



Why Ganduje stepped down as APC chair

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Otedola applauds Tinubu for signing tax reform bills, says move will boost investor confidence

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Wike, Fubara 'end feud' after Tinubu brokers peace deal in Abuja **Pg 4**



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Senators divided over Trump's Iran strikes after delayed intelligence briefing **Pg 22**

Climate Change: Shettima urges practical action as Ethiopia launches green legacy initiative

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has called on world leaders to move beyond conferences and embrace practical, country-specific solutions in the global fight against climate change.

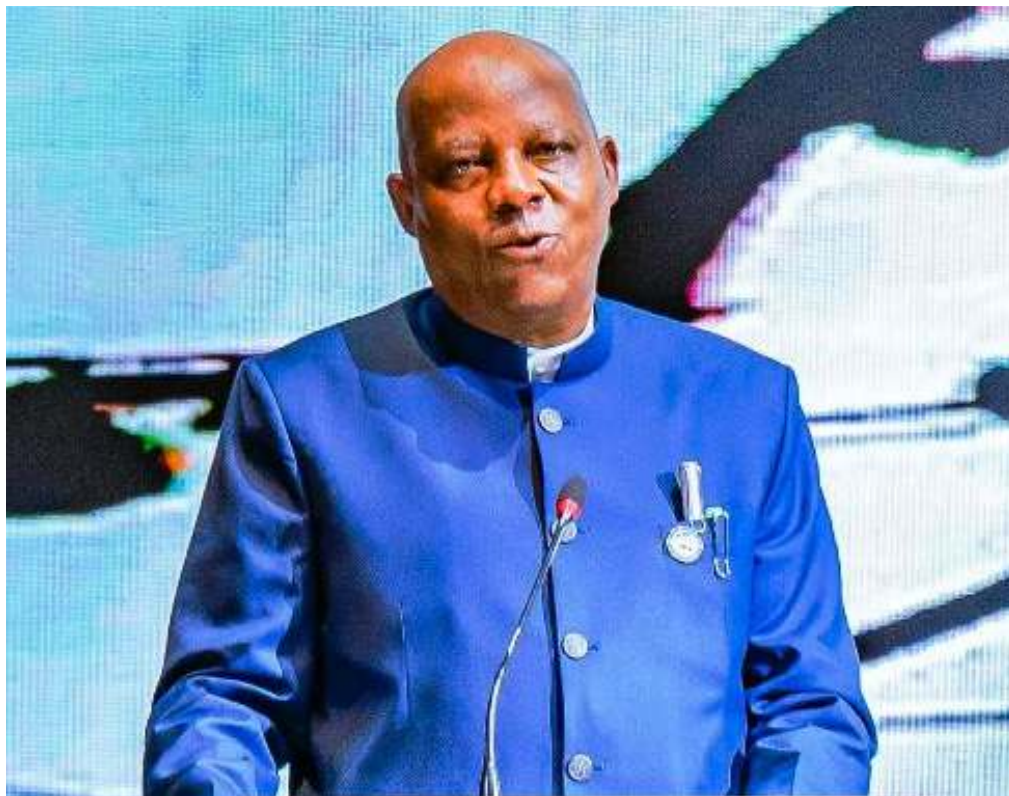
Speaking on Friday at the official launch of Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative (GLI) in Addis Ababa, Mr Shettima stressed that tackling climate change requires bold and decisive action, not just dialogue.

"We have long accepted that climate change is not a problem to be solved in a conference room; it is a danger we must arrest with practical actions, with each nation rising to the occasion by responding to the peculiarities of the ecological burdens they face," Mr Shettima said.

He praised Ethiopia's commitment to climate action through the GLI, which targets the planting of 20 billion tree seedlings over four years to combat deforestation, enhance biodiversity, and mitigate climate change impacts.

Mr Shettima, who is on an official visit to Ethiopia at the invitation of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, described the initiative as an inspiring model of vision, purpose, and courage.

"To plant 20 billion seedlings within four years, to establish over 20,000 nurseries, and to create hundreds of thousands of green jobs is to show that the future is something we must plant, nurture, and build," he said.



He reaffirmed Nigeria's solidarity with Ethiopia, stressing that the two most populous countries in Africa share a significant responsibility to lead the continent's climate agenda.

"Ethiopia and Nigeria are the two most populous countries in Africa. This distinction is not just statistical; it is existential. It means we have the largest stake in Africa's future. It means that more of our people are exposed to the peril of climate change, and it also means that we face the highest cost of inaction," he said.

Mr Shettima assured Ethiopia of Nigeria's continued support and emphasised that both nations are committed to keeping Africa green.

However, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed commended Nigeria for embracing the green vision and urged African countries to make tree planting a cultural and national priority.

He emphasised the need for African-led solutions and reduced dependence on foreign aid.

"This year's Green Legacy is to rise by planting. We never received any aid when we set out to achieve our 20 billion tree planting initiative," he said.

The Prime Minister also expressed optimism that Ethiopia's hosting of the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Summit would further galvanise the continent's green revolution.

During his visit, Mr Shettima also toured Unity Park, the Science Museum, and the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum, which highlight Ethiopia's cultural and historical milestones.

The event was part of Mr Shettima's official visit to Ethiopia on behalf of President Bola Tinubu.

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10X3	179,608.00
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9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
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8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
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5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
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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
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PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
PRESS RELEASE (4X4)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
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Wike, Fubara 'end feud' after Tinubu-brokered peace deal in Abuja

By **Damilola Olufemi**

Federal Capital Territory Minister and former Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, on Thursday evening confirmed that his long-running political feud with Governor Siminalayi Fubara has officially come to an end. The reconciliation follows a high-level peace meeting mediated by President Bola Tinubu at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

Addressing reporters after the closed-door session, Wike revealed that both factions have reached a consensus to put their differences aside and move forward in unity.

“We have all agreed to work together with the governor, and the governor also agreed to work together with all of us. We are members of the same political family,” Wike stated.

He acknowledged the months of political tension but emphasised that the dispute has now been resolved. “Just like humans, you have a disagreement, and then you also have a time to settle your disagreement,” he said. “That has been finally concluded today, and we have come to report to Mr. President, that is what we have agreed. So for me, everything is over.”

Wike also urged their supporters to embrace peace and cooperation, saying, “I enjoin everybody who believes to work with us, to also work together with everybody, that there’s no more acrimony. There’s nothing to say.”

Governor Fubara echoed the sentiments, describing the agreement as a divine breakthrough and a pivotal moment for Rivers State.

“For me, it’s a day we have to thank



Almighty God. For me, it’s very important that this day has come to be,” he said.

He stressed that peace is essential for the state’s development. “What we need for the progress of Rivers State is peace, and by the special grace of God, this night, with the help of Mr. President and the agreement of the leaders of the state, our leader, peace has returned in Rivers State.”

Fubara vows to uphold accord

Fubara pledged to uphold the new accord, saying, “We’ll do everything within our power to make sure that we sustain it this time around.”

The Background

The political crisis between Wike and Fubara, once allies, began shortly after Fubara’s inauguration in May 2023. By October, tensions escalated when lawmakers aligned with Wike

moved to impeach the governor. The situation worsened after a mysterious fire incident led Fubara to demolish the Assembly building and relocate legislative activities.

Although President Tinubu brokered a temporary peace in December 2023, allowing Wike’s allies to take up key positions in Fubara’s government, the deal eventually unravelled. The breakdown led Tinubu to declare a state of emergency in March 2025, citing security breakdown and governance paralysis.

The president’s emergency action suspended Fubara’s executive powers for six months and appointed former Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas (retd.), as sole administrator of the state.

Thursday’s renewed truce, backed by both leaders, now offers a fresh chance for stability in the troubled state.

Why Ganduje stepped down as APC chair

By **Damilola Olufemi**

The National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Abdullahi Ganduje, has stepped down from his position following internal tensions over the party's zoning formula.

Sources of the party who disclosed this to New Daily Prime say Ganduje's planned resignation is aimed at addressing mounting pressure from stakeholders in the North-Central region, who have repeatedly called for the national chairmanship to return to their zone, where it was previously held before his appointment.

What happens once Ganduje resigns According to a source in the party, once the chairman steps down, one of the party's national vice chairmen will assume the role in an acting capacity pending the election of a substantive chairman at the party's next national convention, slated for December 2025.

Ganduje, who served two terms as governor of Kano State, was appointed APC chairman in August 2023 after Abdullahi Adamu, from the North-Central, resigned. His leadership has since been met with internal criticism,



particularly from members who believe his appointment disregarded the party's regional power-sharing agreements.

Meanwhile, the APC has confirmed the resignation of Ganduje in a statement signed by the Publicity Secretary of the party, Felix Morka.

Party sources confirm that arrangements for a leadership transition are already in

motion.

