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# Visit Niger flood victims too, Obi tells Tinubu after Benue trip announcement

By Damilola Olufemi



**F**ormer presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi, has applauded President Bola Tinubu's decision to visit Benue State after recent mass killings but urged him to extend the same gesture to Niger State, where devastating floods have claimed over 200 lives.

The New Daily Prime earlier reported that Mr rescheduled his official visit to Kaduna State and decided to travel to Benue State on Wednesday as part of renewed efforts to foster peace and address the persistent conflict affecting communities in the state.

In a statement released on his X page Monday, Mr Obi described Mr Tinubu's planned visit to Benue as 'refreshing news to a bewildered nation'.

He stressed that a similar show of empathy is urgently needed in Mokwa, Niger State, where floods left more than 200 dead and over 1,000 people missing.

"Given the emergency nature of these incidents, a prompt visit would have conveyed the urgency required, rather than scheduling it for a later date, which makes it appear like a state visit," he said.

He noted that the presence of the President in such grieving communities would be both reassuring and uplifting.

Mr Obi pointed out that the affected locations, Makurdi in Benue and Mokwa in Niger, are relatively close to the nation's capital, Abuja, at approximately 282 km and 287 km respectively.

He contrasted this with South African

President Cyril Ramaphosa's recent 1,870 km round trip from Pretoria to Mthatha to visit victims of a flood that claimed fewer than 100 lives.

"If the South African President could do it, we trust that you, as our own President, can do the same for your people," Mr Obi stated.

"Let your visit to Mokwa send a strong message that all Nigerian lives matter, and that no community, no matter how rural—is forgotten."

He also called on the federal government to bolster security measures, particularly in areas prone to disasters, and emphasised the need for 'proactive leadership that responds not just with words, but with compassion and action.'



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9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
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9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
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9X3	112,875.00
8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
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9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
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6X3	41,124.50
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# Tinubu: Nigerians want infrastructure, not promises

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu on Tuesday reaffirmed his administration's commitment to fast-tracking approvals for viable infrastructure projects across Nigeria, stressing that citizens care more about access to basic services than political promises.

He spoke through Vice President Kashim Shettima at the 2025 Nigeria Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Summit held at the State House Conference Centre in Abuja.

Mr Tinubu urged the private sector to prioritise innovation, efficiency, and integrity over capital alone.

"What matters to the average Nigerian is not promises, but power in their homes, roads to their farms, access to clean water, modern hospitals, and quality schools," the President stated.

"We must build. We must deliver. And we must do it together."

He said his government would strengthen collaboration between the public and private sectors, describing it as essential to delivering sustainable and inclusive development.

He also pledged that projects emerging from the summit would not be trapped in bureaucracy or left unexecuted.

"We will fast-track approvals for viable projects and ensure coordination across ministries, departments, and agencies to support swift implementation," Mr Tinubu said.

He emphasised that Nigeria's infrastructure aspirations surpass what the public budget alone can accommodate, adding that the old model of public-only funding was no longer tenable.

According to him, Nigeria presents unmatched opportunities in terms of scale,



demand, and returns.

"We are offering opportunities to create value. We seek long-term partners ready to help us bridge our infrastructure gap with purpose and precision," he said.

Mr Tinubu noted that his administration had strengthened the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) to properly regulate and de-risk PPP transactions.

He cited reforms such as subsidy removal, foreign exchange liberalisation, and enhanced revenue mobilisation as actions taken to build a stable economic foundation.

Declaring the summit open, he called on participants to ensure it was remembered for "bankable projects, signed deals, and enduring progress," rather than speeches.

Earlier, Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, praised the ICRC for driving impactful projects across sectors, while Director-General of the commission, Jobson Ewalefoh, described the summit as a platform to 'de-risk bankable projects' and align national aspirations with tangible development.

Dahlia Khalifa, Regional Director for Central Africa & Anglophone West Africa at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), applauded Nigeria's reform efforts and noted the government's progress in

dispute resolution within PPPs.

She reaffirmed the IFC's ongoing support for Nigeria's development goals.

Solomon Quaynor, Vice-President for Private Sector, Infrastructure and Industrialisation at the African Development Bank (AfDB), emphasised the necessity of government-private sector partnerships, citing the bank's involvement in the Lagos-Abidjan highway as an example of regional integration.

Zitto Alfayo, Director & Global Head of Project Preparation at Afreximbank, observed that limited public resources had made PPPs indispensable, noting that the bank had disbursed over \$50 million to support investments across energy, transport, manufacturing, healthcare and financial services in Nigeria.

Dignitaries present at the event included Cross River State Governor Bassey Otu, Ondo State Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa, Jigawa State Deputy Governor Aminu Usman, and several federal ministers.

The summit, according to stakeholders, signalled a clear commitment by the Mr Tinubu administration to reposition Nigeria's infrastructure landscape through deeper collaboration between the government and the private sector.



# Benue killings: Senate urges immediate national security dialogue

By Friday Omosola



**T**he Senate has voiced serious alarm over the recent surge of violent attacks in Benue State, affirming its commitment to tackling the growing insecurity in the region.

During a Tuesday press briefing, Senate spokesperson Yemi Adaramodu emphasised the urgent need for a coordinated and enduring strategy to end the violence.

He disclosed that lawmakers, in collaboration with the executive arm, would soon dispatch a delegation to the affected areas to console victims and consult with key local stakeholders.

“We’re weary of continually paying condolences. The killings must end,” Mr Adaramodu said.

“A comprehensive response involving the federal and state governments,

security forces, and especially the local communities is crucial to achieving peace.”

He also pointed to President Bola Tinubu’s scheduled visit to Benue on Wednesday as a timely move expected to bolster current peace initiatives.

“The President’s presence will significantly advance the efforts already in motion,” he noted.

Mr Adaramodu reiterated the Senate’s earlier appeal for a national security dialogue, confirming that the upcoming summit aligns with that objective and represents a pivotal move in addressing broader security concerns across the country.

“Once the summit is convened, any hidden issues will come to light. We’ve allocated sufficient funding to support the operations of security

agencies. The outcomes of our engagements are already evident,” he stated.

Addressing criticisms over the Senate’s productivity, Mr Adaramodu clarified that lawmakers often exceed the constitutionally required 181 plenary days annually.

“There are months we don’t take any recess, other than official public holidays. In total, we sit well beyond the minimum days stipulated,” he explained.

Commenting on the various probes launched by Senate committees, he defended the oversight activities, noting that not all findings are publicised—particularly in cases where the institutions under review have met legislative standards.

# Edun, Cardoso meet to strengthen fiscal, monetary policy synergy amid falling inflation

By Friday Omosola

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, have met with the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Yemi Cardoso, as part of efforts to strengthen the alignment between fiscal and monetary policies.

In a statement signed by Mohammed Manga, Director of Information and Public Relations, the meeting, which took place in Abuja, came on the heels of a positive development in the economy, with Nigeria's inflation rate easing to 22.97% in May 2025.

The discussions between both economic managers centred on maintaining and accelerating this progress.



They focused on strategies to stabilise prices, enhance investor confidence, and promote private sector-led economic growth.

The ministry said the meeting reflects its commitment to collaborative economic management, adding that it signals a renewed focus on driving sustainable development across the country.

# Benue Gov rejects self-defense, backs community policing

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, has dismissed the idea of residents taking up arms in response to recent violent attacks in the state, instead advocating for strengthened community policing efforts.

During an interview on AIT News on Tuesday, following deadly assaults across parts of Benue that reportedly left over 100 people dead, Alia called for calm and discouraged emotionally charged reactions that could worsen the security situation.

He emphasized that while the impulse to resort to self-defense is understandable, it could increase vulnerability if driven by emotion rather than strategy. Alia made it clear that he does not support individuals arming themselves in response to the attacks.

Rather, the governor expressed strong support for a locally driven security approach, insisting that community policing offers the most effective solution. He argued that only those embedded within local communities possess the



insight needed to detect and respond to threats quickly and effectively.

The renewed violence, reportedly carried out by suspected armed herders, devastated Guma Local Government Area and neighboring regions, sparking outrage nationwide. Local officials believe the death toll may be higher than currently reported.

Amid calls for a state of emergency, Alia underscored the limitations of external

forces unfamiliar with the terrain and local dynamics, reaffirming the need for grassroots security structures.

His comments come at a time of mounting public anger and growing pressure from civil society organizations and political figures, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, demanding swift and decisive action from the federal government.



