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Tinubu renames UNIMAID after Buhari

By Gbenga Olaleye

President Bola Tinubu has officially renamed the University of Maiduguri in Borno State as Muhammadu Buhari University in honour of the late former president, who died on Sunday, July 13, at the age of 82.

“May we now adopt the University of Maiduguri as the Muhammadu Buhari University,” Tinubu declared during a special Federal Executive Council session held Thursday at the Presidential Villa, Abuja. The session was convened to pay tribute to Buhari’s life and legacy.

Describing the late leader as “a good man, a decent man, an honourable man,” Tinubu praised Buhari for his unwavering sense of discipline, patriotism, and moral clarity. While acknowledging Buhari’s imperfections, Tinubu said his commitment to Nigeria’s service and ethical public conduct set him apart.

“President Buhari was not a perfect man — no leader is but the moral authority he embodied, the incorruptibility he upheld, and the quiet dignity with which he served will not be forgotten.”

Tinubu reflects on Buhari’s years in leadership

Reflecting on Buhari’s years in both military and democratic leadership, Tinubu highlighted his humility and resistance to the perks of power.

“He stood, always, ramrod straight — unmoved by temptation, unswayed by applause, and unafraid of the solitude that comes with doing what is right rather than



what is popular,” he said. “His patriotism wasn’t loud; it was expressed more in action than words.”

Tinubu also recalled their historic political collaboration, which culminated in the 2015 general elections—the first time power peacefully shifted from one ruling party to another in Nigeria’s history.

“We stood together, he and I,” Tinubu recalled. “With allies from across regions and political backgrounds, we forged a coalition that made Nigeria’s first real democratic transition possible. And when Buhari became President, he led with restraint and governed with a quiet dignity.”

Praising Buhari’s withdrawal from politics after leaving office, Tinubu noted how the former leader returned to Daura without clinging to power behind the scenes.

“When his tenure ended, he went

home to Daura—not to pull strings or issue commands from the background, but to live in peace, content with his service,” Tinubu said. “Even in death, he remained calm and dignified. No complaints, no drama. Just quiet submission to the will of God.”

The President also commended the Inter-Ministerial Committee and Katsina State Governor Dikko Radda for coordinating a swift and dignified state funeral, saying it was a “profound honour” to lead the final rites in Daura.

He concluded his eulogy with a solemn prayer:

“Mai Gaskiya, the People’s General, the Farmer President—your duty is done. May Almighty Allah forgive your shortcomings and grant you Aljannah Firdaus. May your life continue to inspire Nigerians to serve with courage, purpose, and selflessness. Thank you, President Buhari. Nigeria will remember you.”

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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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
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NELFUND disburses N73.2bn student loans to 400,000 in first year

By Friday Omosola



The Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) has announced a significant achievement in its first year of operation, having already allocated over N73.2 billion in interest-free loans to 396,252 students spanning all 36 Nigerian states and the Federal Capital Territory.

NELFUND's Managing Director, Akintunde Sawyerr, shared these figures during a media briefing in Abuja on Thursday, reflecting on the substantial progress made since President Bola Tinubu launched the initiative.

Sawyerr reported that the Fund has processed 94% of the 645,692 loan applications received from 206 tertiary institutions across the nation.

"For the first time in our nation's history, students are gaining structured, interest-free access to education finance through a national public fund," Sawyerr stated.

He characterised the programme as a demonstration of political commitment aimed at preventing undergraduates from prematurely ending their studies due to financial difficulties.

The initiative, he added, is designed to make higher education and vocational training more accessible through a sustainable funding model.

Sawyerr noted the visible and meaningful progress since the application portal became active in May 2024, highlighting that many beneficiaries are 'first-generation students in tertiary institutions.'

He also commended the digital, transparent system supporting the loans, which facilitates efficient processing, tracking, and verification.

Despite these successes, Sawyerr acknowledged ongoing challenges, including discrepancies in data, delays

in verification processes, and the spread of misinformation.

Nevertheless, he reaffirmed NELFUND's dedication to transparency and ongoing enhancement.

"We've remained steadfast, improving our systems, engaging applicants directly, training institutional focal points, and addressing concerns swiftly," he explained.

The NELFUND MD cautioned against the rising tide of false information about the Fund circulating on social media, warning that it could jeopardize the initiative's credibility and core mission.

He urged the public to seek accurate information directly from NELFUND rather than disseminating unverified claims.

Akpabio praises late President Buhari: 'He never looted, he fought for Nigeria'

By **Gbenga Olaleye**



Senate President Godswill Akpabio has paid glowing tribute to the late former President Muhammadu Buhari, hailing him as a patriotic leader who served Nigeria faithfully without looting the nation's treasury.

Akpabio made the remarks on Thursday during a special, expanded session of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) held in Abuja in honour of the late Nigerian leader, who died on Sunday at the age of 82.

Addressing a room filled with current and former government officials, Akpabio described Buhari as a disciplined and selfless servant of the nation whose integrity remained intact throughout his years in office.

"Let us be honest, he was tough. He was a soldier who did not flinch under fire, a leader who did not flee from responsibility, and above all, a Nigerian whose loyalty to this nation was never up for sale," Akpabio said.

He added, "Even his fiercest critics

will admit that he did not pilfer the nation's purse, nor pander to its pleasures to the very end."

Tributes from across the aisle

The special FEC session was attended by members of the National Assembly leadership, state governors, serving ministers, and Buhari's family including his son, Yusuf Buhari, who led the delegation.

The Senate President, who once served as Governor of Akwa Ibom State, recalled Buhari's personal sacrifices and firm leadership style. He said the late president's belief in discipline, integrity, and service remained central to his legacy.

"President Buhari did not merely pass through the corridors of power; he left his boots and imprints in them," Akpabio stated. "He believed that discipline mattered, that integrity mattered, that leadership, even when lonely, must be anchored on something greater than power."

Akpabio also contrasted Buhari's quiet sense of duty with the allure of political fame, stating, "He sought duty when others sought glory."

A Life of Service

Muhammadu Buhari served Nigeria first as military Head of State from 1983 to 1985, and later as a democratically elected President from 2015 to 2023. His time in office was marked by both praise and criticism, but many agree on his personal integrity and austere lifestyle.

He passed away on 14 July at a clinic in London and was laid to rest on Tuesday in his hometown of Daura, Katsina State, in accordance with Islamic rites.

As the nation continues to mourn, tributes such as Akpabio's reflect the late president's enduring influence on Nigerian politics and his unique position as a figure both revered and debated.

Amnesty slams FG over Plateau massacre, calls it shameful failure

By Gbenga Olaleye

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



Amnesty International Nigeria has strongly condemned the recent deadly attack in Plateau State, describing it as a horrific and shameful demonstration of the government's failure to safeguard its citizens.

The attack took place on Monday in Bindi-Jebbu, part of the Tahoss community in Riyom Local Government Area, where at least 27 residents were brutally killed. According to Amnesty, entire families were deliberately targeted, with some locked in their homes and murdered, while others were gunned down while trying to flee.

"Entire families were locked up in their rooms and slaughtered one by one. Those who tried to escape were shot," the organisation said in a post on X (formerly Twitter) on Wednesday.

The international human rights group also issued a scathing criticism of President Bola Tinubu's administration, accusing it of failing to live up to repeated promises to end the cycle of violence plaguing parts of the country—especially in Plateau State, which has long been a hotspot for attacks on rural farming communities.

"President Bola Tinubu claims repeatedly to have 'tasked' security agencies to end the killings, but the mounting death toll clearly tells a different story," Amnesty stated.

The organisation called for an impartial and thorough investigation into the killings, holding perpetrators accountable, and implementing urgent security reforms to prevent further bloodshed.

"The Nigerian authorities must impartially investigate these attacks to

ensure that suspected perpetrators are held to account. More concrete steps must be taken to end the relentless bloodshed in Plateau State, in which typically, gunmen attack farming communities, slaughter people, and raze homes," it added.

Amnesty further warned that continued government inaction was fuelling insecurity and eroding public trust. "The government of Nigeria has an obligation to protect the people. The rising death toll in some states and increasing impunity by gunmen shows just how badly the authorities are failing in this responsibility."

The Bindi-Jebbu massacre marks yet another tragic chapter in Plateau's long struggle with violence, highlighting the urgent need for more decisive government action to halt the ongoing crisis.

Obasanjo: Nigeria's problems stem from leadership, not constitution

By Friday Omosola



Former President Olusegun Obasanjo has stated that Nigeria's primary constitutional challenge lies not with the document itself, but with the individuals entrusted with its implementation.

He spoke yesterday at the commencement of a three-day national summit in Abuja focusing on Nigeria's constitutional democracy.

Obasanjo emphasised that even an imperfect constitution can facilitate good governance and enhance citizen welfare if properly operated.

Obasanjo's remarks, delivered by Olawale Okunniyi, the secretary-general of Eminent Patriots, underscored that every constitution, while never flawless, must

accurately reflect a nation's history, aspirations, and constituent parts.

"The best constitution can be perverted and distorted by the operators, and we have experienced that all over Africa; Nigeria is not exempted," the former president stated, drawing on broad continental experience.

He stressed the critical importance of focusing on those who operate the constitution, as their actions directly impact governance and the well-being of the populace.

Obasanjo issued a stern warning: without a fundamental shift in the conduct of Nigeria's leadership, the welfare of its citizens will continue to be sacrificed to 'selfishness, corruption, and impunity.'

"No matter what you do to the Nigerian constitution, if the operators of the constitution, for the past one decade and a half, remain unchanged and continue in the same manner, the welfare and wellbeing of Nigerians will continue to be sacrificed on the altar of selfishness," he reiterated.

At this pivotal juncture for the nation, Obasanjo urged that rigorous attention be directed towards the integrity, honesty, and adherence to the rule of law among those operating the constitution.