The last activity of Ganduje until his resignation as chairman of the party was leading the National Working Committee on a condolence visit to the Niger State Governor, Mohammed Umaru Bago at the state's liaison office in Abuja, over the devastating Mokwa flood and bandit attacks in Mariga LGA on the state.

Newly enacted tax laws to commence in January 2026 – FIRS Chairman

By **Friday Omosola**

The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) Chairman, Zacch Adedeji, has announced that Nigeria's newly enacted tax laws will come into force on January 1, 2026.

Speaking to journalists at the State House yesterday, he said the timeline provides the government with a six-month window to adequately plan and sensitise stakeholders about the impending changes.

He noted that implementing such reforms requires significant adjustments across all sectors, including regulators, operators, and participants.

"It's a process that demands proper preparation, not something to simply rush through media channels. By the grace of God, the new system will take effect from the start of the new fiscal year, January 1,



2026," he said.

Mr Adedeji credited the National Assembly and President Bola Tinubu for granting sufficient time for a smooth transition, stressing that it is essential to align the reforms with the government's

financial calendar.

The announcement followed Mr Tinubu's recent assent to four key tax reform bills, which were passed by the National Assembly after extensive engagement with relevant stakeholders and interest groups.

The signing ceremony, held at the Presidential Villa on Thursday, was attended by senior government officials, including National Assembly leaders, governors, ministers, and presidential aides.

The newly signed bills include the Nigeria Tax Bill, the Nigeria Tax Administration Bill, the Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Bill, and the Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Bill.

Over 100,000 vehicles converted to CNG in one year – FG

By **Gbenga Olaleye**

The Federal Government has announced the successful conversion of over 100,000 petrol-powered vehicles to run on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) in the past year, marking what it described as a major milestone in the nation's push for alternative fuel adoption.

Speaking at a sensitisation workshop held in Lagos on Thursday, the Programme Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (PCNGI), Michael Oluwagbemi, said the initiative had seen significant progress as part of government efforts to cushion the economic impact of petrol subsidy removal.

"In just over a year, we've gone from fewer than 4,000 CNG-powered vehicles to nearly 100,000," Oluwagbemi stated. "The President's vision was clear—reduce pressure on citizens by leveraging domestic energy sources like natural gas to build a more sustainable and cost-effective transportation system."

According to Oluwagbemi, the PCNGI has benefited from growing awareness among the public and increased private sector investment. He cited the Dangote Group's recent deployment of 4,000 CNG trucks as a sign of private confidence in the programme.

"It's no longer just a government-led project—businesses are now investing because they can see the economic and environmental benefits," he added.

The PCNGI's next phase aims to convert 250,000 additional vehicles in partnership with private operators. So far, the sector has attracted over \$1 billion in investments, including \$280 million from the Dangote Group, \$28 million from Arita LNG, and significant contributions from companies such as Femadec, Greenview, and Greenville.

Infrastructure has also expanded dramatically. From just seven CNG conversion centres last year, the country now boasts 265 operational centres. The number of CNG refuelling stations has increased from 20 to 60, with 175 more in the pipeline. The initiative has also created more than 10,000 direct jobs.



Oluwagbemi addressed safety concerns, asserting that CNG is significantly safer than petrol and diesel.

"CNG is 18 times less explosive than petrol and eight times less than diesel. Most explosion reports are exaggerated or involve traditional fuel vehicles, not CNG ones," he said.

He also linked the initiative to broader economic benefits.

"When transport becomes cheaper, food prices drop. In Lagos, the price of meat has decreased in some areas due to CNG-powered livestock transport," he explained.

The initiative has garnered support from major stakeholders in the transport sector. Babatunde Karim, an executive of the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN), praised the programme for significantly lowering fuel costs.

"Before, we spent about ₦50,000 on petrol for certain routes. With CNG, it's now around ₦12,000. That's a massive relief," Karim said, noting that even operators of Lagos' iconic yellow buses had begun conversions.

However, he highlighted challenges such as low gas pressure and irregular supply at some refuelling stations.

"There are days we queue with no pressure or no gas at all. These issues need urgent

attention," he urged.

Dele Tajudin, an executive member of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), also praised the programme's potential but warned of implementation hurdles.

Representing IPMAN National President Alhaji Abubakar Maigandi, Tajudin pointed out that most petrol stations were not designed for CNG and required significant investment and regulatory approval to retrofit.

"Converting a petrol station to a CNG facility isn't plug-and-play—it needs structural changes, compliance with safety standards, and financial support. Without government backing, most marketers can't afford the switch," he said.

He added that the scarcity of functional CNG stations had resulted in long queues and reduced access for motorists.

"Independent marketers are present in virtually every corner of Nigeria. We are strategically positioned to support this transition, but we need technical and financial assistance," Tajudin stressed.

Responding to critics of the project's pace, Oluwagbemi remarked: "Rome wasn't built in a day. Those who created the subsidy crisis cannot fairly criticise the speed at which it's being addressed."

Reps summon Education minister over alleged illegal action on VCs, varsity councils

By Damilola Olufemi



The House of Representatives Committee on University Education has summoned the Minister of Education, Dr. Morufu Alausa, to appear before it over claims of unlawful dismissal of vice chancellors and the dissolution of university governing councils across the country.

Committee chairman, Rep. Abubakar Fulata (APC–Jigawa), made the announcement during a meeting held in Abuja. He said the committee had received numerous petitions alleging that the minister was involved in decisions that undermined due process in university administration.

Affected schools by minister's actions Fulata named institutions such as Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education in Owerri, Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awka, and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, among those reportedly affected by the minister's actions.

According to him, "The education sector is facing a crisis of unstable leadership. The unilateral dissolution

of governing councils and removal of vice chancellors has created serious concerns. These actions threaten to disrupt harmony within institutions and undermine the legal framework that governs university operations."

He warned that such interference could destabilize the academic environment and violate provisions of existing university laws, especially with regard to leadership succession and council autonomy.

One of the petitions, titled "Unwarranted Removal of Prof. Aisha Maikudi as Vice Chancellor and Dissolution of Governing Council of University of Abuja", was brought forward by Prof. Abubakar Kari, who appeared before the committee alongside other concerned staff of the University of Abuja.

Kari condemned the removal of Maikudi on February 6, 2025, and the sudden dissolution of the governing council. He stated that Air Vice Marshal Ismaila Kaita (rtd), then chairman of the council, was also relieved of his duties without due

process, and replaced by Senator Lanre Tejuoso, while Prof. Patricia Lar was appointed acting vice chancellor.

He argued that the changes violated the Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Act, 2003, which clearly outlines the legal procedure for removing a vice chancellor — a responsibility vested solely in the governing council.

Kari appealed to the lawmakers to step in and reinstate both Maikudi and the former council members, noting they were duly elected representatives of the University Senate and Congregation.

Speaking before the committee, both Prof. Maikudi and AVM Kaita revealed that they had not received any formal communication or dismissal letters regarding their removal.

The committee is expected to question the minister on the legality of his actions and determine appropriate recommendations to restore compliance with the law.

Reinstatement: Tinubu places Fubara under strict conditions

By Damilola Olufemi

President Bola Tinubu has reportedly agreed to reinstate Siminalayi Fubara as the Governor of Rivers State, but under strict conditions, including a commitment not to seek re-election in 2027.

The agreement was reached during a closed-door meeting held Thursday night at the Presidential Villa in Abuja. Present at the meeting were Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Nyesom Wike, Governor Fubara, suspended Rivers Assembly Speaker Martin Amaewhule, and a select group of lawmakers, The Cable reports

Presidency sources described the outcome as a fragile truce, part of a broader attempt to restore order in the state following months of political turmoil.

A key term of the deal, insiders revealed, is that Fubara would be allowed to serve out his first term but must give up any ambition of running for a second term in 2027. "He agreed to it. That was the major compromise," one source familiar with the talks said.

In return, Wike is to be granted significant political concessions, notably, the authority to appoint all 23 local government chairpersons in the state. According to a source within the presidency, "This gives Wike control at the grassroots, which is strategic for 2027."

Additionally, Fubara has committed to paying outstanding allowances and entitlements owed to the 27 lawmakers loyal to Wike. These legislators, led by Amaewhule, had defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC) but insisted on retaining their seats in the state assembly — a position that sparked intense legal and political



debate.

In exchange, the lawmakers have agreed not to pursue impeachment proceedings against the governor.

Insiders familiar with the talks say the deal marks a major concession by Fubara, effectively reducing his political leverage in exchange for retaining his seat. "The arrangement is clear: no second term, no local government control, and peace will return," a source said.

Another added, "The president was firm, Rivers cannot remain in crisis. This is a peace deal, but it comes at a high cost for Fubara."

"Wike is the winner here," the source noted. "By regaining control of the local governments, he reestablishes a strong grip on Rivers politics ahead of 2027."