# Obasanjo urges govt to retain Nigerian doctors with better incentives

By Friday Omosola



**F**ormer President Olusegun Obasanjo has stressed the need to improve working conditions for Nigerian-trained medical professionals to curb their growing migration abroad.

Mr Obasanjo, who spoke during the commissioning of the upgraded Yariman Bakura Specialist Hospital in Zamfara State on Tuesday emphasised that many doctors and nurses are leaving Nigeria in search of better opportunities overseas—a trend commonly referred to as ‘Japa’.

The term, popular among young Nigerians, captures the widespread exodus driven by the pursuit of economic stability and career growth in countries across Europe, the Americas, and Asia.

Hosted by Governor Dauda Lawal, the former president insisted that providing healthcare infrastructure

alone is not enough.

According to him, governments at all levels must also equip facilities with modern tools and offer competitive salaries to retain medical staff.

He praised the Zamfara State governor for investing in the hospital’s renovation.

He noted, “In a time when countless Nigerian medical professionals are leaving the country for greener pastures, it’s crucial to ask—how do we get them to stay if we don’t offer real incentives?”

“We must do better. Our healthcare system depends on skilled personnel, functional equipment, and a conducive environment.”

Mr Obasanjo commended the state’s efforts in integrating all necessary elements to improve healthcare

delivery.

Echoing similar concerns, Akinwumi Adesina, the outgoing President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), recently described the ‘Japa’ wave as a significant setback not just for Nigeria, but for Africa as a whole.

He noted that the continent has over 465 million people aged between 15 and 35, cautioning that Africa risks turning this youth population into a lost opportunity if it fails to harness their potential through meaningful investments.

“The solution isn’t in Europe or North America,” Adesina said.

“The future of Africa’s youth should be built right here on the continent—with strong economies, innovation, and quality jobs that inspire them to stay and contribute.”

# Atiku camp: Nigerians defecting to opposition coalition ahead of 2027

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

**A**s the political landscape begins to shift in anticipation of the 2027 general elections, the coalition aiming to unseat President Bola Tinubu is reportedly gaining significant traction.

According to former Vice President Atiku Abubakar's camp, increasing numbers of Nigerians are throwing their support behind the emerging alliance of opposition parties.

Paul Ibe, Media Adviser to Atiku, revealed in an interview with Vanguard on Sunday that the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) is becoming increasingly uneasy about the coalition's growing influence and the alignment of key opposition figures.

"They're scared because they know the coalition represents a formidable platform that could remove this administration," Ibe asserted.

"Even if some leaders defect to their political party, the reality is that Nigerians are defecting to the coalition. It embodies their aspiration, a platform to end this failed government."



Ibe expressed strong optimism that the coalition would present a serious challenge to the APC, stating that the momentum reflects widespread public disillusionment with the current administration.

He described the alliance as a "train" that Nigerians are ready to board once all formalities are concluded.

"Once everything about the coalition is finalised and the dotted lines are signed, Nigerians will eagerly board this train," he added.

"That will mark their defection,

far more overwhelming than what's happening with the APC."

The coalition, which remains in its formative stages, is expected to unite various opposition parties and figures ahead of the 2027 elections. Political analysts suggest that its success may hinge on the unity and coherence of its members, as well as its ability to present a credible alternative to the electorate.

As tensions rise and political manoeuvring intensifies, all eyes will be on how both the ruling party and the opposition coalition navigate the run-up to what promises to be a fiercely contested election.



# 'The Armed Forces are with you', CDS assures Benue residents

By New Daily Prime

**T**he Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa, has rallied stakeholders in Benue, calling for collaboration to stem the renewed spate of killings in the food-producing state.

"The Armed Forces are with you. We are pained about what's happening. For me, it's a personal thing. I don't want to be the chief of defense of our Armed Forces when people are being killed. No," General Musa said on Tuesday during a meeting with traditional rulers in Makurdi, the Benue State capital.

"We have gone to Liberia, we're going to Sierra Leone, we've gone to other countries, and have brought peace. Why not in our own country?"

"So, I want to assure you, no member of the Armed Forces is going to be against one. If we notice anybody, we're ready to prosecute that person. But we are going to count on your support so that we can be able to achieve [peace] and work together. We must achieve [peace] together."

He cited the success recorded in Zango Kataf in Kaduna State through collaboration with stakeholders and believes a similar thing can be achieved in Benue.

The CDS said, "I'm sure you're all aware I'm from Zango Kataf, and I know when you hear Zango Kataf, you know that we are also having similar issues on the ground. But if you notice, for the past two years, the issues of Zango Kataf have gone, and what have we done?"

"One, we made them understand that, look, we need to talk to ourselves because a house that is divided cannot stand. It is only when we are together



that we can be able to face our common enemy, and that's very critical."

Scores of people have been killed in the food-producing state in the last few weeks following renewed attacks, with many displaced and others severely injured.

That has prompted national outrage and protests.

However, the CDS during the meeting directed military commanders to go after the assailants, promising to fish them out.

"We must find out where they are. We must go after them. And that's the directive I'm giving my commanders," he said.

"We have had some areas where we think they are holing up, where they are gathering. We're going to go after them so that we can dislodge them. We shouldn't wait until they come to attack people."

The fresh wave of killings in the North-Central State has prompted President Bola Tinubu to schedule a visit to the state on Wednesday after directing security agencies to go after the attackers and restore peace to the communities.

"In preparation for the visit, President Tinubu has already dispatched the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, the Inspector General of Police, heads of intelligence agencies, the National Security Adviser, and the Chairmen of the Senate and House Defence Committees to Benue State.

"The President is expected to hold a town hall meeting with all stakeholders during the visit," a statement by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, disclosed on Monday.

Tinubu also sympathised with the people of the state and those who lost their loved ones in the attacks.

# Tinubu flags off construction of INEC annex office in Abuja

By New Daily Prime



President Bola Tinubu has flagged off the construction of the annex office of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Abuja, saying the edifice symbolises Nigeria's commitment to electoral integrity, institutional autonomy, and democratic growth.

At the ground-breaking event on Tuesday, Tinubu described the event as one of national significance.

"It is a great honour and sense of purpose that I stand before you to flag off the construction of a new national office — the annex of the headquarters of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

"We are committed to ensuring that INEC is fully equipped — not only in infrastructure but in law, policy, and resources — to carry out its constitutional mandate with courage, fairness, and excellence," Tinubu said.

According to him, the project represents far more than a physical structure. He said it is a reaffirmation of the government's dedication to strengthening democracy.

"Today's ceremony is not merely about bricks and mortar. It is about the strength of our democracy, the independence of our institutions, and the future of our electoral integrity," Tinubu said.

He praised INEC's role in sustaining Nigeria's democratic process, noting that the commission has been and remains the backbone of the nation's democratic journey.

"Its role in conducting free, fair and credible elections is central to the trust our people place in their government and our democratic process. For this reason, it is only right that such a pivotal institution is housed in a structure that reflects the dignity, responsibility, and national significance of that institution," he said.

The President added that the new building signals "our unwavering support for INEC's autonomy, the capacity and growth it will provide — not just a conducive home, but a hub for innovation, planning, training, and transport in electoral administration".

The President also commended the

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, for initiating the project, and lauded it as another step towards safeguarding democracy.

"By initiating this project, the FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike, has taken another important step towards the protection of our democracy. I say thank you very much. I salute your vision, courage, and commitment to the progress and development of our country," he said.

Tinubu further lauded the leadership and staff of the FCTA and INEC for their resilience and efforts in laying a stronger foundation for Nigeria's democratic institutions.

To Nigerians, he stated that our "democracy is not a destination but a journey," urging that "Together, let us strengthen our institutions, safeguard our freedom and protect the future."

He officially flagged off the construction, expressing hope that the new INEC headquarters will stand as "a pillar of democracy, accountability, transparency, and national unity".



# ‘No storm can uproot PDP in Lagos’: Bode George slams defectors’ claims **By Friday Omosola**

**B**ode George, a former Deputy National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has rejected claims suggesting that the party’s structure in Lagos has disintegrated.

He described the PDP as deeply rooted and resilient, both within the state and nationally.

The New Daily Prime earlier reported that the PDP was hit by a wave of defections, with several prominent members joining the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Speaking to journalists after a PDP stakeholders’ gathering in Lagos yesterday, Mr George dismissed assertions that the party had collapsed.

His comments follow recent defections by key PDP figures in the state, including its 2023 governorship candidate, Abdul-Azeez Adediran, known as Jandor, and the party’s spokesperson, Hakeem Amode, who both joined the ruling APC.