The summit, organised by The Patriots in collaboration with the Nigeria Political Summit Group, aims to deliberate on the future trajectory of Nigeria's constitutional framework.

Dele Momodu resigns from PDP, joins ADC

By Friday Omosola

Veteran journalist and businessman, Dele Momodu, has announced his resignation from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and declared his allegiance to the newly formed coalition party, the African Democratic Congress (ADC).

In a letter dated Thursday and addressed to the PDP Ward 4 Chairman in Ihievbe, Owan East Local Government Area of Edo State, Momodu confirmed his defection.

The 65-year-old media entrepreneur, also the CEO and publisher of Ovation International magazine, cited the hijacking of the PDP by what he described as 'antidemocratic forces' both within and outside the party.

He lamented that these elements had taken over the party in broad daylight, prompting his decision to seek a more progressive platform.



"I wish to inform you of my decision to resign from our political party, PDP, with immediate effect. My reason is simple and straightforward.

"It is, therefore, honourable to abandon the carcass of the party to them while the majority of us earnestly sign up with the new coalition party known as the African

Democratic Congress (ADC). I will forever treasure the kind support you gave me at all times", he said in the statement.

Momodu's resignation from the PDP followed closely on the heels of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar's decision to part ways with the party.

We do not have your passport – Court to Yahaya Bello

By Friday Omosola

The Federal Capital Territory High Court, presided over by Justice Maryanne Anenih, on Thursday clarified that it does not possess the travel passport of the immediate-past Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello.

The court stated that the document is, in fact, held by the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court.

Justice Anenih's declaration came during the resumed hearing of an alleged money laundering case brought against the former governor by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

She explained that her court could not consider Bello's application for the release of his travel document because it was not within her court's jurisdiction.

Justice Anenih emphasised that even if the request were approved, it would be



ineffective as the passport is currently under the custody of Justice Emeka Nwite of the Federal High Court.

Bello is currently facing similar charges concurrently at both the FCT High Court and the Federal High Court in Abuja.

His legal team sought the release of his passport, citing health grounds as the reason for his need to travel out of the country.

Ironically, while Bello's counsel, Joseph Daudu, had earlier conceded that the requested passport was not in the FCT High Court's custody, the former governor's own application had previously indicated that his travel documents were indeed with the Federal High Court.

Bello had, at an earlier point in the proceedings, been ordered to deposit his travel passport and other relevant documents with the FCT court registry.

Following her ruling, Justice Anenih adjourned the case to October 8 and 9 and November 13, 2025, for the continuation of the hearing.

Buhari's death sparks scramble for CPC loyalists as APC faces political test

By Gbenga Olaleye



The death of former President Muhammadu Buhari has reignited a fierce political contest over the allegiance of his loyalists, particularly those from the defunct Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the party he founded in 2009 and which formed the backbone of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

With President Bola Tinubu's emergence in 2023, the influence of CPC-aligned figures within the APC has steadily declined.

Some key Buhari allies, such as former Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai and ex-Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Babachir Lawal, have even publicly opposed Tinubu's expected second-term bid.

Now, with Buhari's passing, political

analysts predict a fresh round of realignment, especially in the north where the late President retained a cult-like following estimated at over 12 million supporters.

ADC emerges as challenger

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has emerged as a major contender for Buhari's political base. Bolaji Abdullahi, ADC's interim National Publicity Secretary, said that the coalition has already attracted several former CPC leaders and Buhari loyalists.

"Most of the Buhari loyalists are already with us, the entire North is already with our party. The passing of the former President will only cement that for us because that was his wish when he was alive that his members should join the coalition," Abdullahi claimed.

He named several figures, including Babachir Lawal, Abubakar Malami, Isah Pantami, Emeka Nwajuba, Nasir El-Rufai, Rotimi Amaechi, and Rauf Aregbesola, as key members now aligned with the ADC coalition.

Abdullahi accused the Tinubu administration of marginalising Buhari's allies and demonising the former President's legacy.

"Why would they remain part of the APC? Tinubu's government has blamed Buhari for almost every economic woe. So, why would Buhari loyalists remain with the APC?" he asked.

APC pushes back

**Continue reading
on next page**

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In response, APC's Director of Publicity, Bala Ibrahim, downplayed the risk of mass defections. "No, they will not support ADC.

They are more comfortable with and in the APC," he said, admitting that Buhari's death has created a vacuum but expressing confidence in the party's ability to recover.

"It is a vacuum that will push the party into sobriety... The party is doing something to reconcile, reassess the situation, and see to it that there is a very good sense of mending," he added.

Former Minister of Communications, Adebayo Shittu, a CPC veteran also dismissed speculation about his alleged defection.

"No way, I am not leaving the APC. In fact, I am planning to run for Oyo governorship in 2027 on the party's platform," he declared.

Buhari's Loyalists: Who's In, Who's Out?

Despite ADC's claims, several high-profile CPC figures remain within the APC, including:

Senator Tanko Al-Makura

Katsina State Governor Dikko Radda

Chairman of NDLEA, Gen. Buba Marwa (rtd)

Former Speaker Aminu Bello Masari

Nasarawa Governor Abdullahi Sule

Adamu Adamu, Ibrahim Gobir, and others

However, insiders acknowledge that discontent remains within the CPC

bloc. Some members feel increasingly sidelined since Buhari exited office, raising the possibility of further defections ahead of the 2027 elections.

Northern leaders divided

Northern political leaders have expressed mixed reactions. Former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, remarked that Buhari's death could significantly reshape Nigeria's political dynamics.

"Politics in Nigeria will certainly change, I hope for the better," he said.

Yerima Shettima, President of the Arewa Youth Consultative Forum, warned that Buhari's absence could create a power vacuum within the APC.

"His death could trigger a power vacuum. The APC would face a critical juncture," he said, adding that how the party handles Buhari's legacy will be crucial.

In contrast, Anthony Sani, former Secretary General of the Arewa

Consultative Forum, dismissed the idea of a political shift. "Given the attitude of his supporters, I do not see how they will betray Buhari, even in his grave," he stated.

A turning point for Nigerian politics
Former APC Vice Chairman (North-West), Salihu Lukman, now with the ADC coalition, said Buhari's death marks the end of an era when a single endorsement could sway national elections.

"Now we don't have any figure like that, our leaders must develop a team spirit and build a fresh political platform that meets the expectations of Nigerians," he said on Arise TV.

Lukman called for greater humility and citizen engagement, arguing that arrogance among political elites had eroded public trust.

As the APC seeks to consolidate its base and the ADC builds a coalition of the disgruntled, Buhari's legacy once a unifying force in northern politics now becomes a contested space in Nigeria's shifting political landscape.



Omisore calls Adeleke a 'political orphan', alleges defection plans

By Gbenga Olaleye

Former Deputy Governor of Osun State and All Progressives Congress (APC) stalwart, Senator Iyiola Omisore, has labelled current Governor Ademola Adeleke a "political orphan," amid renewed allegations that Adeleke is seeking to defect from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the ruling APC.

Omisore made the comment on Wednesday during an interview on Channels Television, where he reacted to persistent speculation surrounding Adeleke's political future.

According to Omisore, the governor has been actively lobbying APC leaders, including a serving southern governor, to facilitate his defection.

"Why do you want to force yourself on the party? Why is the governor begging to enter the party? He is struggling, begging and fighting to join APC," Omisore stated.

He criticised Adeleke's leadership of the state, claiming that no major APC figure has crossed to the PDP under his watch.

In contrast, Omisore pointed out that several prominent PDP members in Osun, including Alhaji Isa Oyedokun, Dayo Babayemi, and Hon. Wole Oke, have already defected to the APC or are reportedly on their way.

"For the past three years, he has been governing that state with no single person decamping from APC to PDP," meanwhile, one over seventh of PDP members have moved to APC, which you know, of course," he said.

Background to the rumours
Speculation over Governor Adeleke's loyalty to the PDP has intensified in recent months, particularly after his frequent engagements with key figures



in the APC.

In June, his unannounced visit to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the Presidential Villa in Abuja set off a fresh wave of rumours. Though the governor's team claimed the visit was purely administrative, critics and observers suggested it had political undertones.

Adeleke, who won the 2022 Osun gubernatorial election on the platform of the PDP, defeating then-incumbent Gboyega Oyetola of the APC, has faced internal friction within his own party.

Analysts say ongoing tensions with some factions of the PDP and pressure from political heavyweights may be pushing him to explore a return to the APC the party he was once loosely aligned with during earlier political movements in the state.

Although Governor Adeleke has yet to make any public statement confirming

or denying his alleged defection plans, the silence has done little to dispel the growing narrative.

APC caution, internal reactions

Within APC circles, there has been mixed reaction to the possibility of Adeleke joining the party. While some see it as a strategic win ahead of the 2026 governorship election, others have raised concerns about the governor's political consistency and previous criticisms of APC policies.

Omisore's blunt remarks appear to reflect this cautious approach, portraying Adeleke not as a political asset, but as a desperate politician with no clear ideological base.

With the next electoral cycle approaching, political realignments in Osun remain fluid, and all eyes are on Governor Adeleke as the PDP and APC reposition for future contests.

Ex-Lagos deputy gov Bucknor-Akerele criticises Tinubu's 2027 ambition

By Damilola Olufemi

Former Lagos State Deputy Governor, Kofo Bucknor-Akerele, has criticised President Bola Tinubu's reported focus on securing a second term in 2027, calling it a misplaced priority given Nigeria's deepening social and economic crisis.

Speaking on The Morning Brief programme on Channels Television, Bucknor-Akerele — who served under Tinubu from 1999 to 2002 — said the administration should instead be focused on rescuing the country from its current decline.