How it started between Fubara and Wike

The political crisis between Wike and Fubara of Rivers state, once allies, began shortly after Fubara's

inauguration in May 2023. By October, tensions escalated when lawmakers aligned with Wike moved to impeach the governor. The situation worsened after a mysterious fire incident led Fubara to demolish the Assembly building and relocate legislative activities.

Although President Tinubu brokered a temporary peace in December 2023, allowing Wike's allies to take up key positions in Fubara's government, the deal eventually unravelled. The breakdown led Tinubu to declare a state of emergency in March 2025, citing security breakdown and governance paralysis.

The president's emergency action suspended Fubara's executive powers for six months and appointed former Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas (retd.), as sole administrator of the state.

Thursday's renewed truce, backed by both leaders, now offers a fresh chance for stability in the troubled state.

NNPC alleges sabotage plot by internal, external actors

By Damilola Olufemi



The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd.) has raised the alarm over what it described as a calculated sabotage campaign orchestrated by a network of individuals, both within and outside the organisation.

In a statement released on Friday, NNPC Ltd. said the group behind the scheme is deliberately spreading falsehoods and misinformation aimed at undermining the company's leadership and discrediting its reform efforts.

According to the management, "Their tactics include planting scandalous and fabricated reports, curated to distract leadership, mislead the public, and undermine the commitment of our

dedicated workforce and reform-minded Nigerians."

The company accused the unnamed actors of attempting to derail its ongoing transformation into a transparent, corruption-free, and results-driven national energy company — a vision aligned with the directives of President Bola Tinubu.

"These are calculated efforts by those who feel threatened by reform, transparency, accountability, and change," the statement said. "It is clear evidence of the lengths to which they will go to obstruct the transformation of Nigeria's foremost energy institution."

NNPC warned that more defamatory content could surface in the coming days, but insisted it would not be swayed or intimidated.

NNPC remains undeterred

"We expect a surge of defamatory content in the days and weeks ahead, but NNPC Ltd. remains undeterred. The transformation is underway, and no amount of sabotage will stop it," it stated.

The company also called on its staff, industry stakeholders, and Nigerians at large to remain focused and not be discouraged by the ongoing smear campaign.

"We urge our dedicated staff, stakeholders, and all patriotic Nigerians to stay focused, ignore the noise, and not be discouraged," the statement concluded.

Sanwo-Olu visits Tinubu to express gratitude for birthday wishes

By Gbenga Olaleye



Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, on Thursday paid a courtesy visit to President Bola Tinubu and First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, to personally express his appreciation for their warm birthday messages.

The visit comes just days after Governor Sanwo-Olu celebrated his 60th birthday, which drew widespread goodwill messages from leaders and citizens across the country.

Sharing a statement on X (formerly Twitter) following the visit, Sanwo-Olu wrote: "I had the honour of

visiting His Excellency, President Bola Tinubu and the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, to personally thank them for their kind and thoughtful birthday wishes."

The governor noted that the occasion also presented an opportunity to celebrate with his birthday mate and Chief of Staff to the President, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila.

"It was a pleasure to celebrate with my birthday mate, the Chief of Staff, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila," he added.

Sanwo-Olu also extended his birthday felicitations to the Group

Chief Executive Officer of Oando Plc, Mr Wale Tinubu, who marked his 58th birthday on the same day.

Earlier this week, President Tinubu had congratulated the Lagos State Governor on his milestone birthday. In a statement signed by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, the President praised Sanwo-Olu's dedication to public service and commitment to transforming Lagos.

"Governor Sanwo-Olu is a committed public servant who has remained faithful to the vision of developing Lagos into a thriving, modern city," the statement read.

INEC, security agencies map out plans for by-elections, Anambra governorship poll

By Friday Omosola



The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Nigeria's security agencies have intensified preparations for the forthcoming by-elections, the Anambra off-cycle governorship election, and the resumption of the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) across the country.

This followed a high-level meeting yesterday at INEC's headquarters in Abuja, where the Commission held its second quarterly consultative session with the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) to strategise on ensuring a peaceful and credible electoral process.

Addressing the session, INEC Chairman, Professor Mahmood Yakubu, stressed the importance of

securing election personnel, materials, and voters to guarantee the success of the upcoming polls.

He called on security agencies to adopt proactive strategies to prevent disruptions and ensure swift responses to any threats.

"The success of any election depends significantly on the security of our personnel, facilities, and the voters. I call on all security agencies to put in place adequate measures to prevent disruptions and to respond swiftly to any potential threats," Mr Yakubu said.

He further encouraged security operatives to see the upcoming CVR exercise as an opportunity to fine-tune their operational strategies ahead of the main elections.

Representing the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, was the Director of Internal Security, Hassan Abdullahi, who reaffirmed the Federal Government's (FG) commitment to safeguarding the electoral process.

"Our primary objective remains to safeguard the integrity of the upcoming elections. Therefore, we must ensure that eligible voters exercise their right to vote without fear or intimidation," Mr Abdullahi stated.

He pledged greater inter-agency cooperation to effectively tackle potential security threats and issued a stern warning to political parties and their supporters to conduct themselves responsibly in line with democratic ideals.

Otedola applauds Tinubu for signing tax reform bills, says move will boost investor confidence **By Friday Omosola**

Nigerian business mogul Femi Otedola has commended President Bola Tinubu for signing the tax reform bills into law.

In a statement posted on his X page on Friday, he described the move as a significant step towards creating a more transparent, efficient, and investment-friendly economy.

Mr Otedola welcomed the reforms, noting that they would simplify Nigeria's tax system, promote fairness, and restore public confidence in revenue collection and utilisation.

"These reforms will reduce complexity, promote fairness, and restore confidence in how revenues are collected and used.

"It's not just about paying taxes; it's about building a system where taxes and other public resources fund infrastructure, unlock productivity, and fuel inclusive growth," Mr Otedola said.



He emphasised that the new tax framework would help strengthen the private sector and drive Nigeria towards sustainable prosperity.

"I am inspired to invest more, and many other investors share the same sentiment," he added, applauding all stakeholders who contributed to what he

called a landmark achievement for the nation.

Mr Otedola's endorsement aligns with growing support from business leaders who view the tax reforms as a critical part of Mr Tinubu's broader economic transformation agenda.

Mr Tinubu on Thursday signed into law the four tax reform bills recently passed by the National Assembly.

The signing took place at the Presidential Villa and was attended by the leadership of the National Assembly and some legislators, governors, ministers, and the President's aides.

The four bills— the Nigeria Tax Bill, the Nigeria Tax Administration Bill, the Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Bill, and the Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Bill— were passed by the National Assembly after extensive consultations with various interest groups and stakeholders.

Deji Adeyanju doubts Fubara-Wike truce

By Gbenga Olaleye

Prominent human rights lawyer and political activist Deji Adeyanju has expressed scepticism over the recent peace accord brokered between Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike.

Adeyanju's reaction comes in the wake of Thursday night's high-level meeting convened by President Bola Tinubu, aimed at resolving the prolonged political crisis in Rivers State.

The meeting brought together Governor Fubara, Minister Nyesom Wike, and members of the Rivers State House of Assembly.

Reports had suggested that the President succeeded in brokering a truce between the feuding political heavyweights. However, Adeyanju remains unconvinced.

May be an image of 4 people and text that says "CHANNELA CHANNELSTV HANNELSTVNNELSTV.COM"



Taking to his official Facebook page, the outspoken lawyer warned Governor Fubara to remain vigilant, alleging that Wike, now Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, may still undermine him.

"No matter the agreement you have with Wike, he will make your life miserable. Wike is an unreasonable man," Adeyanju wrote.

He added that the Governor would find it difficult to govern peacefully and might face an even tougher political battle come 2027.

"Fubara will not be able to sleep with two eyes closed, and 2027 will be worse," Adeyanju warned.

"Even when Wike makes a vow, his vow is as useless as the 'T' in buffet."

The remarks have reignited public debate over the stability of the fragile political alliance in Rivers State, with many questioning the durability of the President's intervention.

As the political situation in the state continues to evolve, all eyes remain on the actions of both leaders in the coming weeks.

N80.2bn fraud trial: EFCC opposes Yahaya Bello's request for medical travel

By Friday Omosola

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has opposed an application by former Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello, seeking permission to travel abroad for medical treatment.

Mr Bello's request was presented yesterday, before Justice Emeka Nwite at the Federal High Court, Maitama, Abuja, during the resumed hearing of his alleged N80.2 billion money laundering case.

Mr Bello's counsel, J.B. Daudu, urged the court to prioritise the former governor's health, arguing that the application was properly filed under Section 173(2)(a) of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) and the court's inherent jurisdiction.

Daudu informed the court that the application was supported by a 22-paragraph affidavit sworn to by Bello, with accompanying documents including a medical report and a letter from a consultant cardiologist.