The defectors claimed that the PDP structure had been subsumed by the APC.

Mr George categorically rejected such narratives, calling them “ridiculous” and lacking substance.

Drawing a metaphor, he compared the PDP to an Iroko or Lebanon oak tree, stating that the party remains firmly anchored and capable of weathering any storm.

“The PDP remains strong and intact,” he said. “This political structure is like an Iroko tree—its roots are deep, and it is not going anywhere.”

He criticised the defectors, questioning their influence and contributions to the party.

“Who are these individuals to talk about the PDP?” he asked, describing them as irrelevant and likening their departure to noise without consequence.

Mr George expressed regret over the party’s decision to endorse Jandor in the



2023 election, calling it a misstep.

He insisted that claims about the party’s collapse were deliberate falsehoods spread to mislead the public.

He acknowledged the internal challenges the PDP is currently facing but stressed that they are not insurmountable.

“We’re addressing our shortcomings. The lessons from the 2023 elections are being taken seriously,” he said.

Looking ahead, Mr George emphasised that the party would no longer allow the imposition of candidates.

“There will be no more selection by fiat. From now on, anyone aspiring for office must win the people’s approval through due process,” he declared.

Turning to the political crisis in Rivers State, Mr George urged President Bola Tinubu to restore Governor Siminalayi Fubara to office, insisting that the will of the people must be respected.

He criticised the President’s appeal to the National Assembly for approval of various appointments under an emergency framework, including the leadership of the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC), the Primary Healthcare Board,

and both the Civil and Local Government Civil Service Commissions.

Mr George warned that such actions could erode democratic institutions and promote excessive centralisation of power.

He cautioned Mr Tinubu against empowering the sole administrator, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas (Rtd), to oversee elections or make appointments in the state.

“The President must not sacrifice our democracy on the altar of political expediency,” he warned, urging Mr Tinubu to focus on pressing national concerns like insecurity, hunger, youth unemployment, and social instability.

Several prominent PDP figures attended the Lagos meeting, including Senator Motorola Bucknor, Chief Aduke Maina, Dr Niran Adeniji, Dr Layi Ogunbambi, Dr Amos Fawole, and Captain Tunji Shelle (Rtd.).

Other participants included Dr Seye O’Dairo, Alhaji Ismail Abiola, Alhaji Akorode Imam, Alhaja Babs Olorunkemi, Alhaja Tanwa Olusi, Elder John Agbaje, and Chief Ahmed Alashe, alongside members of the PDP Local Government Chairmen Forum.

# APC's Salihu: Endorsing Tinubu without Shettima was constitutional

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



**N**ational Vice Chairman (North-East) of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Mustapha Salihu, has stated that endorsing both a presidential aspirant and their running mate before the party's primary election is unconstitutional.

Salihu made the remarks during an interview with Channels Television on Monday, addressing speculation following his public endorsement of President Bola Tinubu at the recent APC North-East summit in Gombe — an endorsement that did not include Vice President Kashim Shettima.

Explaining the omission, Salihu said the move was deliberate and

grounded in the APC's internal rules and the Nigerian constitution.

"In party politics, we have only one ticket at the primary stage — for the executive chairman, local government chairman, governors, and president," he said.

"There is no provision in our constitution that allows for the endorsement of a joint ticket at that level. It is only after the primaries, when a candidate emerges, that he chooses a running mate."

Salihu emphasised that his full speech acknowledged and praised Vice President Shettima, and included a declaration of support

for him.

He also noted that other senior figures in the party, including Governors Mai Mala Buni of Yobe and Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe, had similarly endorsed Tinubu without mentioning Shettima, further supporting the claim that this is standard party practice.

Responding to rumours of discord within the APC leadership, Salihu dismissed them as speculative.

"These kinds of rumours are inevitable in every administration," he said, downplaying any suggestion of a rift between Tinubu and his deputy.



# Reno Omokri backs Tinubu, says He's delivering on PDP promises

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



**R**eno Omokri, former aide to ex-President Goodluck Jonathan, has defended his support for President Bola Tinubu, asserting that the current administration is implementing reforms originally championed by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

In a statement obtained by New Daily Prime on Tuesday, Omokri criticised the media team of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar for what he described as “unwarranted attacks” against him, despite his continued respect for Atiku.

“There is absolutely no reason for those around Waziri Atiku Abubakar to fight with someone who only has the utmost respect for the former Vice President and has never had an unkind word to say about him overtly or covertly,” Omokri said.

He explained his political stance,

highlighting his support for Tinubu on the grounds that the president is delivering key policies long promised by the PDP including fuel subsidy removal, Naira flotation, devolution of power, and student loans.

“Our goal is Nigeria’s progress,” Omokri stated.

“It does not matter if the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice, and it matters not if the party in power is APC or PDP, as long as it delivers progress for the Nigerian nation.”

Drawing parallels between Tinubu and Atiku, Omokri pointed out that both hail from the 1989 Social Democratic Party background, saying there is “little or no difference between them.”

Addressing questions about his loyalty and integrity, Omokri

insisted he has never betrayed any confidential information in his work with Atiku and has never sought personal gain.

“To therefore attack me, when I have never even as much as said one negative word about Waziri or his immediate coterie, is most unkind. Nevertheless, I will not respond in kind,” he said.

He concluded by reaffirming his resolve to maintain his stance, not out of fear but respect.

“I choose to suffer the insults hurled at me without any retaliation. I am only observing restraint out of respect, not out of cowardice.”

Omokri also vowed to continue defending President Tinubu against political opponents, adding, “As long as Obi takes on President Tinubu, I will tackle him.”

# VeryDarkMan slams Tinubu's call for dialogue over Benue massacre

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



**N**igerian social critic and activist, VeryDarkMan, has strongly criticised President Bola Tinubu's response to the recent massacre in Benue State, where over 200 people were reportedly burnt alive in a brutal herdsmen attack in Yelwata, Guma Local Government Area.

The incident, which has sparked international outrage, was first publicly condemned by Pope Leo, who labelled it a "terrible massacre" and called for justice. Following this, President Tinubu issued a statement urging the Benue State Government to engage the attackers in dialogue and reconciliation.

Reacting to the President's remarks, VeryDarkMan described the call for dialogue as a dangerous sign of weakness. He argued that the attackers wield influence that surpasses even the federal

government's reach.

"You want to dialogue with those burning people alive? That shows they are even bigger than the President," he said.

"This isn't about politics they are bigger than APC, PDP, bigger than everybody."

He also accused the country's security agencies of wilful ignorance or complicity, questioning how the attackers could have mobilised with gallons of fuel and assault rifles without detection.

"It would be clowning for the NSA, DSS, Police, or Army to claim they don't know what is going on in Benue. They came prepared — with AKs and fuel. How did they pass undetected?"

He lamented the general public's indifference to the killings,

suggesting that the tragedy failed to receive due attention because Nigerians have become desensitised.

"What scares me most is that 200 people died and it didn't even trend. No one talked about it until I shared the video," he said.

Calling for practical action, VeryDarkMan urged Benue farmers to arm themselves legally.

"Every farmer in Benue needs to get a gun with a licence. This is beyond what the government can handle. Without the means to protect themselves, they are defenceless," he warned.

On Sunday, the activist joined hundreds of youths in Makurdi, the Benue State capital, for a protest demanding justice and immediate government intervention.



# New Nimbus covid strain causes sharp throat pain

By Helen Okechukwu



**A** newly emerging Covid variant, NB.1.8.1—commonly referred to as the Nimbus strain—is rapidly gaining ground in the United Kingdom (UK), sparking concern among health experts due to a particularly painful symptom.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) reports a near 10% surge in Covid-related hospital admissions, with 947 patients hospitalised in the week ending 31 May. Confirmed cases have also increased by 6.9%, reaching 1,211 infections in the week to 4 June.

What sets the Nimbus variant apart is a striking symptom described by doctors as a “razor blade sensation” in the throat.

Dr. Naveed Asif, a general practitioner at the London General Practice, warns that the pain—intensely sharp and stabbing during swallowing—is being widely reported by those infected.

Other symptoms include extreme fatigue, mild coughing, muscle aches, nasal congestion, and in some cases, digestive issues such as nausea or diarrhoea, according to Dr Mohamed Imran Lakhi.

Despite the rising numbers, the World Health Organisation (WHO) says there is no indication that NB.1.8.1 causes more severe illness than previous variants. Approved Covid vaccines remain effective against it, offering protection and reducing the risk of serious outcomes.