“Unfortunately, what I see is that the president seems more concerned about a second term than fixing the country,” she said. “I think he should pay attention to the work being done by people like Emeka Anyaoku and others who are committed to creating a better future for Nigeria.”

Bucknor-Akerele, a member of The Patriots, a group led by former Commonwealth Secretary-General Emeka Anyaoku, urged Tinubu's advisers to redirect his focus from 2027 politics to addressing Nigeria's challenges. “I hope that his advisers will be able to tell him that 2027 is not our priority right now. Our priority is fashioning something that will be able to make Nigeria great again,” she added.

‘Disenchanted youths may resist politicians in 2027’

She warned that the growing frustration among Nigerian youth — especially over unemployment — could derail



political ambitions in the next election cycle. “We need full employment for our youths. Many are roaming the streets, some with degrees but working as security guards. Is that the Nigeria we want?”

She added, “It's urgent. This can't wait until after another election. Some of these politicians may not even get the power they seek, because the youth are restive. Let us pray we don't end up in a revolution.”

Bucknor-Akerele calls for constitutional reform

Bucknor-Akerele reiterated support for a complete overhaul of the nation's constitution as championed by the Anyaoku-led group. According to her, the existing system has failed to serve current and future generations.

“We need drastic action now. Our security, economy, education, and

health systems are all in a state of disarray,” she said.

On restructuring, she advocated for long-standing demands such as state policing and budget reform. “Recurrent expenditure is swallowing our budget. We need a leaner, more effective system that delivers free education and healthcare. That was once possible in Nigeria — it can be again.”

The former deputy governor said the current hardship across the country means Tinubu's government will soon have no choice but to adopt the Patriots' proposals.

“There's frustration everywhere in Nigeria. If this government believes it can carry on with business as usual, then I'm sorry to say—we are headed for disaster,” she said.

Court sentences man to jail for hiding N653m received from Saudi Arabia

By Fatimah Idera

Justice S.M. Shuaibu of the Federal High Court in Kano has sentenced a man, Salisu Ahmad, to prison for failing to declare foreign currency amounting to over ₦653 million upon his arrival in Nigeria from Saudi Arabia.

Ahmad was convicted on a one-count charge of non-declaration of funds, in violation of Sections 3(3) and 3(5) of the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022. The case was prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) following his arrest by Nigeria Customs Service officers during a routine check at Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport on July 7, 2025.

According to the EFCC, Ahmad arrived aboard Ethiopian Airlines flight ET940 and was found with large sums of undeclared foreign currency concealed in polythene bags wrapped in cloth inside his luggage. The funds included \$420,900, £5,825, CFA3,946,500 (West African CFA), and Cameroonian CFA224,000—all amounting to a total value of ₦653 million.



Court charges

The court charge read: “That you, Salisu Ahmad, on or about the 7th day of July, 2025... while transporting this foreign sum, failed to make a declaration of the same to the Nigerian Customs.”

Justice Shuaibu found Ahmad guilty and ordered the total amount forfeited to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

During interrogation, Ahmad claimed he was acting on behalf of his brother, Auwal Ahmad, who resides in Saudi Arabia. He alleged he was instructed to deliver the money to two individuals in Nigeria—Yusuf Adamu and Abdulhamid Rabi—whom he has since been arrested while attempting to collect the funds.

The EFCC confirmed that investigations are ongoing into other persons possibly connected to the illegal money transfer.

Atiku: Nigeria's political journeyman

By Alade Adisa

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar qualifies to be labelled Nigeria's political journeyman.

Who is a journeyman one may ask? A journeyman is a skilled worker who has completed an apprenticeship and is qualified to work in their trade, typically for an employer.

They are experienced, competent workers but not necessarily masters of their craft. And recent actions of Atiku point him in the direction of somebody who may not be a master of his craft.

He cut his political teeth under the late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, who was the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters to the then Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, from February 1976 to October 1979.



After the military sent the civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari packing, the General Muhammadu Buhari-led administration was also overthrown by General Ibrahim Babangida.

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The latter played with various political permutations under which General Yar Adua formed the Peoples Democratic Movement, PDM.

It was in the PDM that Atiku rose to prominence. Babangida finally created the defunct Social Democratic Party, SDP and the National Republican Convention, NRC.

When General Sani Abacha eventually died and a new political dispensation came into force, the PDM was one of the major blocs that formed the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP. Atiku was already an elected governor in Adamawa State before Obasanjo, the presidential candidate of the PDP, nominated him as his running mate, and the duo won the 1999 presidential election.

Since 1999, Atiku has left the PDP and come back three times. He left the party in 2007 for the then Action Congress, AC. Went back and later left to form the All Progressives Congress, APC, with others. He came back again and has now left.

Why the movement up and down?

Atiku is doing all the defections for no other reason than to become the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Atiku ran unsuccessfully for President of Nigeria six times, in 1993, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023.

He did not get the ticket for his party on three occasions, but got the ticket and lost in the general elections in 2007, 2019 and 2023.

Can he inherit Buhari's 10 million votes?

Since the announcement by Atiku on Wednesday that he has resigned from the PDP to join the African Democratic Congress, ADC, tongues have been wagging that he could be the one to now enjoy the cult following that Buhari enjoyed while alive.

Before Buhari finally contested and won at the fourth attempt in 2015, he had contested thrice almost single-handedly and was able to muster over 10 million votes on each occasion. It

was the coalition with Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and others that gave him the necessary edge in 2015.

Some political pundits are of the view that Atiku could now become the toast of the North. Some leaders of the region are bent on reclaiming the presidency for the region come 2027.

Commenting on the development, a member of the State Caretaker Committee of the PDP in Ekiti State, Mr Jackson Adebayo, said many things would still unfold in the political sphere.

“With the death of former President Muhammadu Buhari, a sort of vacuum has been created regarding the political leadership of the North, and somebody has to fill it.

“However, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar can be the next political leader there, but a lot of things would still happen. Those going into the coalition would have agreed among themselves how to share the various positions,” he said.



Kenya threatens closure of health facilities abusing UHC reforms

By Helen Okechukwu



The Cabinet Secretary for Health, Hon. Aden Duale, has issued a stern warning to healthcare providers across Kenya, cautioning that any public or private facility found compromising the integrity of ongoing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) reforms will face immediate closure.

Speaking during a high-level public engagement held at the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Sports Complex in Kisumu County, CS Duale reaffirmed the government's commitment to fast-tracking UHC reforms, highlighting the need for urgency, transparency, and accountability in healthcare service delivery.

He disclosed that under the newly operational Social Health Authority (SHA), 295 healthcare providers have already been empanelled,

including 135 public health facilities.

12 centres were yet to complete their contracting process, and eight had reported service delivery or claims-related challenges.

"I am calling on county leadership to move swiftly to finalise contracting and resolve any system inactivity that may disrupt access to care," he said.

Duale reiterated that the Taifa Care model must remain people-focused, with targeted interventions to reach marginalised populations regardless of age, income, or social standing.

He also noted that SHA has introduced advanced monitoring tools, including artificial intelligence systems designed to detect fraud and ensure transparency.

"“We are building a health system that is not only efficient but also inclusive and accountable,” he stated.

The Cabinet Secretary condemned any attempts to manipulate the UHC system, specifically pointing out the misuse of One-Time Password (OTP) codes by doctors for pre-authorisation of services. “The misuse of OTP doctors’ pre-authorisation codes is a serious breach and will not be tolerated,” he warned.

The Kisumu visit is part of the Ministry of Health’s broader strategy to bolster public confidence, enhance collaboration between national and county governments, and deliver on the national vision of health coverage for all.

NiMet calls for stakeholders' collaboration to tackle food insecurity using data

By Helen Okechukwu



The Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) has called on stakeholders to work collectively in addressing food insecurity through a coordinated, data-driven, and solution-oriented approach.

This call was made by NiMet's Director General and Chief Executive Officer, Prof. Charles Anosike, during a courtesy visit by a delegation from the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) to the agency's headquarters in Abuja.

Prof. Anosike, who also serves as Nigeria's Permanent Representative with the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), reaffirmed NiMet's support for the Food and Nutrition Security Information System (FNSIS) and stressed the importance of collaboration in developing a robust national framework to address food and climate-related challenges.

Read Also: NiMet warns Nigerians to take precautionary measures against heat surge

He highlighted NiMet's ongoing partnership with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to

downscale seasonal forecasts, enabling farmers across the country to make informed decisions that enhance productivity.

He also underscored the agency's role in early warning systems and disaster risk reduction, crucial components in safeguarding food security.

Prof. Anosike shared insights into the National Framework for Early Warning and Early Action, developed by NiMet with support from the WMO, which aims to coordinate institutional responses to climate and food crises.

While speaking with the delegate, he said that copies of the framework would be made available to all relevant stakeholders, aimed to "foster synergy, eliminate duplication of efforts, and strengthen the national response to emerging threats."

Leader of the visiting delegation, Mr. Williams Massaoud, commended NiMet's contributions to climate services and its role in supporting food security efforts.

He stressed the significance of integrating meteorological data into

the broader FNSIS and outlined the goals of the PRISISAN Project (Project for Strengthening and Innovating Food and Nutrition Security Information Systems), noting its support to countries in the Sahel and West Africa with the focus of building sustainable information systems for effective food crisis management.

"Mr. Massaoud further highlighted that the mission includes representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (FMAFS), the Cadre Harmonisé Taskforce, and other key development partners committed to tackling food and nutrition insecurity in the region," the statement noted.

"Prof. Anosike reiterated the importance of collective action, urging all relevant stakeholders to collaborate in tackling food insecurity through the development of a coordinated, data-driven, and integrated food security information system that supports evidence-based decision-making and long-term resilience."