The defence argued that Mr Bello, who has not travelled outside Nigeria in over eight years, required urgent medical attention that could not be provided locally, not even in the hospital he constructed while in office.

Daudu stressed that Mr Bello was not a flight risk and had no criminal record abroad, offering that the court could fix a definite return date.

However, the EFCC, represented by prosecuting counsel Kemi Pinheiro, strongly opposed the request, describing it as an abuse of court process.

Pinheiro noted that Mr Bello previously filed similar applications before other courts, which he said was improper and misleading.

Pinheiro raised five key objections, including that the motion was 'technically incompetent' because Mr Bello's sureties were neither notified nor included in the application, raising



concerns about accountability should Bello fail to return.

He also argued that money laundering is a transnational crime, citing charges involving properties in Dubai and funds in bank accounts in the US and UK.

The EFCC lawyer further warned that Mr Bello was already on a red notice and could risk international arrest and extradition.

"He could be 'Hushpuppied' from Dubai," Pinheiro said, referring to the arrest of a known Nigerian fraudster abroad.

Pinheiro also dismissed the credibility of Mr Bello's medical report, noting that the doctor who signed it failed to state his qualifications.

He argued that the alleged health issues, such as low potassium and mild hypertension, could be easily treated in Nigeria.

"Bananas and pawpaw can fix low potassium. He doesn't need to fly to the UK for that," he said.

He also referenced Mr Bello's claim of building a state-of-the-art hospital in Kogi State.

"From Abuja to Lokoja is just two hours. He should visit that hospital instead of seeking a six-hour flight abroad," Pinheiro added.

In response, Daudu maintained that the sureties were not required to be parties to the motion and contended that the red notice had lapsed following Mr Bello's arraignment.

He urged the court to grant the application based on its discretion.

Meanwhile, earlier in the proceedings, the defence continued cross-examination of the fourth prosecution witness, Aryan Mashelia Bata, a Compliance Officer with Zenith Bank Plc.

The defence challenged Bata's jurisdiction over several accounts presented in evidence, many of which fell outside his direct supervision.

Bata clarified to the court that contrary to earlier reports, he was not harassed by Mr Bello's security team but merely experienced difficulty securing a seat in court.

Justice Emeka Nwite adjourned the trial to 3 and 4 July 2025 for further hearing and fixed 21 July 2025 for ruling on Bello's application to travel abroad.

NGX group, stakeholders back Dangote fertiliser listing

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX Group) and key capital market stakeholders have expressed strong support for the planned listing of Dangote Fertiliser Limited on the Nigerian Exchange, in what is expected to be a landmark move for the nation's capital market.

The development follows a recent strategic visit by the board and management of NGX Group—alongside stakeholders from across the capital market—to the Dangote refinery and fertiliser facilities located in Lagos.

Temi Popoola, Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NGX Group, said the Exchange is well-positioned to mobilise significant capital for large-scale industrial projects.

“In 2024 alone, Nigerian investors deployed over ₦2 trillion into the banking sector,” Popoola said.

“With Dangote Fertiliser’s listing, we’re poised to replicate that success—providing the infrastructure and liquidity needed to drive long-term

industrial growth.”

Echoing this sentiment, Chief Executive Officer of Nigerian Exchange Limited, Jude Chiemeka, said the listing would underscore the Exchange’s capacity to attract major transactions.

“This listing will showcase NGX’s ability to attract transformative deals. Our market’s depth, transparency, and broad investor base make it ideal for such listings,” Chiemeka added.

President of the Dangote Group, Aliko Dangote, affirmed the fertiliser business’s robust growth outlook. He revealed that the company is projected to generate \$20 million in daily revenue, with long-term earnings potential estimated at \$70 billion.

“With projected revenues of \$20 million per day and cumulative earnings of up to \$70 billion, this listing will deliver dollar-denominated returns for investors and align with Nigeria’s broader economic growth strategy,” Dangote said.

The listing is also expected to bolster

investor confidence in the Nigerian capital market and attract more foreign and domestic participation.

Chairman of NGX Group, Umaru Kwairanga, commended Dangote for his consistent contributions to the capital market, noting his longstanding support for the growth and development of the Nigerian Exchange.

The NGX delegation included the chief executives of the Central Securities Clearing System (CSCS), NGX Regulation, and Lagos Commodities and Futures Exchange, alongside representatives from the Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers and the Association of Securities Dealing Houses of Nigeria.

The proposed listing is being viewed as a game-changer for the industrial and capital market landscape, with expectations that it will further position Nigeria as an investment hub in Africa.

Lagos Health District V strengthens community ties to improve primary healthcare

By Friday Omosola

The Lagos State Health District V has intensified efforts to strengthen primary healthcare delivery through strategic community engagement with key stakeholders across four Local Government Areas (LGAs) and six Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs).

The Permanent Secretary of the district, Oladapo Asiyanbi, led the engagement session held recently at the Amuwo-Odofin Local Government Secretariat Hall, bringing together representatives of the Local Government Health Authorities (LGHAs) and Ward Health Committees (WHCs).

The meeting focused on improving the performance of Primary Health Centres (PHCs) under the Basic Health Care Provision Fund, which provides direct funding to PHCs for the maintenance of the 'Ilera Eko' and National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).

These initiatives offer free maternal services and subsidised healthcare for other medical conditions.

Mr Asiyanbi expressed concern that many eligible residents, particularly indigent people, were not utilising the available healthcare services due to poor awareness and limited mobilisation.

"The funds have been disbursed, and service provision is available, yet many who should benefit are not coming forward. The resources are being underutilised," he said.

"We must sensitise the people to take advantage of the free maternal services and ongoing health insurance programmes provided by the Lagos State Government."

He tasked the LGHAs and WHCs with the responsibility of mobilising their communities to access PHC services, particularly immunisation, maternal healthcare, and the management of chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension.



The Permanent Secretary also underscored the importance of community-level oversight, urging LGHA and WHC leaders to monitor service delivery, ensure sound financial management, and prioritise the welfare of residents within their localities.

"Health begins at the grassroots. If communities are properly served through PHCs, outbreaks like cholera can be prevented. Our people must not only be aware of these services but must also actively use them," he added.

To further support healthcare delivery, Asiyanbi disclosed that Health District V had deployed an additional 20% workforce to PHCs, provided minor medical and laboratory equipment, and allocated supervision funds to local government health teams to improve community monitoring, regular meetings, and awareness campaigns.

He also directed all WHC chairpersons to remain fully involved in managing and overseeing the activities of their PHCs to ensure they are well-informed about service delivery outcomes and challenges.

Speaking at the engagement, Ahmad Bello, Director of Medical Services, stressed the importance of the session,

particularly with new local government chairmen expected to assume office next month.

She urged LGHA and WHC representatives to maintain accurate data and a thorough understanding of their wards to ensure smooth transitions and continuity in healthcare delivery.

Mrs Elizabeth Oguntona, Director of Health Education and Health Promotion Services, also addressed participants, encouraging them to take lessons from the meeting back to their communities.

She highlighted upcoming health initiatives and called for strict adherence to compliance, accountability, and enforcement, warning that sanctions may be applied for non-compliance.

Additionally, all LGHAs have been directed to reactivate their Immunisation Task Forces to monitor and report cases of vaccine refusal, especially in schools where immunisation is being rejected.

Mrs Asiyanbi reaffirmed the state government's commitment to providing accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare, and called on community stakeholders to continue partnering with the government to achieve a healthier Lagos.

Speed Darlington declared wanted for sexual assault

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has declared controversial Nigerian rapper and internet personality Darlington Okoye, popularly known as Speed Darlington, wanted over serious criminal allegations.

According to a public statement issued by the agency, Speed Darlington is being sought in connection with multiple offences, including rape, cyberbullying, and cyberstalking.

Authorities said they have gathered enough preliminary evidence linking the entertainer to these crimes and are now calling on the public to assist in locating him.

Public help needed

In a notice released through official channels on Instagram, NAPTIP appealed to anyone with useful information about Okoye's current location to come forward. They emphasised the urgency of the situation and called on citizens to report any sightings or knowledge of his whereabouts to the nearest NAPTIP office or law enforcement agency.

"Anyone with credible information on his whereabouts should contact NAPTIP immediately," the agency stated.

The notice also warned the public against aiding or harbouring the suspect, noting that doing so could amount to obstruction of justice and lead to legal consequences.

Charges under investigation

Though specific details have not yet been made public, NAPTIP officials revealed that the allegations involve separate incidents that may have occurred both online and offline.

The rape charge reportedly stems from a complaint by an unidentified woman who claims that Okoye sexually assaulted her under deceptive circumstances.

Meanwhile, the cyberbullying and cyberstalking charges are said to involve repeated online harassment and threats made by the entertainer through his social media platforms.