Dr. Gayatri Amirthalingam, deputy director at UKHSA, acknowledged the variant’s growing presence but emphasised that current data does not show increased severity.

Individuals experiencing symptoms are advised to rest, stay hydrated, and use over-the-counter painkillers.

The NHS continues to recommend that anyone suspecting they have Covid remain at home and seek medical advice if symptoms worsen.

For urgent medical attention, such as difficulty breathing, the public is urged to call emergency services.

# 'Pregnancy is a blessing for healthy women', Woli Arole

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian comedian and media personality, Woli Arole, has sparked conversation on social media after sharing his strong opinion on the increasing trend of surrogacy among women who are physically capable of carrying a child.

Arole, known for blending humour with social commentary, used his Instagram platform to express concern over what he described as the misuse of medical alternatives like surrogacy and IVF.

Natural childbirth is a blessing, he says. In his post, Arole emphasised that it is a blessing for women to carry their children. He argued that natural childbirth is part of God's plan for women and should be cherished rather than avoided for personal convenience.

"Listen carefully," he wrote. "It is a blessing for a woman to carry her baby in her womb. That is how God wants it. Do not let wokeness derail you."

According to the comedian, choosing not to carry a pregnancy despite being medically fit should not be encouraged. He believes that medical alternatives should only be explored when a woman faces serious health challenges or infertility.

Medical exceptions are valid, he adds. While Arole took a firm stance, he made it clear that his comments do not apply to women with medical complications. He acknowledged that options such as surrogacy and IVF exist for women who are unable to conceive or carry a pregnancy due to health reasons.

"Unless for medical reasons, she can adopt options like surrogacy, IVF, and all," he wrote.

This clarification shows that Arole recognises the importance of reproductive assistance in cases where it is truly needed. However, he drew a sharp line between necessity and choice driven by lifestyle or trends.

'Your body is God's temple'



Going further, Arole challenged the modern-day slogan "My body, my decision." He warned that using this phrase to justify avoiding pregnancy, despite being healthy, goes against divine design.

"You cannot say 'my body, my decision, I do not feel like carrying a child, I want surrogacy.' Noooooooo. Your body is God's temple," he stressed.

He urged women to rethink how they view their bodies and the process of childbirth. According to him, viewing the body as a temple should encourage women to appreciate the gift of carrying life.

Mixed reactions from the public. Arole's comments have drawn mixed reactions online. While some praised him for defending traditional values and natural motherhood, others felt his views were insensitive to women's personal choices.

Critics pointed out that the decision to carry a child or not is deeply personal. They argued that societal or religious expectations should not pressure women into pregnancies they are not mentally or emotionally ready for.

Some also highlighted that modern women face unique challenges, including career demands and mental health issues,

which can influence their decision to explore alternative paths to motherhood.

Growing debate on reproductive choices. The comedian's remarks come at a time when more Nigerian women, especially public figures and celebrities, are opening up about using surrogacy and IVF. These options have gained popularity in recent years, often praised for giving hope to couples struggling with infertility.

However, the growing use of these options by women without medical issues has stirred debates about whether such choices are rooted in freedom or influenced by societal shifts.

Arole's message: Be grateful, not trendy. In closing, Arole's message urges women to appreciate the natural ability to give birth. He cautioned against what he sees as the growing influence of modern ideologies that prioritise convenience over purpose.

For him, motherhood is not just a biological event but a spiritual responsibility, one that should not be taken lightly or replaced for non-medical reasons.

His post continues to trend, fueling ongoing conversations about womanhood, faith, modernity, and reproductive freedom.



# Why gospel artistes go secular, Ric Hassani reveals

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian singer Ric Hassani has weighed in on the ongoing conversation about why many gospel musicians eventually leave the church scene and move into the secular music industry.

Contrary to popular opinion, Hassani believes that these shifts are rarely motivated by financial gain. Instead, he says, they stem from a deeper need for creative and spiritual fulfilment.

In a recent interview with Hip TV, Hassani opened up about his own musical journey and how he came to understand his true calling. Though he began as a gospel singer in church, he realised early on that his path lay elsewhere.

“Gospel is a calling, not a career”

Hassani explained that gospel music is more than just singing inspirational songs; it’s a spiritual responsibility that not everyone is meant to carry.

“Gospel is beyond singing,” he said. “You have to be blessed to interpret God’s word through music. That’s not something everyone can do just because they love God or music.”

He used pop star Katy Perry and gospel legend CeCe Winans as examples to make his point. While both are gifted vocalists, he believes only someone truly called to the gospel space, like CeCe Winans, can effectively communicate God’s message through music.

“There’s no way Katy Perry could deliver gospel the way CeCe Winans does,” he said. “CeCe is clearly blessed to carry that message. It’s a divine gift.”

From church choirs to concert stages

Reflecting on his own journey, Hassani said he started out in church but later understood that he was called to impact the world in a different way.

“I’m a strong Christian,” he said. “In every one of my albums, I include at least one gospel song. But I don’t think I was



made for church music. That’s not my gift.”

He admitted that if he tried to become a full-time gospel artist today, he might not succeed because he doesn’t have the spiritual grace required to thrive in that space.

“If I enter church music now, I fit no bang,” he added in Pidgin English. “It’s not my thing.”

Creativity beyond the church walls

Hassani was clear in dismissing the assumption that gospel artists leave the church purely for money. He believes the driving force behind such moves is a need to create music that aligns with one’s authentic voice.

“People think it’s about money. It’s not,” he said. “Creatives just want to express themselves fully. Everyone likes money, sure, but true fulfilment comes from creating something that matters.”

He pointed out that even mainstream stars like Wizkid, Burna Boy, and Davido, who are already financially secure, continue to make music, not for money, but because it feeds their passion and sense of purpose.

“If it was really about money, then Davido should have no business doing anything,” he said. “He already has all the money he needs. But he still creates, because it’s about more than that.”

A different kind of impact

Hassani concluded by saying that each artist must find where their gift fits. For some, that may be in the church. For others, like himself, it could be on the global stage, making music that speaks to a different audience but still carries meaningful messages.

“I’m not Frank Edwards. I’m not Mercy Chinwo. They are doing great in their lane, but I have a different kind of assignment,” he said. “I was made to touch the world with another kind of music.”

Final thoughts

Ric Hassani’s comments shed light on a topic that often stirs debate in the Nigerian music industry and church community. His message is simple but powerful: Not all who leave gospel music are chasing money; some are simply answering a different kind of call.

# AY, Olamide, Kate Henshaw, other celebrities react to Benue killings

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**P**rominent Nigerian celebrities have joined the nationwide outcry over the renewed wave of violence in Benue State.

Actress Kate Henshaw, comedian Ayo Makun (popularly known as AY), rapper Olamide, and other stars have called on the federal government and security agencies to act swiftly and decisively to stop the bloodshed.

Their collective voices echo the growing frustration and grief sweeping through the country as reports of killings and attacks continue to emerge from the troubled state.

AY: “We cannot ignore this tragedy”  
Comedian AY took to Instagram to share his concern over the worsening crisis. He emphasised the need for unity in the face of tragedy.

“We cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering happening in our homeland. It’s time for us to stand together,” he wrote.

AY stressed that the loss of innocent lives is not just a local issue but a national tragedy. He called for immediate dialogue, reconciliation, and a long-lasting solution that fosters peace and mutual respect.

“Violence brings only fear and sorrow,” he added. “The time has come for government, leaders, and everyday Nigerians to demand peace, justice, and security for all.”

MI Abaga: “We can’t normalize this pain”  
Rapper and music executive Jude Abaga, better known as MI, also expressed heartbreak over the killings. In a deeply emotional post, he mourned the lives lost and urged Nigerians not to become numb to the violence.

“My heart is heavy,” MI wrote. “It grieves me to see so much of the Middle Belt bleed. These aren’t just numbers; these are people. Families. Communities.”

He urged citizens and leaders alike to break the cycle of violence, remember the dead, and support the living.

“To those we’ve lost: we will not forget you. To those still standing, we stand with



you,” he concluded.

Mr. Macaroni slams federal govt inaction  
Actor and activist Mr. Macaroni expressed anger over the government’s slow response. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), he wrote in disbelief:

“Over 200 Nigerians killed in Benue!!! 200 PEOPLE!!!!!! 200!!!!!! I don’t think we understand the gravity of this barbarism!!! What exactly is the Government doing??? 200 PEOPLE??? Just like that!!!!”