BBNaija season 10 kicks off July 26 with N150m top prize

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

MultiChoice Nigeria has officially announced that the tenth season of Big Brother Naija (BBNaija) will premiere on Saturday, 26 July 2025, with a second launch show scheduled for Sunday, 27 July.

This marks a major milestone for the hit reality TV show, which first aired in 2006.

During a media briefing on Wednesday, the organisers revealed that this year's winner will walk away with a ₦150 million grand prize, the biggest reward in the history of the show. This announcement generated widespread excitement among fans and the media.

Long-time host Ebuka Obi-Uchendu will return once again to anchor the show. He is expected to guide viewers through 10 weeks of drama, romance, competition, and unexpected twists. According to MultiChoice, the grand finale has been scheduled for Sunday, October 5, 2025.

Ebuka, who has hosted the show since its second season, shared his thoughts on the show's enduring popularity. "BBNaija has become a part of Nigerian pop culture. With every season, we witness different personalities, stories, and experiences," he said.

At the press event, Busola Tejumola, Executive Head of General Entertainment at MultiChoice Nigeria, described the upcoming edition as more than just another season. She said Season 10 would be "a celebration of legacy", in honour of the show's long-standing impact on entertainment and youth culture in Nigeria and across Africa.

While the theme for Season 10 remains under wraps, Tejumola confirmed that it will be unveiled during the premiere weekend.

The audition process for Season 10 kicked off with online applications



between May 3 and 7, followed by in-person auditions held in Lagos, Abuja, and Enugu from May 16 to 18. The organisers said the selection was aimed at discovering Nigeria's most charismatic and entertaining personalities and promised a vibrant mix of contestants.

This rigorous process, they explained, was to ensure that only the most engaging housemates made it into the Big Brother House.

BBNaija introduced 197 housemates across nine seasons

Since its debut, BBNaija has introduced 197 housemates across nine seasons, with a total of ₦637 million given away in prizes. The show has also racked up an impressive 709 days of total broadcast time, making it one of Africa's longest-running reality series.

The most recent edition, Season 9, carried the theme "No Loose Guard". That season introduced a pairing twist, housemates entered as duos and later separated to play individually. The season ended with Kellyrae emerging

as the winner, pocketing ₦100 million. He also made history as the first married housemate to win the show.

Other standout participants included Wanni X Handi, the Mbadiwe twins, Onyeka, Nelly, and Shaun, all of whom brought unique stories and energy to the house.

Fans can catch the live premiere on Africa Magic Showcase, Africa Magic Family, and Showmax at 7 p.m. WAT on both Saturday and Sunday.

The 24-hour live broadcast will be available on DSTv Channel 198, GOTv Channel 49, and streaming on Showmax. For fans on the move, the show can be accessed through the DSTv Stream and GOTv Stream mobile apps, available on Google Play and the iOS App Store.

As always, Sunday eviction shows will continue to air weekly on all these platforms, offering fans suspense and excitement as housemates are voted out one by one.

Burna Boy reveals deep connection with Jamaica than Nigeria

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Grammy-winning Nigerian music star, Damini Ogulu, widely known as Burna Boy, has opened up about a time in his life when he felt more Jamaican than Nigerian.

The 34-year-old artist made this revelation during a recent interview with Capital Xtra in London. He explained that his time living in Brixton, a culturally diverse neighbourhood in the United Kingdom, played a major role in shaping this feeling.

According to him, he was surrounded mostly by Jamaicans and other Caribbean nationals, which made him form a strong bond with Jamaican culture.

“Jamaica has always been a part of me,” he said during the interview.

Burna Boy said his love for Jamaica didn’t just begin when he moved to the UK. It started much earlier, during his childhood in Nigeria.

Burna Boy recalls dad playing Jamaican music

He recalled how his father frequently played Jamaican music in their home, especially tracks by Super Cat, a legendary reggae and dancehall artist.

That early exposure, Burna Boy noted, helped him develop a deep admiration for Jamaican sound and culture.

“From my dad playing Super Cat and stuff when I was a kid to me ending up in Brixton, it’s been part of my life for a long time,” he said.

Burna Boy described his time in Brixton as eye-opening. At a time when most Nigerians in the UK were either studying or living in Peckham, he found himself in Brixton, a place known for its Caribbean population.

He said this unique environment led him to feel more Jamaican during that period of his life.

“I considered myself more Jamaican at the time simply for the fact that everyone around me was Jamaican and Caribbean,” he said.

He added that there were very few Nigerians in his immediate circle back



then. Instead, his close friends were from other African and Caribbean countries, such as Gambia, Uganda, and Congo.

“There were only two Nigerians in my crew,” he recalled.

Despite his love for Jamaica and its people, Burna Boy made it clear that he has never lost touch with his Nigerian roots.

He explained that whenever he returns home to Nigeria, he fully embraces his identity as a Nigerian. However, his time in the UK, especially among Caribbean communities, allowed him to experience a different cultural identity.

“When I go back home to Nigeria, then I’m really a Nigerian. But when I was here, I’m Jamaican,” he said.

Burna Boy also acknowledged the strong Jamaican influence on his music. He said reggae and dancehall played a major role in shaping his unique sound, which blends Afrobeat with global genres.

He has often been praised for fusing African rhythms with Caribbean vibes, creating a sound that resonates across continents.

This cross-cultural musical style has

earned him global recognition, including a Grammy Award in 2021 for Best Global Music Album.

This is not the first time Burna Boy has spoken fondly about Jamaica. In past interviews, he referred to the country as “home” and expressed his deep appreciation for its people, music, and culture.

His connection to the island nation goes beyond just music. From 2019 to 2021, Burna Boy was in a relationship with British-Jamaican rapper Stefflon Don. The high-profile romance further tied him to Jamaican culture and brought attention to his admiration for the Caribbean.

Over the years, Burna Boy has grown into one of Africa’s biggest music exports. While his Nigerian heritage remains central to his identity, his global outlook is shaped by the places and people he has encountered along the way, including Jamaica.

His story is a testament to how music and culture can bridge nations, break boundaries, and shape personal identity.

As Burna Boy continues to rise on the global stage, his unique blend of African and Caribbean influences remains one of his greatest strengths.

Timi Dakolo slams Royal Air Maroc over lost luggage

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian singer and songwriter Timi Dakolo has publicly accused Royal Air Maroc, Morocco's national airline, of mishandling his luggage during a recent international trip.

In a video posted to his Instagram page on Thursday, Dakolo expressed frustration after what he described as a long and fruitless attempt to recover his missing bag.

The incident, according to him, occurred on June 26, 2025, during a trip from Lagos to Freetown, Sierra Leone, with a layover in Casablanca, Morocco.

The visibly upset artist said he flew business class and expected his luggage to be given priority. However, upon arrival in Freetown, his bag was nowhere to be found.

Narrating the incident, Dakolo said, "On the 26th of June, I flew from Lagos to Morocco, then from Morocco to Freetown. While boarding, I saw my bag being loaded from where I was sitting in the business class cabin. I asked the crew, and they assured me the bag would be put on the flight."

However, he revealed that upon landing in Freetown, the bag was missing. "I got to Freetown and couldn't find my bag. I reported the matter immediately. I filled out a form, called several times, sent emails, and even contacted NAHCO. But since that day, I haven't seen my full luggage," he added.

Dakolo hinted at possible foul play, saying, "It's beginning to look like they stole my stuff. Air Maroc, please return my full luggage. This is not just any kind of luggage."

More than three weeks after the incident, Dakolo's bag remains unaccounted for. Despite repeated efforts to contact the airline and resolve the issue, he says there has been no helpful response from Royal Air Maroc.



"It's not just about the cost of the items in the bag," he said. "It's the carelessness and the silence that are most upsetting. You can't treat passengers like this and expect silence."

Daddy Freeze calls on airline to return Dakolo's belongings

Popular media personality and radio host, Daddy Freeze, has lent his voice to Dakolo's complaint. In a separate video posted to his Instagram account, Freeze directly addressed Royal Air Maroc and urged the airline to return the singer's belongings.

"Air Maroc, please, what is going on with Timi Dakolo's bag?" he asked. "Can the authorities look into this matter and help retrieve his luggage?"

He added, "This is not just about Timi. It could be anyone. You buy a ticket, trust the airline with your belongings, and they disappear. That's not right."

The incident has sparked widespread reactions online, with many Nigerians expressing sympathy for Dakolo. Some users shared similar experiences with Royal Air Maroc, alleging poor

customer service and unaccounted luggage.

Many urged aviation authorities and regulatory bodies to investigate the matter and ensure that airlines operating in and out of Nigeria are held to international standards.

Dakolo concluded his message with a direct appeal to Royal Air Maroc: "Please return my luggage. I'm tired of the silence. This is not how to treat people."

So far, Royal Air Maroc has not issued any official statement in response to the allegations.

The incident highlights the ongoing issue of missing baggage in the aviation industry and raises questions about airline accountability and customer care. As travellers continue to share their stories, pressure mounts on airline operators to improve services and maintain trust.

For now, Timi Dakolo and his supporters await a response and, most importantly, the return of his missing bag.

Darkoo: 'I want kids, but not pregnancy'

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

British-Nigerian rapper and singer, Oluwafisayo Isa, popularly known as Darkoo, has opened up about her desire to become a mother.

The 22-year-old artiste said she is now at a point in her life where having children is on her mind.

However, she made it clear that while she wants to raise kids, she has no plans to carry a baby in her womb.

Speaking during an interview with media personality Madame Joyce, Darkoo said she believes she would be a wonderful mother. Still, she prefers that her partner be the one to get pregnant and give birth.

"I'm at a phase in my life when I'm thinking about having kids," she said. "I feel like I would be a great mom, but I don't want to carry the baby in my womb. My partner is going to carry it."

Her comments have sparked conversations online, with many people praising her openness and honesty about her personal life and future goals.