Investigators say they have been reviewing digital evidence, including videos, messages, and online posts, to support the allegations.

Speed Darlington as controversial online figure

Speed Darlington is well-known on social media for his eccentric personality, outspoken opinions, and provocative videos. He has built a fan base online with his humorous and often controversial takes on politics, celebrities, and societal issues.

However, critics have long accused him of using online platforms to spread harmful content and target individuals with verbal attacks. Several past videos and posts have raised public concern and drawn criticism from both fans and civil society groups.

With this recent development, questions are now being raised about whether his online activities crossed the line into criminal behaviour.

Legal consequences ahead

Legal experts say if Okoye is arrested and found guilty, he could face a range of penalties depending on the severity of the offences. Rape, under Nigerian law, carries a sentence of life imprisonment, while cyberbullying and cyberstalking are punishable under the Cybercrime Act

of 2015 with imprisonment and fines.

NAPTIP has assured the public that it will pursue the matter with full commitment and work closely with law enforcement agencies to ensure justice is served.

NAPTIP urges calm

In the wake of the announcement, the agency urged members of the public to remain calm and allow investigators to carry out their duties. They also encouraged victims of abuse and online harassment to come forward without fear.

"We are committed to protecting all citizens, especially vulnerable individuals, from abuse both online and offline," the statement read. "We take every allegation seriously and are determined to hold offenders accountable."

No response yet from Speed Darlington

As of the time of filing this report, Speed Darlington has not publicly responded to the allegations. His social media pages have not shown any recent activity, and attempts to reach him or his representatives have so far been unsuccessful.

The case continues to unfold as authorities intensify efforts to locate the suspect and bring him in for questioning. Updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

Skales hints at divorce, says he hasn't seen daughter

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular Nigerian singer John Njenga-Njeng, better known by his stage name Skales, has spoken out about the pain of being away from his daughter.

The singer, who has remained mostly private about his family life, took to social media to express how much he misses his little girl.

Skales and his wife, Precious Hassanity, welcomed their daughter in March 2023. But recent developments suggest that not everything is well in the singer's home.

A bittersweet fatherhood journey

On Thursday, Skales shared an emotional post on his X (formerly Twitter) handle, where he opened up about the difficulties of fatherhood from a distance.

"I miss my daughter so much ... I haven't seen her in a while ... she's growing up too fast," he wrote.

The simple but heartfelt post struck a chord with fans. Many sent words of encouragement, while others expressed concern about the family's well-being.

Marriage under public scrutiny

Although Skales didn't give reasons for his separation from his daughter, the message comes amid long-standing rumours of trouble in his marriage.

Last year, the singer made headlines after he called out his wife on social media. In a now-deleted post, he accused her of mocking his music career. The incident sparked a wave of speculation that the couple was heading for a divorce.

At the time, many fans were shocked by the public nature of the accusations, especially since the couple had just welcomed their child a few months earlier.

Skales denies divorce rumours

Despite the tension and social media drama, Skales recently addressed the rumours about his marriage falling apart. In a statement last month, he firmly



denied claims that he had filed for divorce.

According to him, the rumours were exaggerated and did not reflect the full story. He insisted that every marriage has its challenges, but maintained that he and Precious were doing their best to move forward.

Still, his recent comments about not seeing his daughter have reignited speculation that the relationship may still be strained.

Fans react to Skales' post

Many fans have taken to the internet to show support for the singer. Several users responded to his X post with messages of comfort, encouraging him to stay strong and focus on reconnecting with his child.

Some fans urged the couple to put their differences aside for the sake of their daughter. Others questioned whether the emotional distance was a result of legal or personal disagreements between Skales and his wife.

One fan wrote, "Skales is a good man. You can feel the pain in his words. I hope he gets to see his daughter soon."

Another added, "No matter the issues between parents, a child should never be denied the love of both mum and dad."

Career still active despite personal struggles

While facing these personal challenges, Skales has remained active in the music industry. Known for hit songs like Shake Body and Temper, the artist continues to perform and release music.

Over the years, he has built a solid reputation in the Afrobeats scene, gaining fans in Nigeria and abroad.

Even as rumours swirl and personal trials surface, Skales seems focused on both his career and maintaining a presence in his daughter's life.

A call for peace and healing

For now, the singer hasn't shared any more details about when or if he'll be reunited with his daughter. However, his public expression of love and longing shows just how much fatherhood means to him.

As fans wait for more clarity, many hope that Skales and his wife can resolve their differences privately and allow their daughter to grow up surrounded by the love of both parents.

His words may be few, but they carry the deep pain of a father missing out on precious moments.

Comedian Shank relocates, says 'Nigeria too toxic'

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

US-based Nigerian content creator and comedian Adesokan Emmanuel, widely known as Shank Comics, has sparked heated reactions online after describing Nigeria as a “toxic” and “sickening” environment.

The 26-year-old influencer, who relocated to the United States less than six months ago, took to social media to express his strong dissatisfaction with the state of his home country.

In a blunt post shared via his verified X (formerly Twitter) handle, Shank wrote:

“Nigeria is too too toxic man. Sickening.”

His brief yet provocative message quickly drew widespread attention and criticism, especially from Nigerians who felt offended by his remark. While some supported his sentiments, others accused him of turning against the country shortly after moving abroad.

Backlash from social media users

Shortly after his post went live, the comment section exploded with reactions from X users. A number of them called him out for what they perceived as ungratefulness and exaggeration. They argued that his criticism came too soon after his relocation and lacked context.

One user replied:

“You never even reach 6 months for that side, you don't even enter us.” This loosely translates to: “You’ve not even spent six months over there, and you’re already insulting us.”

Another wrote:

“Bro you just left. Let people who are still here breathe.”

However, some users came to his defense. They echoed his sentiments, sharing their frustrations with the economic, social, and political challenges facing Nigeria.

One supporter commented:

“He’s not lying. This country drains your mental health. Anyone who has the chance to leave will understand what he



means.”

Shank responds: ‘I’m serious’

In response to the backlash, Shank clarified that he wasn’t joking. He stood by his statement and emphasised that his opinion was rooted in his real-life experiences and observations.

He replied to one user with a short but firm message:

“No jor. I’m serious.”

This response further fueled the online debate, with more people weighing in on whether his critique was fair or simply out of touch.

Rising frustration among Nigerians abroad

Shank’s remarks echo the growing frustration that many Nigerians in the diaspora have expressed in recent years. From insecurity and poor infrastructure to inflation and unreliable public services, the issues plaguing the country have led many young Nigerians to seek better opportunities abroad.

The trend, popularly known as “Japa,” has seen thousands of young professionals, creatives, and students leave the country in search of stability and a better quality of life.

For some of them, like Shank, the stark difference in systems and living conditions becomes immediately apparent. This often leads to harsh

reflections on what they left behind, and sometimes public outbursts of disappointment.

A career built on Nigerian stories

Before his relocation, Shank Comics rose to fame through skits and commentary that humorously portrayed the struggles of everyday Nigerian life. His relatability and consistent content earned him a large following, both in Nigeria and abroad.

Despite his success overseas, his identity and comedic content remain rooted in the Nigerian experience. This makes his criticism all the more controversial among fans who feel he built his brand on the back of the country he now criticises.

The bigger picture

Shank’s statement may sound harsh to some, but it reflects a broader concern shared by many Nigerians at home and in the diaspora. It speaks to a growing sense of disillusionment, especially among young people who feel neglected by the system.

While some may call for more constructive ways to express dissatisfaction, others argue that honest conversations, even if uncomfortable, are necessary to push for change.

Whether or not one agrees with his words, Shank’s comments have reignited discussions about the state of the nation, the mental toll of living in Nigeria, and the right of those who leave to speak out.

GoodGirl LA recalls parents called her failure

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian singer Euphemia Ekumah, better known as GoodGirl LA, has shared a deeply personal story about her battle with depression, rejection from loved ones, and how she found strength through it all.

In a series of emotional posts on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), the 28-year-old artist revealed that she went through a difficult period of isolation and mental struggle. But instead of giving in to despair, she chose to focus on self-growth and personal transformation.

GoodGirl LA turning pain into power
GoodGirl LA explained that during her time away from the spotlight, she dealt with depression in solitude. However, she used the experience as a stepping stone to reinvent herself.

"I had periods of unavoidable isolation and just... mess, so I charged it," she wrote. "I focused on self-mastery and transmutation, all the while saying no to certain opportunities that others would kill for."

According to her, the offers she declined were tempting, but they didn't align with her values or vision. She stressed that she was not willing to "sell her soul" for fame or approval.

"I know what I want and where I'm going," she said. "I won't sell my soul just to belong or to keep up appearances."