His comments reflect the deepening public frustration over perceived inaction by authorities, even as the death toll rises.

Falz accuses the President of failure  
Singer and activist Falz, known for using music to address social issues, also weighed in. He directly criticised the President for failing to protect citizens.

“You have consistently shown that you are incapable of performing the primary duty of securing lives and property of your citizens,” he wrote on X.. “This routine statement does not cut it.”

Falz, son of renowned lawyer Femi Falana, added, “Over 200 senselessly slain and burnt alive in Benue, and this is not even getting close to enough attention. Why are we so wicked to ourselves?”

Ayra Starr and Kate Henshaw join the awareness drive

Pop star Ayra Starr initially faced backlash for posting unrelated content while the

killings were trending. However, she later joined others in raising awareness by reposting tweets highlighting the atrocities. One of the posts she shared described the brutal murder of children as they slept.

Actress Kate Henshaw, known for her outspoken stance on national issues, also used her social media to amplify calls for peace. One tweet she reposted questioned the nation’s value for human life, especially in light of the ongoing violence in Benue.

Just days earlier, on June 12, Henshaw criticised Nigeria’s democratic system, saying it had failed to improve the lives of ordinary citizens.

A nation in mourning  
The renewed killings in Benue State have sparked widespread grief, anger, and calls for accountability. With celebrities joining the conversation, there is renewed hope that public pressure might force action.

Also, celebrities like 2Face, Sabinus, and Borisky have reacted too.

As more voices speak out, the question remains: will those in power finally take the necessary steps to bring peace to Benue and justice to its people?

Religion leaders also show their supports and feelings towards the massacre like, Apostle Femi Lazarus, Dr Paul Enenche, Apostle Johnson Suleman, Pastor Paul Adefarasin.



# 'I'm tired, mentally drained', Justin Bieber opens up

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Canadian pop sensation Justin Bieber has once again shed light on his ongoing mental health struggles, revealing in an emotional Instagram post that he feels mentally and emotionally drained.

In the post shared on Monday, the 30-year-old singer expressed deep frustration and fatigue, saying he is tired of constantly being told to "heal." Bieber admitted that the pressure to meet expectations, both from himself and others, has taken a toll on his well-being.

"I'm broken and exhausted"

"The more I try to grow, the more self-focused I become, and it's exhausting," Bieber wrote. "I'm tired of thinking about myself."

The singer, known for hits like Love Yourself and Peaches, went on to say that people around him continue to advise him to work on his healing. However, he explained that such advice, although well-meaning, often feels frustrating and overwhelming.

"People keep telling me to heal," he wrote. "Don't you think if I could have fixed myself, I would have already?"

Bieber continued by acknowledging that he knows he has issues, including anger, and that he's been trying to deal with them for years. But instead of finding peace, the journey has only left him more emotionally drained.

Struggling with expectations

"I know I'm broken, and I know I have anger issues," he admitted. "I've tried to do the work my whole life, to be like the people who told me I needed to be fixed like them. It just keeps making me more tired and more angry."

These statements reflect the toll that fame and public scrutiny have taken on Bieber's mental health. From an early age, the Canadian star has lived much of his life under the spotlight. While millions of fans adore him, Bieber has also faced immense pressure to maintain a perfect image.



Despite seeking help and making public efforts in recent years to address his mental health, through therapy, religion, and personal growth, the journey has not been easy.

Turning to faith

In the post, Bieber also shared that his faith in Jesus Christ is the only source of hope that keeps him going. He credited his belief in God for helping him shift his focus away from self-criticism and toward caring for others.

"Jesus is the only person who keeps me wanting to make my life about others," he wrote. "Because honestly, I'm exhausted with thinking about myself lately. Aren't you?"

This reflection highlights how Bieber is using his spirituality as a way to cope with the pressures and emotional pain he continues to face. It also serves as a reminder that, despite his global fame, he struggles with the same internal battles many people do.

A familiar topic for Bieber

This is not the first time Justin Bieber has spoken publicly about his mental health. In past interviews and posts, he has shared his experiences with anxiety, depression, and the emotional weight of growing up in the limelight.

He has previously admitted to making mistakes, including struggles with substance use, and has emphasised the importance of therapy and support from his wife, Hailey Bieber.

In 2020, Bieber released a docuseries titled Seasons, where he opened up further about his health, past traumas, and healing journey. In recent years, he has tried to lead a more grounded life, often speaking about the role of faith, love, and community in helping him navigate fame.

Sparking conversation

His latest message has sparked concern, empathy, and conversation among fans and mental health advocates online. Many have praised his openness, calling it brave and relatable. Others expressed concern for his well-being and urged him to seek continued support.

Mental health experts often emphasise that healing is not linear and that public figures speaking out can help reduce stigma.

With his candid words, Bieber reminds the world that mental health struggles don't discriminate, even for someone with money, fame, and success. His message is a powerful call for understanding, compassion, and honest dialogue.

# 'Herdsmen bigger than you', VeryDarkMan blasts Nigerian Govt

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian social critic and activist, VeryDarkMan, has condemned President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's reaction to the brutal killing of over 200 residents in Yelwata, a community in the Guma Local Government Area of Benue State.

According to reports by New Daily Prime, the victims were allegedly burned alive during a violent attack by suspected herdsmen. The tragic incident, which has drawn global outrage, is the latest in a string of violent clashes that have plagued the region.

Global and local outrage grows

The massacre has attracted strong condemnation both locally and internationally. Pope Leo was among the first to speak out. He described the killings as a "terrible massacre" and called for immediate justice for the victims.

Following the Pope's reaction, President Tinubu issued a statement condemning the attack and directing law enforcement agencies to arrest and prosecute those responsible. However, the President also urged the Benue State Government to begin a process of dialogue and reconciliation with the perpetrators, a move that has sparked public criticism.

VeryDarkMan: 'They are bigger than the president'

Reacting to the President's statement, VeryDarkMan questioned the logic behind negotiating with individuals responsible for such a horrific crime. In a strongly worded video posted on social media, he claimed that the attackers are "way bigger than the President."

"The same press release where the President called for arrests also asked Governor Alia to initiate peace talks with these killers. You want to dialogue with people who burn others alive? That alone shows you how powerful they are, more powerful than the President, the APC, the PDP, more powerful than everyone," he said.

Security agencies accused of turning a blind eye



The activist went on to accuse Nigeria's top security agencies of ignoring the crisis in Benue. He said it would be "clowning" to believe that the Director-General of the Department of State Services (DSS), the Inspector General of Police, and the heads of the armed forces are unaware of what has been happening.

"The only reason people are talking now is because I had to go there and show the video. Many Nigerians have become numb to the news of killings in Benue. That's what scares me most. Over 200 people were slaughtered, and no one talked about it. It didn't even trend," he lamented.

Details of the attack revealed

VeryDarkMan revealed shocking details about how the attackers carried out the massacre. According to him, they arrived with large containers of fuel and assault rifles, poured petrol on buildings, and set them ablaze while people were still inside.

"These people didn't just show up randomly. They came with AK-47s and gallons of fuel. When they opened the doors, they poured fuel inside and set everything on fire. The question is: how did they get into that community unnoticed? Where did they pass? Who allowed them access?" he asked.

Call for armed self-defence

In his video, the activist called on farmers and residents of Benue State to defend themselves, suggesting that they obtain licensed firearms.

"This has gone beyond what the government can handle. If the people of Benue don't protect themselves, no one will. Every farmer needs to get a gun, legally, and be ready to defend their lives and land," he urged.

Joined protest in Makurdi

On Sunday, VeryDarkMan joined hundreds of Benue youths in a protest held in Makurdi, the state capital. The demonstration aimed to raise awareness about the killings and to demand stronger action from both state and federal governments.

The protesters called for justice, improved security, and immediate government intervention. Many carried placards with messages such as "Stop the killings in Benue" and "We want justice now."

As the death toll continues to rise and communities live in fear, many Nigerians are demanding not just justice but also long-term solutions to end the cycle of violence that has plagued Benue and other parts of the country.



# UK MPs vote to decriminalise abortion for women in landmark move

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



In a major shift in UK reproductive law, Members of Parliament have voted in favour of removing criminal penalties for women who terminate their own pregnancies.

The House of Commons backed Labour MP Tonia Antoniazzi's amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill by a vote of 379 to 137, a commanding majority of 242. The move effectively begins the process of decriminalising abortion, reframing it as a healthcare matter rather than a criminal offence.