Darkoo speaks on what mother means

Darkoo also shared her thoughts on what it truly means to be a mother. She explained that being a mom is not only about biological ties, but more about the love, care, and time given to raise a child.

"For me, being a mother isn't just about blood or carrying a child. It's about love, care, and being present," she said.

She added that nurturing a child goes beyond pregnancy and



childbirth. According to her, parenting is about emotional support and being deeply involved in a child's life.

Darkoo came out as a lesbian a few years ago and has continued to speak openly about her sexuality. She has never shied away from discussing her identity in public and in her music. In 2024, she revealed that coming out to her parents brought her a deep sense of relief and peace.

She described the experience as life-changing, saying it felt like a heavy weight had been lifted off her shoulders.

"When I finally told my mom about my sexuality, it changed everything," Darkoo said in a previous interview. "It was scary at first, but after that conversation, I felt so much lighter. I've been a lot happier ever since."

Since opening up to her family and fans, Darkoo has been living more freely and joyfully. She often uses

her platform to speak on LGBTQ+ issues and encourage others to be themselves, no matter how hard it may seem.

Her music, image, and lifestyle reflect her confidence and freedom to express who she is. Fans often celebrate her boldness and the way she challenges traditional views, especially when it comes to relationships, identity, and now, parenting.

Darkoo's latest comments about starting a family with her partner show how today's generation is reshaping the idea of what family looks like. In a world that is constantly changing, her story is one of many showing that love, not gender roles or tradition, is at the heart of parenting.

As she continues to grow in her career and personal life, Darkoo says she is focused on staying true to herself.

"I just want to be happy and build a life that feels right for me," she said.

Ex-BBN housemate Kimoprah reacts to men's boldness who approach her

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Former Big Brother Naija housemate and media personality, Chinonso Opara, better known as Kimoprah, has expressed surprise at the boldness of some men who approach her, especially while she's travelling outside Nigeria.

Speaking during a recent episode of The BTS Reality podcast, the reality star recalled several moments when men, particularly taxi drivers and immigration officers, made romantic advances toward her during her trips abroad.

Kimoprah admitted that she was often taken aback by how freely strangers, regardless of their status, approached her with flirtatious intentions. According to her, many of these men appear to have little concern for class or social standing.

"Taxi drivers try to talk to me... Men have audacity," she said, laughing. "When you travel abroad, you know how it is there. They don't care about class. They can walk up to anybody. Anybody is within their right of speech."

While she acknowledged that people in other countries may not observe the same social boundaries as Nigerians do, Kimoprah made it clear that she finds some of these interactions inappropriate or uninvited.

Kimoprah berates uniform officials

She went on to reveal that even uniformed officials have crossed the line. In her words, immigration officers, whose job is to verify travel documents and maintain border security, have also taken their shot.

"I've had people like immigration officers try to talk to me," she said. "It's just surprising how bold some men can be."

However, despite how often she's approached by such individuals, Kimoprah noted that the type of men she genuinely wants to attract often do not make the first move.

Interestingly, Kimoprah confessed that the kind of men she prefers rarely express romantic interest. This contrast between the people who pursue her and the ones she's drawn to is something she finds frustrating but, ultimately, accepting of.



"The people that you want to attract... those shy away," she said. "But it's even better that you shy away. That means you're not for me. So, it's okay."

She went on to say that she's not discouraged by the lack of interest from her ideal type. In her view, what's meant to be will eventually happen.

"The one that is meant for me would eventually come and will stay," she added.

Kimoprah's comments touch on a broader cultural difference between dating in Nigeria and abroad. While Nigerian society tends to emphasise class, wealth, and social status when it comes to dating or marriage, many Western cultures adopt a more open and casual approach.

In many foreign cities, it is not uncommon for service workers, such as taxi drivers or airport officials, to approach women they find attractive. In those cultures, it's often viewed as a harmless compliment or an act of boldness. But for Kimoprah, who is used to more reserved and class-conscious social cues, the experience can be surprising.

Following the release of the podcast episode, fans have shared mixed reactions on social media. Some applauded her honesty and confidence in sharing personal experiences. Others joked about how "audacious" some men can be, echoing her sentiments.

Many female fans could relate to her story, with some noting that women are often approached by men they are not interested in, while those they desire remain mysteriously silent.

Kimoprah gained national attention in 2019 as a housemate on Big Brother Naija: Pepper Dem season. Since then, she has built a successful career as a TV host, model, and influencer. Known for her poise and style, she often shares insights about her personal and professional life on her podcast and social platforms.

Her recent remarks once again show her willingness to speak candidly about life, relationships, and the challenges that come with being in the public eye.

As she continues to build her brand, one thing is clear: Kimoprah isn't settling for less, whether it's in love or in life.

'I declined your collab request twice', SZA to Nicki Minaj

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The ongoing tension between American music stars Nicki Minaj and SZA has taken a more dramatic turn.

What started as a subtle online shade has now turned into a public war of words, with both artists trading claims over their success, credibility, and past interactions.

The latest clash began on Tuesday night after SZA appeared to throw indirect shade at Nicki Minaj. The R&B star's post came shortly after Nicki launched a furious rant on X (formerly Twitter), aiming at Top Dawg Entertainment (TDE) president, Punch, who has long managed SZA's career.

In her online tirade, Minaj made bold claims about her achievements compared to SZA's. She stated that she had performed in far more countries than the R&B singer, even suggesting that there are places around the world where SZA is not known. The tone of the rant suggested a deep frustration, with Minaj implying that her legacy in music far outweighs that of her counterpart.

Minaj, known for her confident and often confrontational social media style, didn't hold back. She said she has performed in places where SZA's name holds no weight, portraying herself as the more successful and globally recognised artist.

These comments quickly caught the attention of fans and observers alike. Many viewed Minaj's remarks as dismissive and unnecessary, especially considering the respect SZA has garnered in recent years for her chart-topping music and critically acclaimed albums.

Not one to let things slide, SZA responded with what many fans saw as a calm but pointed clapback. The "Kill Bill" singer shared a screenshot on X that appeared to show messages from Nicki Minaj's team requesting a musical collaboration.

In her caption, SZA claimed she had declined Minaj's request for a feature not once, but twice.



"You absolutely know my music and what I contribute," SZA wrote, "cause you've asked for features twice to no response."

The singer went further, pointing out that Nicki had previously rapped her lyrics from the song *Feeling Myself* a collaboration between Nicki and Beyoncé, in which the line "Cooking up the bass looking like a kilo" originates.

"Lol, ur having a moment... I'm not sure why, but be blessed," SZA added, ending the message on a somewhat sarcastic yet composed note.

Fans react to SZA and Nicki's saga
As expected, fans on both sides weighed in heavily. Supporters of Minaj defended her as a legend in the rap game, while SZA's fans praised her for taking the high road and calmly calling out what they saw as hypocrisy.

The situation also sparked broader conversations about how female artists are often pitted against one another in the music industry, especially when both are enjoying successful careers in different genres.

Some fans pointed out that both Nicki and SZA have their unique strengths.



Nicki as a groundbreaking rapper with over a decade of dominance, and SZA as a genre-bending artist who has reshaped modern R&B with her soulful sound and vulnerable songwriting.

This isn't the first time Nicki Minaj has been caught in a public feud with another artist. Over the years, she's clashed with several other female musicians, including Cardi B, Megan Thee Stallion, and Latto. Each incident has often played out publicly, mainly through social media, and has stirred fan debates for weeks.

In this case, however, SZA's calm and factual response, complete with screenshots, seems to have turned the tide in her favour, at least for now.

It remains to be seen whether Nicki Minaj will respond again or let the matter drop. For now, both artists appear focused on their respective careers, but the drama has added yet another chapter to the complex world of celebrity feuds.

Fans can only hope that the tension dies down and that the music takes centre stage once again. Until then, social media remains on fire with memes, debates, and speculation about what may come next.

UK proposes lowering voting age nationwide to 16

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi and Damilola Olufemi

In a new development, the British government announced on Thursday plans to lower the voting age to 16 for all UK elections, marking a significant shift in the nation's democratic framework. This comes after a public inquiry highlighted growing concerns over declining voter engagement. The 2024 general election recorded a turnout of just 59.7%—the lowest in over two decades, according to a parliamentary report.

The proposed reform, which still requires parliamentary approval, aims to unify voting rights across the United Kingdom—bringing England and Northern Ireland in line with Scotland and Wales, where 16 and 17-year-olds already vote in devolved elections.

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner described the move as part of a broader effort to increase political participation and modernise UK democracy.

“We are taking action to break down barriers to participation that will ensure more people have the opportunity to engage in UK democracy,” Rayner said in a statement.

Research from the House of Commons Library suggests that lowering the voting age does not significantly alter election outcomes. In fact, evidence from other countries shows that 16-year-olds are more likely to vote than first-time voters aged 18, challenging assumptions about youth disengagement.

The ruling Labour government, which has seen a steep drop in public support since its landslide victory last year, had pledged to lower the voting age as part of its electoral reform agenda.

In addition to enfranchising younger citizens, the government also proposed expanding acceptable voter ID to include UK-issued bank cards and digital versions of official documents, such as driving licences and Veteran Cards.

To safeguard the integrity of elections, the reforms will introduce tighter controls on political donations, particularly from unincorporated associations. Contributions exceeding £500 (\$670) will be subject to new checks, and legal loopholes used by shell companies will be closed to reduce the risk of foreign



interference.

If passed, these reforms could reshape the UK's electoral landscape, making it more inclusive and resilient in the face of evolving democratic challenges.

Starmer speaks

“This is about fairness,” Starmer said on Thursday. “If 16- and 17-year-olds are old enough to work and pay taxes, then they should also have a say in how their money is spent and which direction the government takes.”