Criticism from all sides

The singer, who gained recognition for her hit single Bless Me, also recalled how people around her reacted during that difficult time. She said many misunderstood her choices. Some called her "crazy." Even her closest friends, she noted, began to distance themselves.



"In that period, my 'friends' started to look down on me and pretty much just shenked me," she said, using Nigerian slang for being abandoned or betrayed.

But perhaps most painful was the lack of support from her own family. "Even my own parents did too and called me a failure," she revealed.

That moment, she said, forced her to re-evaluate what truly mattered to her.

"It changed my view on what's really important," she wrote. "I've seen how the world treats a young girl that's trying to achieve greatness."

Choosing purpose over popularity
Despite the criticisms and rejections, GoodGirl LA made it clear that she remains committed to her goals. For her, the focus isn't on public validation but on making meaningful music that connects with people.

"The cheers and boos aren't what any of this is about," she explained. "It's all about art, touching my Gs and the world."

She added that her greatest joy comes from staying true to her craft and inspiring others through her music. While she may have taken a step back from public appearances, she's been

actively working on herself behind the scenes.

A message of strength and self-belief
GoodGirl LA's story is one of resilience. It sheds light on the hidden emotional battles many artists face behind the scenes. Her decision to speak out not only highlights the mental health struggles within the entertainment industry but also inspires others to stay grounded in their beliefs, even in the face of doubt and criticism.

In closing, the singer described herself with pride: "People called me crazy, but I am, I'm a genius."

Her words are a reminder that sometimes, stepping away from the noise is necessary to hear your voice. Through pain, rejection, and isolation, GoodGirl LA found clarity and, in her way, a rebirth.

Fans and fellow artists have since reacted to her posts with messages of support and admiration, praising her honesty and strength.

As she moves forward, the singer remains focused on her mission: to create music with purpose and to leave a lasting impact, one soul at a time.

US, China reach deal to resume rare earth shipments

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



The United States and China have reached an agreement to expedite shipments of rare earth minerals into America, in what appears to be a significant step towards easing the long-running trade war between the world's two largest economies.

Speaking on Thursday, President Donald Trump announced that the deal had been signed the previous day, although he provided few details. He also hinted at a forthcoming agreement that would "open up" trade relations with India.

China confirmed the details of the agreement on Friday and reiterated its commitment to approving export permits for controlled items.

The breakthrough follows trade talks held in Geneva in May, during which China pledged to remove non-tariff countermeasures imposed since 2 April. However, uncertainty remains over how Beijing will reverse some of those retaliatory measures.

In response to new US tariffs, China had suspended the export of a wide range of critical minerals and magnetic materials, an action that sent shockwaves through global supply chains, particularly in sectors such as automotive, aerospace, semiconductors, and defence.

A White House official confirmed that the new understanding provides a framework for implementing the Geneva agreement, specifically aimed at resuming rare-earth shipments to the US. Another official added that the agreement was finalised earlier this week.

China, a crucial supplier for the US

China, which maintains a near-monopoly on rare earths, a dominance built during the 1990s and 2000s, has long been a crucial supplier for the US. Some of these minerals are essential components in American military equipment, exposing a strategic vulnerability that has become a key

battleground in the trade dispute.

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told Bloomberg, "They're going to deliver rare earths to us," adding that once the shipments resume, "we'll take down our countermeasures."

Lutnick also suggested that similar deals were in the pipeline: "We're going to do top 10 deals, put them in the right category, and then these other countries will fit behind."

While the agreement marks progress after months of economic tension since Trump's inauguration in January, it highlights the complexity and fragility of reaching a comprehensive trade settlement.

Beijing has reportedly intensified its oversight of rare earth exports. According to industry sources, Chinese authorities are vetting buyers rigorously to ensure that materials are not diverted for US military use, which has slowed the licensing process.

Starmer bows to party rebels over benefits reforms

By **Fatimah Idera**



Sir Keir Starmer has made a significant concession to head off a major Labour rebellion, agreeing that current disability benefit claimants will not lose their support under planned welfare reforms.

The Prime Minister has decided that existing recipients of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP), a benefit that helps cover the extra costs of living with a disability, will be protected. The changes will now only affect new claimants going forward.

The decision dramatically reduces the expected savings from the government's original welfare shake-up, cutting the projected £4.6 billion by 2029/30 to £3.1 billion, a reduction of around £1.5 billion. This move adds further pressure on Chancellor Rachel Reeves to balance the books in the autumn Budget, potentially forcing tax rises or spending cuts elsewhere.

Starmer's U-turn comes ahead of a critical Commons vote next Tuesday that could have resulted in the first defeat of his premiership. More than 120 Labour MPs had backed an amendment to block the welfare legislation. Talks between senior government figures and rebel leaders, in which Starmer himself is said to have been involved and led to the revised package.

One prominent rebel described the outcome as major concessions, adding: "We wanted to unite around something better. We are getting there."

The revised measures are expected to secure the backing of most Labour MPs who previously opposed the plan, although hardline members of the Socialist Campaign Group may still vote against it. The government now appears likely to win the vote with Labour support.

Originally, around 800,000 people were expected to be affected by the proposed PIP changes, including 370,000 current claimants. These individuals will now be spared cuts.

To further placate MPs, the Treasury will bring forward a £1 billion support package aimed at helping people return to work, a measure that was initially scheduled to phase in over several years. This earlier rollout will further strain public finances.

Rebels also pushed for the unfreezing of the health-related component of Universal Credit, which supports people with severe long-term illnesses. While this demand hasn't been confirmed as granted, several adjustments to the original legislation are said to have been agreed upon during negotiations.

The shift marks another high-profile retreat by the Labour leadership. Last month, the government reversed its decision to scrap the winter fuel payment for most pensioners. Meanwhile, the Chancellor is also reportedly reconsidering her non-dom tax policy in the wake of an exodus of wealthy individuals from the UK.

Conservative shadow chancellor Mel Stride condemned the changes, calling them "yet another screeching U-turn from this weak Labour government." He warned that the move would burden working taxpayers and called Starmer's welfare approach chaotic.

"This latest reversal shows Labour has no grip on public spending," Stride said. "Families across the country will pay the price in higher taxes."

Economists have also warned that Labour's fiscal position is becoming more precarious. Ben Caswell, of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, said the government's inconsistency risks undermining both political and economic confidence.

With public spending rising and tax revenue constrained, Starmer's concessions may help him avert a political crisis now, but they could also set the stage for tougher choices in the months ahead.

Senators divided over Trump's Iran strikes after delayed intelligence briefing

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Republican and Democratic senators have offered sharply conflicting views on President Donald Trump's bombing of Iranian nuclear facilities, following a delayed and contentious behind-closed-doors intelligence briefing on Capitol Hill.

The briefing, held on Thursday, was originally scheduled for Tuesday but postponed by the White House amid accusations of leaks, fueling Democratic outrage and accusations of obstruction.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer labelled the delay "outrageous", accusing the administration of withholding crucial information from Congress. "Senators deserve full transparency, and the administration has a legal obligation to inform Congress precisely about what is happening," he said.

Senators briefed by top security

officials

Even as senators were being briefed by top security officials, Trump escalated tensions with a Truth Social post, accusing Democrats of leaking a Pentagon draft report which allegedly contradicted his claims about the strikes' effectiveness. The report reportedly concluded that the attacks had only delayed Iran's nuclear programme by a few months, rather than destroying it completely.

"The Democrats are the ones who leaked the information on the PERFECT FLIGHT to the nuclear Sites in Iran. They should be prosecuted!" Trump wrote.

The briefing itself, led by CIA director John Ratcliffe, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Defence Secretary, Pete Hegseth, was marked by the absence of Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. Gabbard had previously told Congress that Iran was not pursuing nuclear weapons, a

stance she reversed last week following criticism from Trump.

Senator Lindsey Graham, a staunch Trump ally, defended the president's characterisation of the strikes. "Obliteration is a good word. They blew these places up in a major-league way. They set them back years, not months," he said. However, he cautioned that Iran might still attempt to rebuild. "As long as they desire [nuclear weapons]... You still have a problem on your hands."

Democrats, however, were unconvinced. Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut accused Trump of "misleading the public" and criticised the lack of clarity over the administration's long-term strategy. Schumer echoed the concern, stating, "There was no coherent strategy, no endgame, no specific plan on how Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon."

UK ministers claim welfare reforms will boost mental health

By Fatimah Idera

Cabinet ministers have insisted that the government's welfare reform plans will improve mental health outcomes, arguing that supporting people into work is key to tackling rising rates of anxiety and depression.

Health Secretary, Wes Streeting and Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall made the case for the reforms, stating: "Good work is good for mental health." Their intervention comes as Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer faces backlash within Labour ranks over the proposed tightening of eligibility for Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

The Prime Minister made a major concession on Thursday night to avoid a potential Commons defeat, agreeing that current PIP recipients would not be affected by the changes as a move expected to erase a third of the £5 billion in savings originally forecast from the overhaul.