Speaking in Parliament, Ms Antoniazzi said the amendment would end the threat of "investigation, arrest, prosecution or imprisonment" for women making decisions about their own pregnancies. Her campaign was driven by recent cases where women faced police investigations after experiencing suspected illegal abortions.

"This is the right change at the right time," she said. "Not a single desperate woman should ever again be subjected to traumatic, criminal investigation at the worst moments in their lives."

Key Points of the Reform

- The 24-week legal limit for abortion remains unchanged.
- Two doctors must still approve the procedure.
- Healthcare professionals acting outside the law and abusive partners using violence to end pregnancies will still face prosecution.
- No legal penalty will apply to women who end their pregnancies on their own, including through the use of prescribed medication.

Justice Minister Alex Davies-Jones confirmed the Government would respect the outcome of the vote and ensure any law passed is legally sound and workable.

Although the Government maintained a neutral stance, several senior Cabinet ministers, including Ed Miliband, Liz Kendall, John Healey, and Jo Stevens, voted in favour of the amendment. Meanwhile, high-profile Tories such as Kemi Badenoch opposed it, highlighting ongoing division on the issue.

## Public and Organisational Reaction

The move was hailed as a "landmark moment" by the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS). CEO Heidi Stewart called it the most significant change since the 1967 Abortion Act, saying, "No more women will be dragged

from hospital beds to police vans, or separated from their children due to outdated laws."

However, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) condemned the vote, warning it could allow terminations at any stage of pregnancy without legal consequence. "This strips away even the limited protections we had," said SPUC spokesperson Alithea Williams.

The amendment must now pass through the House of Lords before becoming law. It does not apply to Scotland, where a separate review of abortion laws is underway.

Meanwhile, alternative proposals — including one from Labour MP Stella Creasy to fully repeal 19th-century abortion laws — were defeated. A third proposal, from Conservative MP Dr Caroline Johnson, which sought mandatory in-person consultations, was also rejected.

As debate continues, the decision marks a pivotal moment in the UK's approach to women's reproductive rights — with potential cultural and political ripple effects still unfolding.

# U.S. won't kill Iran supreme leader 'for now' — Trump

By New Daily Prime



President Donald Trump dramatically stepped up his rhetoric against Iran's supreme leader Tuesday, saying on social media that the United States knows where Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is located but will not kill him "for now."

In another post, Trump also appeared to demand Iran's "UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER!" as he fueled questions about whether the United States would join Israel's attacks on Tehran's leadership and nuclear facilities.

"We know exactly where the so-called 'Supreme Leader' is hiding. He is an easy target, but is safe there — We are not going to take him out (kill!), at least not for now," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

"But we don't want missiles shot at civilians, or American soldiers. Our patience is wearing thin. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" said Trump.

Minutes later the US president followed up with another message simply saying: "UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER!"

Trump flew back early from the G7 summit in Canada late Monday as the conflict between Iran and key US ally Israel escalated, and was set to meet top officials in the White House Situation Room on Tuesday.

The US president has so far stressed that his country is not getting involved in the conflict, and has said that Iran could still take a deal to end its nuclear program that he had proposed before Israel's

attacks.

But Trump has given mounting signals that Washington's intervention in some form may now be imminent.

Trump said Tuesday that "we" have "complete and total control of the skies over Iran," hailing the use of US-made weaponry without explicitly mentioning Israel.

Israel, the closest US ally in the Middle East, had recently made a similar claim.

Earlier, Trump told reporters on Air Force One while returning from Canada that he wanted "a real end, not a ceasefire" to the Iran-Israel conflict, and warning that "I'm not in too much of a mood to negotiate."



# Asylum seekers linked to recent grooming gang cases

By **Fatimah Idera**

A significant number of live police investigations into child sex grooming gangs involve asylum seekers and foreign nationals, according to a hard-hitting government-commissioned report released Monday.

The 200-page audit by Baroness Louise Casey warns that public institutions have consistently failed to confront the true scale of group-based child sexual exploitation, with police and councils accused of downplaying the involvement of Asian grooming gangs for fear of being labelled racist.

Commissioned following public outrage earlier this year, the report prompted an embarrassing U-turn from Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, who had previously rejected calls for a national inquiry. Starmer has now announced a full statutory inquiry, alongside a nationwide investigation led by the National Crime Agency.

Baroness Casey accused local authorities and law enforcement of systematic denial and of suppressing concerns first raised as early as 2009. She noted that despite repeated scandals—such as the abuse of at least 1,400 children in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013—little has changed.

“Public bodies have repeatedly used flawed or absent data to dismiss reports of Asian grooming gangs as sensationalist or biased,” she said. “This not only silences victims but also harms law-abiding members of Asian communities.”

Her review revealed that ethnicity data was missing in two-thirds of abuse cases. But in the three police forces that did collect such data, men of Asian and specifically Pakistani heritage were significantly overrepresented among suspects.

Casey also criticised officials for their reluctance to address the ethnic dimensions of grooming due to fears of inflaming community tensions.

One of the most alarming findings was that a “significant proportion” of suspects in active grooming gang investigations were non-UK nationals or asylum seekers. Yet, no official government body including the Office for National Statistics or Ministry of Justice records



crime data based on nationality or immigration status.

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp responded by calling the findings deeply troubling. He blamed the government for failing to secure the UK’s borders and said offenders must not be allowed to use human rights laws to avoid deportation.

The UK received a record 84,200 asylum applications last year. So far this year, over 14,600 migrants have crossed the Channel in small boats a 30% increase compared to the same period in 2024.

Unveiling the report in the House of Commons, Home Secretary Yvette Cooper accepted all of Baroness Casey’s recommendations. She promised to begin collecting ethnicity and nationality data for all child exploitation suspects, improve data collection on victims, and reopen 800 cold cases potentially rising to 1,000.

She issued a full apology to victims and pledged accountability for those who had concealed or mishandled the issue over the years.

“For over 20 years, institutions have failed to treat children as children,” said Cooper. “There has been denial, flawed data, and too many perpetrators walking free while victims were left traumatised and unheard.”

She revealed that some victims were as young as 10 years old, with children with

learning difficulties being especially targeted. In some cases, agencies protected abusers more than the vulnerable children they exploited.

“The blind eye turned by authorities is nothing short of a national disgrace,” she said. “Those who covered this up must face justice.”

The national inquiry marks a political reversal for Sir Keir Starmer, who just five months ago dismissed calls for such an investigation as pandering to far-Right narratives. His shift came under mounting pressure from opposition leaders and child protection advocates.

Kemi Badenoch, Conservative Party leader, criticised the Prime Minister’s delayed response: “The PM’s handling of this scandal represents an extraordinary failure of leadership. Only after relentless pressure has he accepted the need for a full statutory inquiry.”

The inquiry is expected to last around three years—shorter than the Covid-19 inquiry but will have a wide remit across England and Wales.

Baroness Casey concluded that “too much denial, too little justice, and too many criminals walking free” defined the UK’s response so far. She called for a complete reset in how child exploitation is investigated and addressed.

# Trump, Starmer seal US-UK trade deal

By **Fatimah Idera**



**T**he United States of America President Donald Trump and the United Kingdom Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer have confirmed that a long-anticipated trade deal between the two nations has been signed and finalised during the G7 summit held in the Canadian Rockies.

“We signed it, and it’s done,” President Trump told reporters, holding up a copy of the agreement. “It’s a fair deal for both [countries]. It’ll produce a lot of jobs, a lot of income.”

As the two leaders exited a mountain lodge, several pages of the agreement fell loose from the folder. Sir Keir bent to collect them, calling it “a very important document.” He later described the deal as a real sign of strength and said it would reduce tariffs in key sectors, notably cars and aerospace.

“This is a very good day for both of our countries,” he said. “This document implements the framework to cut tariffs and protect vital industries. It’s a

sign of what our partnership can achieve.”

President Trump added that the UK would be very well protected against future tariffs, commenting, “You know why? Because I like them.” However, he declined to confirm whether existing tariffs on British steel exports to the US would be fully removed, saying, “We’re gonna let you have that information in a little while.”

Trump praised Starmer’s leadership, saying, “We’ve been talking about this deal for six years, and he’s done what they haven’t been able to do.” He also noted the strong relationship forming between the two leaders: “He’s slightly more liberal than me, to put it mildly... but we get along.”

Sir Keir echoed the sentiment: “We make it work.”

At one point during the press appearance, Trump mistakenly referred to a trade agreement with the European Union before correcting

himself.