The proposed legislation will be introduced in Parliament, where Labour holds a strong majority. However, the move is expected to stir political controversy. Critics argue the change could be politically motivated, as younger voters are often more inclined to support Labour.

Still, Labour insists the reform is aimed at revitalising democratic engagement and modernising the system. The current plan also includes automated voter registration—already in place in countries like Australia and Canada—and expanding acceptable forms of voter ID to include UK-issued bank cards.

These changes would reverse parts of the previous Conservative government's

electoral law that required photo identification to vote. According to the Electoral Commission, that policy prevented an estimated 750,000 people from casting their ballots in last year's election.

The UK currently joins a small group of nations—including Austria, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Ecuador—that permit 16-year-olds to vote in national elections. Austria was the first EU country to lower the voting age to 16 in 2007.

Labour ministers also point out that 16-year-olds are already allowed to vote in Scotland and Wales for regional parliamentary elections, making this change a step toward consistency across the UK.

Harry Quilter-Pinner, executive director of the Institute for Public Policy Research, called the reform “the most significant change to our electoral system since 1969,” when the voting age was reduced from 21 to 18.

He estimated that lowering the age and adopting automatic registration could add up to 9.5 million new voters. “Our democracy is in crisis,” Quilter-Pinner warned. “Without action, we risk reaching a point where people stop believing in the legitimacy of politics itself.”

Trump diagnosed with chronic venous insufficiency following leg swelling

By Damilola Olufemi



President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, has been diagnosed with a common vein condition.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt disclosed this on Thursday after Trump was evaluated by his doctor over swelling in his lower legs.

Chronic Venous Insufficiency (CVI) is a condition where blood doesn't flow efficiently from the legs back to the heart, causing symptoms like varicose veins, leg ulcers, and swelling. It is characterised by prolonged venous hypertension due to impaired venous valve function

or obstruction.

Leavitt cites Trump's doctor's note

Leavitt, while reading the report from the president's physician, Capt. Sean Barbabella said, "bilateral lower extremity venous doppler ultrasounds were performed and revealed chronic venous insufficiency, ICD-9, a common condition, particularly in individuals over the age of 70."

According to Barbabella's note, "no evidence of deep vein thrombosis or arterial disease," and the U.S. president's lab testing was all "within normal

limits."

However, Trump was said not to be experiencing discomfort while Leavitt deferred to a forthcoming letter from Barbabella regarding treatment for the condition.

Referring to Barbabella's note while addressing bruising on the back of Trump's hand, Leavitt, through Barbabella, said, "this is consistent with minor soft tissue irritation from frequent handshaking and the use of aspirin, which is taken as part of a standard cardiovascular prevention regimen"

Labour MP Diane Abbott suspended over racism remarks

By Fatimah Idera

Diane Abbott is once again at the centre of controversy after repeating claims that Jewish and Traveller communities experience racism differently from black people, prompting Labour to consider a renewed suspension.

In a recent interview on BBC Radio 4's Reflections programme, the veteran Labour MP defended her previously condemned remarks, saying it was silly to equate racism based on skin colour with the discrimination faced by Jews and Travellers.

"There must be a difference between racist, which is about colour and other types of racism," she said. "You can see a black person walking down the street... You can spot that person of colour from hundreds of yards away. That is what is different."

Abbott, the UK's longest-serving female MP and known as the "Mother of the House," had originally made similar comments in a 2023 letter to The Observer, in which she argued that Jewish, Irish, and Traveller people did not face lifelong racism in the same way as black communities. That letter sparked widespread criticism and led to her suspension from Labour for over a year. At the time, she issued a full apology, saying she "wholly and unreservedly" withdrew the remarks.

However, her latest defence of the original comments has reignited backlash. A Labour spokesperson said the party is taking her remarks incredibly seriously and will review them under party disciplinary procedures. "There is no place for antisemitism in the Labour Party," the statement added.

Abbott, however, pushed back against accusations of antisemitism, insisting she has spent her life fighting racism in all forms. "I get a bit weary of people trying to label me as antisemitic," she said. "It's just not true."

She also hinted at internal efforts to remove her from the party, claiming, "In



2023, they were trying to get me out."

Abbott's original letter had criticised a piece by writer Tomiwa Owolade, which cited research suggesting Jewish people are among the most likely to report experiences of racism. In her response, she controversially compared their experiences to those of redheads and insisted that, historically, Jewish, Irish, and Traveller groups had not faced systemic racism on the same level as black people in the West.

"In apartheid South Africa, these groups were allowed to vote," she wrote. "And at the height of slavery, there were no white-seeming people manacled on the slave ships."

Her remarks were condemned at the time as deeply offensive by Labour and were widely viewed as a major setback for the party amid ongoing efforts to address allegations of antisemitism.

Abbott criticises Starmer's leadership

Abbott, a long-standing critic of Sir Keir Starmer's leadership, has also spoken out against Labour policies on welfare, including benefit caps and the winter fuel allowance. More recently, she has criticised the Prime Minister's stance on the Israel-Gaza conflict, urging stronger

condemnation of Israel's actions and more severe sanctions.

Despite these tensions, Abbott expressed her gratitude for being a Labour MP but acknowledged the growing distance between her and the party leadership.

Her return to the Labour fold ahead of the 2024 general election had been seen as an attempt at reconciliation. However, the renewed controversy now places pressure on Starmer's leadership to act, particularly as Labour continues efforts to present a unified and disciplined front in government.

Abbott has long been a target of racism herself. In 2017, Amnesty International found that she received ten times more online abuse than any other female MP. In 2023, Frank Hester, a major Conservative donor, was reported to have made racist and violent remarks about her, saying she made him "want to hate all black women" and "should be shot."

Labour's decision on whether to suspend her again is likely to deepen internal divisions, especially among party members and MPs already critical of the leadership's approach to discipline and free expression.

Trump blasts supporters as 'weaklings' over Epstein file demands

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

In a blistering outburst on his social media platform, US President Donald Trump has branded some of his supporters "gullible weaklings" for demanding transparency over a secretive government inquiry into the late financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The tirade marks a dramatic departure from Trump's usual strategy of appeasing his fiercely loyal Make America Great Again (MAGA) base. It comes amid mounting suspicion among conservatives that Trump's administration is concealing incriminating details to protect high-profile figures, possibly including Trump himself, who were associated with Epstein.

Posting on Truth Social on Wednesday, the U.S. President accused his base of falling for a "radical left" conspiracy aimed at discrediting him. He labelled the concerns surrounding the Epstein investigation "bullshit" and dismissed them as a hoax.

"Their new SCAM is what we will forever call the Jeffrey Epstein Hoax, and my PAST supporters have bought into this 'bullshit,' hook, line, and sinker," Trump wrote. "Let these weaklings continue forward and do the Democrats' work... I don't want their support any more!"

Trump's comments follow increasing pressure from Republican voters and figures demanding full disclosure of the so-called "Epstein Files" documents, alleged to contain names of elite individuals linked to Epstein's trafficking ring.

In an interview with Real America's Voice, a far-right media outlet co-founded by Trump ally Steve Bannon, the president insisted the FBI investigate what he termed "the Jeffrey Epstein hoax" as part of a broader conspiracy against him.

"They could look at this Jeffrey Epstein hoax also, because that's the same stuff, that's all put out by Democrats," Trump said. "And you know, some of the naïve Republicans fall right into line."



Backlash within Trump's political camp has been stark

The backlash within Trump's political camp has been stark. Users on Truth Social fired back under his post, accusing him of protecting paedophiles and warning he was alienating his core base. "You're losing your most loyal followers and voices, Mr President," one user wrote. Another demanded, "Why are you protecting pedophiles?"

His statements have caused visible fractures within the Republican Party. Even his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, now a Fox News host, joined calls for transparency, stating, "I do think that there needs to be more transparency on this."

Speaker of the House Mike Johnson also broke ranks, urging the Department of Justice to release the Epstein documents.

"It's a very delicate subject, but we should put everything out there and let the people decide it," Johnson said in an interview on Tuesday. "I agree with the sentiment that we need to put it out there."

On Tuesday evening, Trump appeared to pivot slightly, downplaying the entire controversy as "boring" and unworthy of attention.

"I don't understand why the Jeffrey Epstein case would be of interest to anybody," he said. "It's sordid, but it's

boring... I think only pretty bad people, including fake news, want to keep something like that going."

He added that he would support releasing "credible" information, though he failed to clarify what he considered credible.

The growing tension underscores a rare crack in the once-solid MAGA alliance. Throughout his presidency and subsequent campaigns, Trump fuelled conspiracy theories about a "deep state" controlling America. That narrative, intended to target political adversaries, now appears to be ricocheting back at him as his supporters demand answers.

Last week, the Justice Department and FBI concluded their review of the Epstein case, asserting once again that Epstein died by suicide while in federal custody in 2019. Officials also claimed no list of Epstein's alleged clients would be made public.

Attorney General Pam Bondi, previously a trusted conservative figure leading the case, has faced sharp criticism after earlier claiming Epstein's client list was "sitting on my desk right now to review."

Despite official statements, Republican voters remain sceptical, and the demand for accountability, especially from Trump himself, continues to escalate.

Starmer faces backlash after expelling labour welfare rebels

By Fatimah Idera

Sir Keir Starmer has reignited tensions with the Labour Left after expelling and demoting seven MPs who defied the party line to oppose welfare legislation.

In a sharp display of authority, the Prime Minister withdrew the party whip from four MPs on Wednesday evening—Rachael Maskell, Neil Duncan-Jordan, Chris Hinchliff, and Brian Leishman citing repeated breaches of party discipline. All four will now sit as independents. Three others, Dr Rosena Allin-Khan, Bell Ribeiro-Addy, and Mohammad Yasin, were removed from their roles as trade envoys, a government-appointed privilege.