Welfare spending has surged in recent years, with projections showing it could reach £378 billion by 2029–30, up from £210 billion in 2013–14. Labour ministers argue the reforms are essential to help manage costs and ensure the system supports those who can work to do so.

Streeting and Kendall defended the changes while unveiling new mental health access measures, including a pledge to allow self-referral for therapy through the NHS app. The announcement comes as new data shows that nearly a quarter of adults in England suffer from common mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, with rates more than twice as high among people out of work.

"There's a clear link between mental health and work and it flows both ways," the ministers wrote. "If we want to get more people into work, we must take mental health seriously. This isn't just about wellbeing but it's about building a more productive, inclusive society."

Labour's internal tensions have flared over the proposals, with 127 MPs more than a quarter of the Parliamentary Labour Party signing a reasoned amendment to block the reforms. Just 83 rebel votes would be enough to defeat



the Government on the issue in Tuesday's vote. However, after the PIP concession, senior rebels are now expected to back the revised package, making a defeat less likely.

Had the bill been voted down, it would have wiped out the Chancellor's remaining £9.9 billion fiscal headroom outlined in the Spring Statement, with the Office for Budget Responsibility estimating the total savings from the reforms at £13.7 billion by the end of the decade.

The legislation will now proceed with changes, including raising the threshold for new PIP claimants and halving the health-related top-up in Universal Credit from 2026. The reforms also include phasing out the work capability assessment. Together, these changes are estimated to save around £3.5 billion annually.

Next week, the government will publish its 10-year health plan, which is expected to focus heavily on digital access to mental health care. This includes self-referral through the NHS app and the use of AI-powered virtual tools to provide early support.

The Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey, published Thursday, underlined the

connection between unemployment and mental health struggles. Among unemployed adults, 40 per cent have a mental health condition — more than double the 18.3 per cent reported among those in work. Rates of depression, suicidal thoughts, and self-harm are also significantly higher among the unemployed.

For example, 13.8 per cent of unemployed adults suffer from depression, compared to 2.6 per cent of employed people. Nearly half (42.3 per cent) of unemployed respondents reported experiencing suicidal thoughts, and 23.2 per cent said they had self-harmed starkly higher than the 26.3 per cent and 12.8 per cent rates recorded among those in work.

Ministers argue that the reforms are not about punishing claimants, but about giving people with health conditions meaningful pathways back into employment with mental health support playing a central role.

"We are determined to push forward with this change," said Streeting and Kendall. "It's about more than cutting costs, it's about giving people purpose, support, and the dignity of work."

Israeli airstrikes target Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



A series of Israeli airstrikes hit Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon early Thursday, in what the Israeli military described as a response to renewed efforts by the militia to rebuild its operational facilities.

According to a report by Sky News, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched precision strikes on an underground site used by Hezbollah to manage its “fire and defense array.” The IDF stated that the facility had been previously targeted, but recent intelligence suggested Hezbollah was attempting to restore operations at the location.

“The IDF identified attempts by the Hezbollah terror organization to restore the site, and therefore the terror infrastructure in the area was struck,” the military said in a statement.

The military also accused Hezbollah of violating the terms of the ceasefire agreement established last November, stating that,

“The presence of this site and the attempts to re-establish it constitute a blatant violation of the understandings between Israel and Lebanon.”

Footage broadcast by Lebanese media showed columns of thick smoke rising from the hills near Nabatiyeh, a city located about 54 kilometers south of Beirut. Residents reportedly took shelter as the sound of loud explosions echoed through the area.

Lebanese security sources confirmed that at least five heavy airstrikes hit the region. In a separate but related incident, an Israeli drone reportedly struck an apartment in Nabatiyeh al-Fawka, though no official statement

has been released by the Israeli military regarding that strike.

As of now, no casualties have been reported, but assessments are ongoing.

The strikes come amid lingering tensions following the November 2024 ceasefire agreement, which ended over a year of cross-border hostilities. Under the deal, Hezbollah had agreed to withdraw behind the Litani River, approximately 30 kilometers north of the Israeli-Lebanese border. Recent events suggest that parts of the agreement may be unraveling.

Hezbollah, a powerful Lebanese Shia political and paramilitary organization, has not yet commented on the latest developments.

Starmer's adviser criticises 'two-tier' approach to prosecuting Northern Ireland veterans

By Fatimah Idera

Sir Keir Starmer's own veterans commissioner for Northern Ireland has launched a fierce attack on Labour's plans to repeal the Legacy Act, warning that scrapping protections for British soldiers who served during the Troubles would create an immoral and two-tier system of justice.

David Johnstone, appointed by Northern Ireland Secretary Hilary Benn in January, said that removing the current legal shield for veterans could drag dozens of elderly former soldiers into court for actions taken decades ago while fighting the IRA. He estimated that 50 to 70 former servicemen could be prosecuted, despite doing their jobs under government orders.

The Legacy Act, passed in 2023, halted new inquests and civil proceedings related to Troubles-era incidents, replacing them with the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery. Labour pledged in its election manifesto to repeal the Act, citing opposition from Irish political parties, victims' groups, and concerns about compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

But Johnstone, a former Army reservist who served in Iraq, says the repeal would pave the way for vexatious lawfare and create a legal imbalance. "This is lopsided, it's two-tier justice," he said. "Veterans are not going to stand for it."

He warned that reversing the Act would allow up to 33 inquests to reopen, about half of which involve state forces. "You could be looking at 70 soldiers with files sent to the prosecution service," he said.

Johnstone said the plans betray the compromises made during the peace process, including the release of paramilitary prisoners and destruction of weapons that could have been used as evidence. "Society accepted terrorists walking free in the name of peace, yet now, decades later, we're threatening to



prosecute soldiers who followed orders."

The commissioner warned the move could damage military recruitment, saying: "Why would a young person join the forces if they could be prosecuted 50 years later for decisions made in combat?"

Johnstone pointed to the case of Dennis Hutchings, an 80-year-old veteran who died while on trial for a 1974 shooting, as emblematic of the emotional and physical toll on ageing veterans. "We're lauding one generation for answering the call of duty and dragging another through the courts. Surely, as a society, we're better than this."

He also raised concerns about a potential inquest into the 1987 SAS operation in Loughgall, in which eight IRA members and a civilian died during an attack on a police station. Johnstone noted the absence of inquests into IRA attacks and suggested the repeal would unfairly target state forces.

Veterans' concerns intensified after a coroner ruled this year that SAS soldiers were not justified in a 1992 shooting of IRA gunmen in Clonoe, citing violations of Article 2 of the ECHR. Labour says it is reviewing that judgement.

Despite holding two meetings with Hilary Benn, Johnstone fears the government is pushing ahead with repeal out of political obligation rather than practical necessity.

"The default seems to be, 'It was in the manifesto, so we must do it,' even if the reality on the ground says otherwise," he said.

Labour has defended its position. Mr Benn said the Legacy Act was rejected in Northern Ireland and deemed unlawful by courts for offering potential immunity to terrorists. "It is simply wrong to suggest the Act helped veterans; it made undeliverable promises," he said. "We are committed to working with veterans and all parties to ensure far better protections under future legislation."

Still, the planned repeal has sparked a strong reaction across the Armed Forces community. A petition demanding protections for veterans has garnered over 145,000 signatures, triggering a parliamentary debate scheduled for next month.

Johnstone concluded: "The pressure is on. If the government reverses course, it must be prepared for a major backlash from the veteran community. They feel betrayed and rightly so."

Japan executes 'Twitter killer' for murder of 9 victims

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Japan has executed a man known as the "Twitter killer" for the brutal murders of nine people he met online, marking the country's first use of the death penalty in two years.

Takahiro Shiraishi, 33, was hanged on Friday after being convicted of murdering and dismembering nine individuals, mostly young women, whom he lured via Twitter, now known as X, in 2017.

Shiraishi admitted to the killings, having approached vulnerable users on the platform who had expressed suicidal thoughts. He offered to help them die, before bringing them to his apartment near Tokyo, where he killed and mutilated them. The victims were aged between 15 and 26.

According to media reports, Shiraishi stored body parts in coolers around his flat and disposed of others in rubbish dumps. Justice Minister Keisuke Suzuki confirmed the execution in a press briefing, describing the crimes as "robbery, rape, murder, destruction of a corpse and abandonment of a corpse."

"Nine victims were beaten and strangled, killed, robbed, and then mutilated with parts of their bodies concealed in boxes, and parts discarded in a garbage dump," Suzuki said. "After much careful consideration, I ordered the execution."

Twitter killer sentenced to death in 2020

Shiraishi was sentenced to death in 2020 after pleading guilty. His case



drew widespread public and media attention due to the horrifying nature of his crimes and the way he exploited social media to find his victims.