The agreement follows a series of earlier announcements. In April, President Trump introduced his Liberation Day tariffs, including 10% reciprocal duties on UK exports and an additional 25% tariffs on automobiles and steel. In May, Trump and Starmer jointly announced in a televised call that the deal had been agreed in principle, pending final details.

Speaking ahead of the G7 summit, Sir Keir emphasised the importance of securing the deal, particularly for protecting jobs and industry. He confirmed he would meet the US president for one-on-one talks to finalise terms and discuss implementation.

The signed agreement marks the culmination of years of negotiations and is expected to have a significant impact on transatlantic trade and industrial cooperation.



# TV presenter Kim Woodburn dies at 83

By Fatimah Idera



**T**V personality Kim Woodburn has died at the age of 83, her manager has confirmed. She passed away on Monday following a short illness.

Woodburn became a household name as the co-presenter of Channel 4's *How Clean Is Your House*, where she shared practical cleaning advice alongside Aggie MacKenzie from 2003 to 2009.

Her sharp wit and no-nonsense style made her a fan favourite, leading to further appearances on popular reality shows.

She was the runner-up on *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!* in 2009 and finished in third place on *Celebrity Big Brother* in 2017. Her stint on *Loose Women* also made headlines, particularly after a heated exchange with panellist Coleen Nolan.

Woodburn's family speaks  
In a statement, a family representative said: "It is with immense sadness that we let you know our beloved Kim Woodburn passed away yesterday following a short illness. Kim was an incredibly

kind, caring, charismatic and strong person. Her husband Peter is heartbroken at the loss of his soulmate.

"We are so proud of the amazing things Kim achieved in her life and career. We kindly ask that Kim's husband and close friends be given the time and privacy they need to grieve. We will not be releasing any further details."

Woodburn's legacy remains tied to her vibrant television presence, her candid personality, and her impact on British reality TV.

# Syrian doctor sentenced to life in Germany for war crimes and crimes against humanity

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

In a landmark ruling, a German court has sentenced a Syrian doctor to life imprisonment for committing crimes against humanity, including murder and torture, during Syria's brutal civil war. The case marks one of the most significant applications of the international legal principle of universal jurisdiction, allowing prosecution for war crimes committed abroad.

Dr. Alaa Mousa, 40, was found guilty by Frankfurt's higher regional court of two counts of murder and eight counts of severe torture while serving as a junior doctor in military hospitals and intelligence prisons in the Syrian cities of Homs and Damascus between 2011 and 2012. His victims were detainees accused of opposing President Bashar al-Assad's regime during the early stages of the Arab Spring uprising.

Presiding judge Christoph Koller delivered the maximum sentence permitted under German law. In a scathing assessment, he described Mousa as "sadistic," citing expert testimony that highlighted the doctor's apparent enjoyment in inflicting pain on individuals he deemed inferior.

"Above all, the accused enjoyed harming people that he considered inferior and of lower value to himself," Koller stated during sentencing. "He seriously injured nine people, both physically and mentally, and killed two."

Graphic witness accounts described Mousa's brutal methods. Survivors testified that he beat, kicked, and burned them, sometimes using flammable liquids. One 14 year old boy had his genitals set on fire. Another victim died after Mousa injected him with a deadly poison



during an altercation. In another case, a young epileptic man died after Mousa administered a fatal pill following a beating.

The court proceedings stretched over three and a half years, with more than 50 witnesses, many testifying over several days, courageously recounting their trauma. Prosecutors praised the resilience and bravery of the survivors, acknowledging the threats and intimidation many had faced before and during the trial.

Senior public prosecutor Anna Zabeck told the court that the victims and their families had endured immense pressure, including threats from Syria, in an attempt to silence them. "The witnesses were asked to give almost everything during their testimony," she said. "They revisited unspeakable violence that left permanent scars."

Mousa, who moved to Germany in 2015 and worked in several clinics as an orthopaedic doctor, was arrested in 2020 after being recognized in a television documentary by some of his former victims. His trial began in January 2022 and spanned nearly 190 days of hearings.

Though he pleaded not guilty and claimed he was the target of a conspiracy, the court rejected his defence. His lawyers argued that he was not in Homs at the time of the murders, but the evidence against him, combined with consistent witness testimonies, proved damning.

Prosecutor Christina Schlepp dismissed claims of collusion among witnesses. "There were no signs they had wanted to incriminate him falsely," she said.

Germany's federal prosecutors pushed for life imprisonment with a rare addition of preventive detention, a mechanism that ensures Mousa will remain behind bars beyond the usual 15-year maximum term if deemed a continuing threat to society.

This case sets a powerful precedent for holding perpetrators of wartime atrocities accountable, regardless of borders. It reinforces Germany's position as a global leader in prosecuting international crimes, particularly those committed under authoritarian regimes.



# From Lagos to Aarhus: Olalere leads historic promotion

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

In a remarkable journey that bridges the bustling streets of Lagos and the football fields of Denmark, 24-year-old Nigerian defender Oluwatobiloba Olalere has carved his name into history by leading Aarhus Fremad FC to promotion into the Danish First Division after a 19-year absence.

Olalere, born and raised in Lagos, has been an inspirational figure throughout the season, earning the club's Best Player of the Season award—an outstanding achievement for a foreign defender in a highly competitive European league. His consistent performances, leadership, and defensive mastery were central to Aarhus Fremad's success.

## A Dream Realized

Olalere's rise from humble beginnings to professional football stardom is a story of perseverance and dedication. Growing up playing barefoot football in the lively neighborhoods of Lagos, he faced challenges common to many African talents: limited exposure, scarce training facilities, and fierce competition. Yet his commitment and belief never wavered.

"This promotion isn't just for the club, it's for every young boy playing barefoot in the streets of Lagos dreaming of Europe," Olalere said during an emotional post-match interview. "I've worked hard, stayed disciplined, and kept my faith. Today, it all paid off."

## A Defensive Pillar

On the pitch, Olalere's influence has been transformative. Acting as the defensive cornerstone of Aarhus Fremad, his ability to anticipate opposition attacks, make crucial interceptions, and organize the backline turned the team into one of the stingiest defensive units in the league. The club recorded the lowest number of goals conceded, a testament to his leadership and skill.



Head Coach Morten Møller praised Olalere's impact: "He brings a rare combination of grit, intelligence, and leadership. Tobi's presence lifted everyone—on and off the pitch."

## Representing Nigerian Excellence Abroad

Olalere's success story shines brightly amid a growing number of Nigerian players making waves in Europe. Unlike the flashy forwards or midfielders grabbing headlines, his journey reflects the importance of defensive discipline and quiet consistency—qualities often overlooked but vital to team success.

His ascent also highlights the potential within Nigeria's grassroots football, where many young talents dream of breaking into European leagues. Olalere's achievement sends a message that hard work and patience can overcome obstacles.

## The Road Ahead

With Aarhus Fremad's promotion secured, the club now prepares for the challenges of the Danish First Division, where competition will be tougher, and stakes higher. Olalere's role is expected

to grow as he helps the team adapt to the elevated level of play.

Rumors have already begun circulating about interest from top-tier Danish and Scandinavian clubs keen on securing Olalere's signature. However, the defender remains focused on his current club's ambitions.

"I'm just grateful. I want to keep improving and helping this club achieve more. Promotion is just the beginning," Olalere said.

## A Symbol of Hope

Oluwatobiloba Olalere's journey from Lagos to Aarhus serves as a powerful symbol of hope and inspiration for many young footballers in Nigeria and across Africa. His story demonstrates that with talent, hard work, and unwavering belief, even the loftiest dreams can become reality.

As the Danish football season approaches, all eyes will be on Olalere to see how he performs at the next level. For now, his remarkable rise stands as a testament to the growing impact of Nigerian players abroad—and the bright future that awaits.

# Fifa faces criticism over missing anti-racism message at Club World Cup

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Fifa has come under fire from campaigners and human rights groups for its apparent decision to downplay anti-racism messaging during the recent Club World Cup held in the United States. This has raised questions about whether the shift is linked to the political climate in the host country, particularly the policies introduced by US President Donald Trump.

In previous tournaments such as the Qatar 2022 World Cup, Fifa prominently supported anti-discrimination efforts, including the use of “no discrimination” armbands worn by players. Furthermore, Fifa recently introduced a revised disciplinary code aimed at combating racism more effectively through stricter bans and heavier financial penalties.