The disciplinary move follows Labour's largest rebellion under Starmer's leadership, where 127 MPs voted against the government's welfare plans. The rebellion forced a dramatic U-turn, with the government dropping planned cuts to disability benefits, abandoning the expected £4.6 billion in savings.

Starmer's firm response is widely interpreted as an attempt to reassert control following the policy retreat. But the decision has sparked outrage from trade unions and Labour's left-wing faction, who argue the leadership has ignored legitimate concerns about the welfare policy's impact on vulnerable people.

York Central MP Rachael Maskell, a vocal critic of the proposed reforms, expressed sadness over her suspension but stood by her vote. "As a Labour Party member for over 34 years, I could not be more committed to the party, one that upholds the values of equality and justice," she said.



Brian Leishman, MP for Alloa and Grangemouth, said he was devastated but defended his decision to represent constituents' interests despite voting against the leadership on multiple occasions. Chris Hinchliff, MP for North East Hertfordshire and a known environmental advocate, is now rumoured to be considering a defection to the Green Party.

Trade unions and left-wing figures quickly rallied behind the ousted MPs. Fire Brigades Union general secretary Steve Wright condemned the action as outrageous and authoritarian, saying the leadership had ignored the public backlash against the proposed cuts.

Former shadow cabinet minister Jon Trickett also weighed in, describing the suspensions as a mistake. "It's not a sin to stand up for the poor and disabled," he said. "Instead of learning from their error, the Government has mistakenly suspended four decent MPs."

Privately, some Labour MPs were even more critical. One MP mocked the leadership's approach, saying, "I demand that morale improves within the PLP and I will continue to shoot people until that happens," highlighting concerns that the crackdown may worsen internal tensions.

The disciplinary action comes amid reports that Downing Street is planning a broader reset following the collapse of the welfare policy. The reversal has left Chancellor Rachel Reeves scrambling to fill a £4.6 billion hole in the upcoming autumn budget, likely increasing pressure for tax rises.

In response, Number 10 is now reviewing its political strategy, with a possible cabinet reshuffle on the horizon as Labour seeks to regain control of its messaging and policy delivery.

Brazil approves 'devastation bill' to safeguard environment

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Brazilian lawmakers have passed a bill that significantly weakens the country's environmental protections, in what activists are calling the most devastating blow to Brazil's environmental legislation in over four decades.

Dubbed the "devastation bill", the legislation was approved in the lower house of Congress during the early hours of Thursday, passing by 267 votes to 116. The bill, which had already been approved by the Senate in May, now awaits President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's decision. He has 15 working days to either sign it into law or issue a presidential veto.

However, even if Lula chooses to veto the bill, the prospect of a legislative override looms large, with the country's conservative-dominated Congress expected to push the bill through regardless. Should that occur, a legal battle in the Supreme Federal Court appears inevitable, as many constitutional experts argue the law is fundamentally unlawful.

"Either way, its approval is a tragedy," said Suely Araújo, public policy coordinator at the Climate Observatory and former president of Brazil's environmental protection agency, Ibama. "There's no precedent for how damaging this law is," she added, calling it "the greatest setback to Brazil's environmental legislation" since licensing regulations were first introduced in the 1980s.

A key point of contention is the bill's expansion of fast-track licensing for industrial and agricultural activities. Under the new law, projects deemed to have "medium" polluting potential can now obtain an environmental licence through a self-declared online form—bypassing impact assessments and regulatory oversight. Previously, this simplified process was restricted to low-risk operations.

Change could affect up to 90% of environmental licensing processes in Brazil

According to Araújo, the change could



affect up to 90% of environmental licensing processes in Brazil, including major industries such as mining and agribusiness. "We're seeing the implosion of Brazil's environmental licensing system. It's full self-licensing now, where a company just clicks a button and the permit gets printed," she said.

The legislation also significantly curtails the input of Indigenous and quilombola communities, Afro-Brazilian descendants of enslaved people, by stipulating that their involvement in licensing processes only applies to officially recognised territories. This excludes more than 30% of Indigenous lands and over 80% of quilombola territories, which have been awaiting formal recognition for years.

"Many of these lands are already under dispute or being targeted by exploitative companies," warned Dinamam Tuxá, executive coordinator of the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (Apib). "This bill legalises the process of extermination of Indigenous peoples."

Tuxá urged President Lula to veto the legislation but acknowledged the uphill battle, noting, "In a predominantly opposition-led Congress, the president's decision is likely to be overturned. That's why civil society must remain organised to pressure lawmakers not to

overturn the veto."

The bill's passage has ignited fierce backlash from environmentalists, civil society groups, and over 350 organisations, who argue that the new framework undermines decades of hard-won progress in environmental governance.

Some activists have criticised the Lula administration for not doing enough to oppose the legislation, and for reportedly allowing it to advance without sufficient resistance. According to investigative outlet Sumaúma, key figures within Lula's government, apart from Environment Minister Marina Silva, did little to block the bill's momentum. Silva condemned the legislation as "the burial of environmental licensing".

With Brazil set to host COP30 in the Amazon later this year, critics warn the timing of the bill could not be more damaging. "This law is a serious setback and will shape how Brazil is viewed by those who see it as a potential environmental leader," said Araújo.

If the law comes into effect, it is expected to face a wave of legal challenges, with environmental advocates and constitutional lawyers preparing for a prolonged fight to have it overturned.

Trump's tariff threat to shield Bolsonaro sparks backlash in Brazil

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

US President Donald Trump's dramatic intervention in Brazil's domestic affairs appears to be backfiring, triggering widespread outrage across the South American nation and unintentionally giving a political boost to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

On 9 July, Trump penned a letter to Lula demanding that criminal charges against Brazil's far-right former leader, Jair Bolsonaro, be dropped. In an extraordinary move, Trump also declared a punitive 50% tariff on all Brazilian imports into the United States unless his demand was met. Calling the legal proceedings against Bolsonaro a "Witch Hunt," Trump thundered that the investigation "should end IMMEDIATELY!"

The intervention was seen as a desperate attempt to shield Bolsonaro, 70, who is already barred from standing in next year's presidential election. It also reignited tensions between Brazil's political factions, especially as Bolsonaro's son, Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, urged Lula's government to "surrender" to Trump's ultimatum and offer his father an amnesty.

Flávio went as far as comparing Brazil's predicament to Japan's at the close of the Second World War. "It's up to us to show the responsibility to avoid two atomic bombs landing on Brazil," he said.

The opposite effect of Bolsonaro's likely intended

However, the move has had the opposite effect of what Trump and the Bolsonaros likely intended. Instead of aiding Bolsonaro, the tariff threat has stirred national outrage, rallied leftwing forces, and handed Lula an unexpected surge in public approval.

The conservative Estado de São Paulo newspaper blasted the Bolsonaros for hypocrisy and cowardice, accusing the family of betraying Brazil for personal gain. "Jair Bolsonaro couldn't care less about Brazil. He's a phoney patriot," the paper wrote in a scathing editorial.

"Brazil's or Bolsonaro's. The two paths



are opposed," the editorial board added, calling on conservatives to abandon the former president.

Columnist Eliane Cantanhêde, also writing for Estado, identified three likely motivations behind Trump's "indecent proposal": a bid to bolster far-right allies in Latin America, a strike against growing Chinese influence following the recent BRICS summit in Rio, and a personal favour to Bolsonaro's son, Eduardo, who has been lobbying in Washington while in self-imposed exile in the US.

Cantanhêde argued that the strategy has spectacularly misfired. Trump's "megalomaniac" play has allowed Lula to reframe himself as a nationalist defender of Brazil's farmers, industrial workers, and exporters. The leftist president, once on the back foot due to falling approval ratings, now appears revitalised.

"Lula was on the ropes," Cantanhêde noted. "Now he's all smiles."

The slogan "Brazil belongs to the Brazilians" has quickly become a rallying cry, with Lula even donning a blue cap bearing the phrase, a direct rebuke to what many perceive as Bolsonaro's willingness to sacrifice national interests for his survival.

Lula is seen wearing a "Brazil belongs to Brazilians" baseball cap.

Nicolás Saldías, a Latin America analyst with the Economist Intelligence Unit, concurred, saying Trump's gambit had effectively handed Lula a political gift. "Trump is pushing the whole world into China's lap," he added, noting that Beijing, Brazil's largest trading partner, is likely delighted by the diplomatic rift between Washington and Brasília.

Even the Bolsonaros now appear to grasp the miscalculation. One source close to the family told Reuters: "The thrill of catching Trump's attention soon curdled as the Bolsonaros realised the crushing weight of the tariffs tied to their cause."

Under pressure, Bolsonaro distanced himself from the fallout on Tuesday, claiming he opposed the tariffs and blaming Lula's "provocation" of the United States. He also suggested he could resolve the issue if granted "the freedom to talk to Trump."

But the damage may already be done. Across Brazil, many are furious that Bolsonaro's inner circle seems willing to jeopardise the country's economy in a bid to escape legal accountability.

"We cannot allow this to happen," said Silvana Marques, a teacher protesting in São Paulo. Recalling the unpunished crimes of Brazil's 1964–1985 military dictatorship, she insisted: "There must be justice."

Two killed, priest injured as Israeli strike hits Gaza's only Catholic church

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



An Israeli strike has hit the Holy Family Church, the only Catholic church in Gaza, killing two people and injuring several others, including the parish priest, who was known for his close relationship with the late Pope Francis.

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem confirmed in a statement: "Two persons were killed as a result of an apparent strike by the Israeli army that hit the Holy Family compound this morning." The compound had been sheltering both Christians and Muslims, including disabled children and elderly civilians.