Japan is one of only two G7 nations, the other being the United States, that still practises capital punishment. The country carries out executions by hanging, often in complete secrecy.

There is significant public support for the death penalty in Japan. A 2024 government survey of 1,800 people revealed that 83% consider it "unavoidable".

However, the system has come under heavy criticism from human rights groups for its lack of transparency and psychological toll on death row inmates. Executions are carried out without prior warning, typically in the early morning, with prisoners informed only hours before.

Legally, executions must take place within six months of a final verdict, once all appeals have been exhausted. In practice, however, inmates often wait in solitary

confinement for years, sometimes decades, with no indication of when their sentence will be carried out.

As of December 2023, 107 prisoners remained on death row in Japan, according to the Justice Ministry.

The last execution prior to Shiraishi's was in 2022, when Tomohiro Kato was hanged for a 2008 attack in Tokyo's Akihabara district. Kato killed seven people after ploughing a rented two-tonne truck into a crowd before embarking on a stabbing spree.

Japan's most high-profile mass execution in recent history took place in 2018, when Shoko Asahara and 12 members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult were hanged. The group was responsible for the 1995 sarin gas attack on Tokyo's subway, which killed 14 people and injured thousands.

Despite growing international pressure to abolish the death penalty, Japan remains firm in its position, insisting it is a necessary deterrent for the most heinous crimes.

UN warns of soaring child recruitment by armed groups in Colombia

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The United Nations has warned that armed groups in Colombia are increasingly turning to social media platforms such as TikTok and Facebook to recruit children into their ranks.

According to a new report by the UN Human Rights Office in Colombia, 474 cases of recruitment or use of children under 18 were verified between 2022 and 2024, with a sharp increase reported in the first quarter of 2025 alone. Of 118 reported cases this year, 51 have already been verified by UN investigators.

The report raises the alarm over a growing trend of digital coercion, with armed groups using platforms like TikTok to lure children with promises of wealth, glamour, and power. In at least 36 verified cases, recruitment took place within schools, but it is the use of social media that the agency calls a “grave concern”.

“It’s horrific, toxic and ugly,” said Scott Campbell, Colombia’s representative for the High Commissioner for Human Rights. “Illegal groups are using social media to lure girls and boys into their ranks, which is increasing violence across the country and strengthening narco-trafficking.”

Campbell described how children are promised mobile phones, money, and motorbikes. In some cases, girls are also offered cosmetic surgery. The content used to entice them often depicts parties, clubs, designer clothing, and heavy weaponry, glorifying the lifestyle of armed group members.

Elizabeth Dickinson, a senior analyst at the International Crisis Group, said recruitment often begins with online messaging. “The first contact frequently comes through social media,” she said. “TikTok is especially saturated with videos posted by armed groups depicting the perks of the lifestyle.”

Investigators from Colombia’s Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) found some posts garnering up to 625,000 views, underscoring the viral reach of such propaganda.



Campbell criticised major tech firms for not doing enough to stem the problem. “If children were being recruited into illegal groups in London or Silicon Valley, social media companies would be putting huge resources into this,” he said.

Meta replies UN

In response, TikTok and Meta, the parent company of Facebook, stated they were cooperating with state authorities and actively removing harmful content.

Child recruitment has long been a scar on Colombia’s conflict-ridden past. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which demobilised after the 2016 peace agreement, was found by the JEP to have recruited more than 18,000 minors during its insurgency. Yet the trend continues despite the peace deal. Since 2016, one child has been recruited every 48 hours on average, according to JEP.

Violence across Colombia has surged in recent months, further fuelling recruitment. In January, over 50,000 people were displaced amid clashes between armed groups near the Venezuelan border. In June, a wave of coordinated bombings and shootings in the country’s south-west left at least seven dead and more than 50 injured.

The use of minors in armed groups is also intersecting with high-profile national events. Earlier this month, a 15-year-old boy was charged with the attempted assassination of presidential candidate Miguel Uribe. Authorities have linked the attack to an organised criminal group, adding further urgency to the issue.

The International Crisis Group recently warned that the rate of child recruitment has reached its highest level in over a decade. Many families, fearing retaliation or social stigma, are too afraid to report their children missing, allowing the crisis to deepen unchallenged.

In a shocking development earlier this year, 20 of the 112 members of the armed 33rd Front who surrendered to authorities were discovered to be minors. In another incident, following a deadly clash that claimed nearly two dozen lives, a third of the deceased were found to be under the age of 18.

As Colombia edges towards a presidential election next year, human rights organisations fear the country’s children will increasingly be used as pawns in a violent struggle for power and control. The UN has called for urgent action from both national authorities and global tech companies to address the crisis before more lives are lost.

'Alligator Alcatraz': Fury as migrant detention camp rises in Florida Everglades

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Environmental campaigners, immigrant rights advocates, and a Native American tribe have condemned the construction of a controversial outdoor migrant detention facility deep within the Florida Everglades, branded by state officials as “Alligator Alcatraz”.

Crews began work this week to prepare the remote site, located at a largely abandoned training airfield, for what has been described by critics as a “cruel spectacle” designed to house undocumented migrants in harsh, inhumane conditions. The facility is being built to support the Trump administration’s newly intensified immigration crackdown, which aims to detain and incarcerate up to 3,000 undocumented migrants per day.

Set to open in early July, the camp’s timing has raised widespread alarm, with South Florida’s summer heat index frequently exceeding 100°F

(37.8°C). Opponents argue that placing vulnerable detainees in such an environment, particularly in a region known for its swamps, snakes, alligators, and severe weather, is not only reckless but intended to be punitive.

The Everglades facility is one of several new Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centres rapidly emerging across the United States, as the number of migrant arrests and detentions continues to surge.

Florida officials have refused to disclose many details of the Everglades project. However, a report by the Tampa Bay Times revealed that a second facility is already in planning stages at Camp Blanding, a Florida National Guard training base west of Jacksonville. Both sites reflect Governor Ron DeSantis’s continued support for Donald Trump’s hard-line immigration agenda.

Critics have been vocal in their condemnation. Thomas Kennedy, spokesperson for the Florida Immigrant Coalition, said the state government had deliberately chosen “the most controversial site possible” to provoke outrage and reinforce a political message.

“He just always has to throw red meat to his base, always has to generate controversy and polarisation,” Kennedy said, referring to Governor DeSantis. “They’re using medieval metaphors, describing the camp like it’s got moats full of alligators and snakes. There’s no adequate running water, no plumbing. Uthmeier [Florida’s chief of staff] is out there saying we don’t need proper buildings, we’ll just throw up tents in the middle of a swamp, in hurricane season, in July, with mosquitoes, heat, and no infrastructure. It’s designed to enact suffering.”

Super Falcons Goalkeeper Nnadozie joins Brighton

By New Dsily Prime

Brighton and Hove Albion have signed Super Falcons goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie on a free transfer from Paris FC.

Nnadozie is expected to join the club when her contract with the French side ends on July 1st.

“We are delighted to announce the signing of Nigerian goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie, subject to the usual regulatory processes,” the club side revealed on their official X handle on Friday.

We are delighted to announce the signing of Nigerian goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie, subject to the usual regulatory processes!

— Brighton & Hove Albion Women



(@BHAFCWomen) June 27, 2025

The two-time CAF goalkeeper of the year made 16 European appearances for Paris FC between 2022 and 2025.

She also made 55 appearances for Nigeria, with her senior debut coming in 2018.

Leicester part with manager Ruud van Nistelrooy before new season

By New Daily Prime

Ruud van Nistelrooy has left Leicester nearly 10 weeks after they were relegated from the Premier League, the club announced on Friday.

Leicester said in a statement that they had “mutually agreed” with the Dutchman that his contract would be terminated with immediate effect.

Van Nistelrooy, 48, joined the struggling Foxes in late November after a brief spell as Manchester United’s caretaker boss.

But he was unable to stop their slide and they returned to the second-tier Championship after just one season back in the top division.

“Ruud has overseen a challenging period for the club,” Leicester said.

“From his appointment in November 2024, he approached the role with professionalism, integrity and a clear commitment to our aims, including through the integration of several promising players from the club’s



academy into our first-team environment.

“Ruud moves on with the respect and thanks of everyone at the football club for his dedication and hard work, and with our very best wishes for the future.”

Former PSV Eindhoven boss Van Nistelrooy called for talks with the club’s hierarchy after relegation was confirmed but was left waiting for a number of weeks.

“I would like to personally thank the Leicester City players, coaches, academy and all the staff I have worked with for their professionalism and dedication during my time at the club,” he said.

The former Manchester United and Real Madrid striker won four points in his opening two games after replacing Steve Cooper but a run of 15 defeats from their next 16 matches sealed their fate.