squad for their "superlative" display of resilience and skill.

The timely payment is seen as a morale booster, eliminating financial distractions as the team prepares for the crucial final.

This gesture extends beyond the Super Falcons, with Nigeria's women's basketball team, D'Tigress, also set to benefit from prompt payment of their allowances as they begin their 2025 FIBA Women AfroBasket campaign in

Côte d'Ivoire.

The National Sports Commission has pledged that such prompt disbursements will become standard practice, ensuring athletes receive their dues without delay, resources permitting.

The approval comes amidst ongoing discussions about historical payment disputes, with some sources alleging outstanding allowances dating back to 2021.

While NFF President Ibrahim Gusau has denied claims of debts stretching that far, he acknowledged ongoing talks with the government to clear any remaining dues before the tournament's end.

For now, the focus remains on the Super Falcons' pursuit of glory, with Tinubu urging the team to "bring the trophy home" and cement Nigeria's dominance in African women's football.