Father Gabriel Romanelli, the Argentinian parish priest of the church since 2019, was among the wounded. Reuters footage from the hospital showed him with a bandaged leg, walking with difficulty. Romanelli had a deeply personal bond with the late Pope Francis, who would call him daily throughout the Gaza conflict until his own death in April. The Pope began the calls on 9 October 2023, just two days after Hamas's deadly attack on Israel, and continued them even after he was hospitalised, in a show of solidarity.

Dr Fadel Naim, acting director of al-Ahli Arab Hospital, which received the wounded, said two people were critically injured. Among the other casualties were

a disabled child, two women, and an elderly person.

Witnesses at the scene reported that the church was hit by Israeli tank shelling. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) acknowledged awareness of the reports, saying in a statement: "The IDF makes every feasible effort to mitigate harm to civilians and civilian structures, including religious sites, and regrets any damage caused to them. The circumstances of the incident are under review."

The Vatican has not yet issued a statement.

Italy PM condemns Church attack

Italy's prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, responded to the incident with sharp condemnation, saying: "The Israeli raids on Gaza have also hit the Holy Family Church. The attacks against the civilian population that Israel has been carrying out for months are unacceptable. No military action can justify such behaviour."

The Holy Family Church also issued its statement, confirming "several injured, some in critical condition".

The compound had become a place of refuge for many since the start of the war, including individuals with special needs. Its targeting has sent shockwaves through Gaza's Christian and Muslim communities alike.

The incident comes amid a surge of violence across the Gaza Strip. On Thursday alone, dozens of Palestinians were reported killed or wounded in Israeli airstrikes, including four civilians in a home near the Imam al-Shafi'i school in the al-Zeitoun district, south-east of Gaza City.

Following the death of Pope Francis, Father Romanelli spoke to The Guardian about the late pontiff's compassion. "Even after he was hospitalised, he continued calling to check on us," he said. "Our grief is deep because we lost someone we felt had become a member of our church."

In his final Easter Sunday address, Francis had urged for an end to the conflict, condemning the "deplorable humanitarian situation" in Gaza. He pleaded for a ceasefire, the release of hostages, and humanitarian relief for what he called "a starving people that aspires to a future of peace."

Fire guts Iraqi shopping mall, claims over 60 lives

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



The blaze erupted late on Wednesday evening at the newly opened Hyper Mall, quickly engulfing the five-storey building that housed a supermarket and a restaurant. Civil defence officials reported that most of the victims died from smoke inhalation in the building's bathrooms, with 14 of the bodies so severely burned they have yet to be identified.

Heartbroken relatives gathered outside hospitals and the charred remains of the mall throughout the night, desperately searching for news of their loved ones. Disturbing footage shared online showed grief-stricken people wailing, collapsing in tears, and pounding the ground in despair.

"I lost five family members," said Nasir al-Quraishi, a local doctor in his 50s. "We just wanted to have dinner and escape the power cuts at home. Then the air conditioner

exploded on the second floor and the fire spread so fast, we couldn't escape."

Rescue workers saved more than 45 people trapped inside the building, but the casualty toll continued to rise into the early hours of the morning. Ambulances were still ferrying victims to overcrowded hospitals at 4am, as emergency services scrambled to manage the unfolding crisis.

The cause of the fire is yet to be confirmed. However, one survivor claimed it began after an air conditioning unit exploded.

Iraq PM calls for probing

Iraq's Prime Minister, Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, has called for a full investigation into the incident to uncover "shortcomings" and ensure accountability. Wasit province governor Mohammed al-Miyahi

announced three days of mourning and pledged legal action against the mall's owner and contractor.

"This tragedy is a major shock," al-Miyahi told Iraq's state news agency INA. "It requires a serious review of all safety measures."

Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the highest authority in Iraq's Shia community, extended his condolences to the bereaved families.

Deadly fires are tragically common in Iraq, where poor construction standards and outdated infrastructure have plagued the country for years. In recent summers, when temperatures have soared to nearly 50°C, Iraq has witnessed a spike in fatal incidents. In September 2023, over 100 people died in a wedding hall inferno. Just two years earlier, more than 60 perished in a hospital Covid unit blaze.

Snoop Dogg joins Swansea City as co-owner

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

In a surprising move that blends global entertainment with British football, legendary rapper Snoop Dogg has become a co-owner and minority investor in Swansea City AFC, a Championship club looking to reclaim its place in the Premier League.

The announcement was made official on Wednesday, just days after the 53-year-old hip-hop icon appeared as the headline model for Swansea's new 2025–26 home kit. The California-born artist, known globally not just for his music but also for his charismatic presence and passion for sport, now joins the club's growing ownership group, which includes Real Madrid and Croatia great Luka Modric.

Snoop Dogg, whose real name is Calvin Broadus, expressed his enthusiasm in a heartfelt message shared on the club's official website. "My love of football is well known, but it feels special to me that I make my move into club ownership with Swansea City," he said. "The story of the club and the area really struck a chord with me. This is a proud, working-class city and club. An underdog that bites back, just like me."

Snoop's investment comes months after a takeover of the club led by American businessmen Brett Cravatt and Jason Cohen in late 2024. The duo have been open about their ambitions to grow the club's commercial profile and generate the kind of revenue that could give Swansea a competitive edge on the field—within the constraints of English football's strict profit and sustainability regulations.

The involvement of Snoop Dogg, who boasts more than 88 million Instagram followers and over 100 million across all platforms, is a major coup for Swansea's ownership. Club officials confirmed that Snoop's interest in the team was born out of a personal connection with Cravatt and Cohen, though the details remain private.



"To borrow a phrase from Snoop's back catalogue, this announcement is the next episode for Swansea City as we seek to create new opportunities to boost the club's reach and profile," Cravatt and Cohen said in a joint statement. "Snoop's colossal global fanbase and audience will certainly help us do that, and he has made clear to us throughout this process just how excited he is at the prospect of joining the club."

The club's leadership believes Snoop Dogg's involvement could prove transformative, not only in attracting new fans from around the world but also in commercial opportunities ranging from merchandising to sponsorships.

Swansea City, once a Premier League mainstay between 2011 and 2018, has spent recent years rebuilding in the second tier of English football. The club has made notable efforts to revamp its identity and financial strategy under the new ownership, and the addition of Snoop Dogg adds significant star power.

As a symbolic gesture, Swansea

unveiled a mural of Snoop Dogg at the Swansea.com Stadium's West Stand to mark his inclusion in the club's ownership family. The artwork pays tribute to both his contribution to global music and his new commitment to the Swans.

Club sources indicated that Snoop Dogg's role will not be just ceremonial. He is expected to actively participate in initiatives aimed at international fan engagement and commercial expansion.

Swansea also confirmed that Cravatt and Cohen have been present at the team's pre-season training camp in Spain, further underscoring their commitment to a hands-on approach. Photos of the American duo interacting with players and staff have been posted on the club's official social media channels.

As the 2025–26 season approaches, Swansea City fans can now look forward to a campaign unlike any before—with a new kit, new ownership energy, and one of the most iconic figures in music now helping steer the club's future.

Chepngetich suspended after failing drug test

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Ruth Chepngetich, the reigning women's marathon world record holder, has been provisionally suspended following a failed drugs test, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) announced on Wednesday.

The 30-year-old Kenyan runner, who stunned the world with her record-breaking performance at the 2024 Chicago Marathon, tested positive for the banned diuretic hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ). The substance, often used medically for fluid retention and high blood pressure, is prohibited at all times under the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code due to its common use as a masking agent.

According to the AIU, a urine sample collected from Chepngetich on 14 March 2025 revealed an HCTZ concentration of 3,800 nanograms per millilitre (ng/mL)—a staggering figure compared to WADA's minimum reporting threshold of 20 ng/mL.

Chepngetich had not been provisionally suspended immediately after the result was reported on 16 April. However, three days later, she voluntarily agreed to a provisional suspension while the AIU continued its investigation.

"In the intervening months, the AIU continued its investigation and today issued a Notice of Charge and imposed its own provisional suspension," said AIU Head Brett Clothier in a statement. The Notice of Charge formally initiates a disciplinary process that could lead to a ban and the stripping of titles if the violation is confirmed.

Chepngetich made headlines in October 2024 when she shattered the women's marathon world record in Chicago, clocking a historic 2:09:56. That time eclipsed the previous record of 2:11:53, set by Ethiopia's Tigst Assefa at the Berlin Marathon in 2023, by nearly two full minutes.



The Chicago win had been viewed as a crowning moment in Chepngetich's already illustrious career, which includes a gold medal at the 2019 World Athletics Championships in Doha. Her aggressive front-running style and ability to dominate even the most competitive fields earned her admiration around the world.

However, the recent developments cast a shadow over her achievements. The use of HCTZ in such high concentrations raises serious questions about potential performance-enhancing practices and athlete transparency.

The AIU has not disclosed whether additional substances were detected or whether further testing will be conducted. Under WADA rules, HCTZ is classified as a specified substance, meaning that if an athlete can prove its use was unintentional, the sanction may be reduced.

Chepngetich has not yet publicly responded to the suspension or the charge. If she contests the findings, the case will proceed to a hearing before the independent Athletics Disciplinary Tribunal.

Kenya has faced increasing scrutiny in recent years over the number of high-profile doping cases involving its distance runners. The country has been on WADA's Category A watchlist of nations with high doping risk. In 2022, Kenyan authorities, in cooperation with World Athletics and the AIU, launched a major anti-doping initiative to combat the growing crisis.

Athletics Kenya, the country's governing body for the sport, has yet to issue a formal statement on Chepngetich's suspension. However, officials have consistently reiterated their commitment to clean sport and promised to support investigations into any breaches of anti-doping rules.

If found guilty, Chepngetich could face a suspension of up to four years, and her world record may be annulled, pending further adjudication.

As one of the most recognized faces in women's distance running, Chepngetich's suspension is a sobering development for athletics and a reminder of the ongoing challenges in the fight against doping.