However, the 2024 Club World Cup has seen a noticeable absence of direct anti-racism messaging during matches. Instead, Fifa promoted a broader campaign titled “Football Unites the World,” which focuses on the unifying power of football but lacks explicit emphasis on fighting discrimination and racism.

Reports from The Athletic revealed that Fifa had prepared promotional material for a dedicated anti-racism campaign for the tournament but ultimately chose not to use it. The governing body has yet to officially comment on this decision.

Piara Powar, executive director of the campaign group Fare, expressed disappointment at the lack of clear anti-discrimination messaging during the Club World Cup. “It is disappointing that it appears there will be no anti-discrimination messaging throughout the tournament,” Powar said. “Such messaging has historically been well received by supporters, players, and civil society. It’s more than a shame that a message of inclusion can’t be broadcast to the world, especially without informing key stakeholders.”

Powar suggested that the volatile political environment in the United States, where President Trump has moved to dismantle diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs, might have influenced Fifa’s approach. Since taking office in January, Trump’s administration has directed federal agencies and several large corporations to end or scale back DEI initiatives, raising concerns about the broader social climate.



In response, a Fifa spokesperson highlighted the organization’s commitment to fighting discrimination and racism. “‘Football Unites the World’ is Fifa’s main global campaign, displayed in all Club World Cup stadiums and on Fifa’s social platforms,” the spokesperson said. “We have a firm, zero-tolerance stance against all forms of discrimination and racism.”

The statement further emphasized the enforcement of Fifa’s anti-discrimination protocols during the Club World Cup, including the three-step procedure empowering referees to take escalating actions against discriminatory behavior by fans or participants. Additionally, Fifa’s social media protection service continues to support clubs, players, and officials.

Evan Whitfield, chair of the Human Rights Soccer Alliance (HRSA), a US-based coalition of former players, lawyers, and grassroots groups, criticized Fifa’s apparent retreat from explicit anti-racism messaging. “Soccer exists in a space where values of non-discrimination and inclusion are clear, but they need to be consistently underlined to the world,” Whitfield said. “A basic message like ‘football unites the world’ doesn’t communicate the urgency of combating racism clearly enough.”

Whitfield stressed that Fifa should maintain consistent messaging regardless of the host nation’s political climate. “If Fifa can have strong anti-racism campaigns in countries like Russia,

Qatar, New Zealand, and Australia, the same standard should apply in the United States. This is a global soccer issue, not one dictated by politics.”

The timing of this controversy coincided with a powerful gesture from Los Angeles-based Angel City FC, who wore shirts reading “Immigrant City Football Club” before their National Women’s Soccer League game against North Carolina. This was a statement of solidarity amid ongoing immigration raids and protests in the city, underscoring football’s role in community and social issues.

Anti-discrimination group Kick It Out expressed concern over Fifa’s decision, calling for the governing body to reconsider. “Fifa’s apparent decision to drop its anti-discrimination messaging at the Club World Cup is worrying, especially after recent campaigns highlighting its importance,” Kick It Out said in a statement. “Football has unique power to bring communities together, and visibility of Fifa’s anti-discrimination campaigns while the world is watching is crucial.”

As the global football community prepares for the next World Cup, questions remain about how Fifa will balance its campaigns against discrimination with the political realities of host countries. Campaigners urge Fifa to uphold consistent, strong anti-racism messaging to reinforce football’s role as a force for inclusion worldwide.



# Excitement builds as NPFL 2025/26 kicks off August 22

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



As the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) prepares to kick off the 2025/26 season on August 22, excitement is growing among football fans, players, and coaches nationwide. Following a historic 2024/25 campaign in which Remo Stars became the first privately owned club to win the league, expectations are high for another competitive and thrilling season.

## Looking Back at Last Season

The previous season marked a significant milestone in Nigerian football. Remo Stars' league triumph as a private club showcased a new era of professionalism and competitiveness, challenging the dominance of traditional government-backed teams.

Meanwhile, Ikorodu City FC impressed many by having a strong showing throughout the season. As relative newcomers, they secured a respectable mid-table finish, demonstrating that newly promoted teams can compete effectively in the NPFL.

Fans applauded the competitive balance of the league, noting the excitement

brought by emerging clubs and the fierce battles across the table. Many agree that last season helped raise the profile and appeal of the NPFL.

## Expectations for the New Season

Heading into the new season, all eyes will be on Remo Stars as they look to defend their title. Other clubs have been active in the transfer market, bolstering their squads to challenge for the crown.

There is hope among fans and analysts that improvements in league organization, stadium facilities, and officiating will continue, enhancing the quality and professionalism of Nigerian club football.

## Promoted Teams and New Challenges

The upcoming season will feature fresh faces, including promoted teams eager to make their mark in the top flight. These clubs will aim to avoid immediate relegation and establish themselves in the league.

With a mix of experienced sides and ambitious newcomers, the NPFL promises a dynamic and competitive

environment. The promoted clubs have expressed determination to compete strongly and earn their place among Nigeria's football elite.

## Voices Across the League

Coaches and analysts have noted the progress of the league in recent years, particularly praising the increased competitiveness and professionalism. The success of privately owned clubs like Remo Stars is viewed as a positive step that could attract more investment into Nigerian football.

Fans remain passionate and hopeful that the NPFL continues to grow, with more games broadcast live and increased engagement across the country.

## Looking Ahead

As the new season approaches, anticipation is high for thrilling matches, emerging talents, and unforgettable moments on the pitch. With a healthy mix of established powerhouses, newly promoted challengers, and private clubs making waves, Nigerian football stands on the brink of a promising new chapter.

# Levy: sacking Postecoglou was tough but necessary

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Tottenham Hotspur chairman Daniel Levy has opened up about the emotional challenge of parting ways with manager Ange Postecoglou, just weeks after the Australian led the club to a historic Europa League triumph.

Postecoglou was dismissed only 16 days following Spurs' 1-0 victory over Manchester United in Bilbao, which secured the club's first major trophy in 17 years. Despite this landmark success, Spurs endured a dismal Premier League campaign, finishing 17th, sparking calls for change. Former Brentford boss Thomas Frank was swiftly appointed as Postecoglou's successor.

Levy expressed his gratitude for Postecoglou's contributions during his two-season spell at Tottenham. "I don't regret appointing Ange, I'm very grateful to him. In his first season, we finished fifth, and in his second, we were over the moon to win a trophy," Levy told the club's media team.

However, Levy stressed the club's ambition to compete strongly on all fronts as the key reason for the managerial shift. "We need to compete in all competitions, and we felt that we needed a change. Emotionally it was difficult but we feel that we've made the right decision for the club."

Postecoglou's departure adds to the revolving door of managers under Levy, who has overseen 13 permanent appointments during his 25 years as chairman. Yet Levy remains resolute about his vision and leadership. "I've got very broad shoulders. Failure is not an option, the desire to succeed is everything. Because it's so difficult, I want to succeed even more."

Levy and newly-appointed chief executive Vinai Venkatesham were deeply involved in the recruitment process for the new manager. They conducted a thorough and swift search, considering more than 30 candidates before settling on Frank, who had spent seven successful years at Brentford.

Venkatesham explained, "We defined 10 characteristics important for success at



Tottenham. We analyzed every candidate in detail, and Thomas was absolutely the number one choice. We couldn't be more excited to have him join the club."

Frank, 51, has signed a contract keeping him at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium until 2028, a deal reflecting the club's faith in his long-term vision and ability to develop young talent. "One of the things I'm most excited about is that he's an outstanding developer of young players. I really look forward to seeing what he can do with the squad we have here," Venkatesham added.

Levy praised Frank's qualities beyond his tactical acumen, highlighting his intelligence, communication skills, and character. "Whenever you have a new coach, it's always a fresh start. There are always different ideas, but we want to build on the success of winning a trophy last season. Thomas is clearly highly intelligent, a great communicator, a super human being, plus all the technical aspects, which are obviously important."

The appointment of Thomas Frank signals a new chapter for Tottenham, as the club seeks stability and growth after a turbulent campaign. With the experience of managing Brentford in the Premier

League and a reputation for nurturing young talent, Frank could be the ideal candidate to balance immediate competitiveness with long-term development.

Tottenham supporters remain cautiously optimistic as the club looks to translate European success into consistent domestic performance. Levy's admission of the emotional toll the Postecoglou sacking took highlights the complexity of managing expectations at one of England's top clubs.

As Frank settles in, Spurs' priority will be to improve their league standing and maintain a competitive edge in Europe. Levy's leadership will be crucial in ensuring the club remains ambitious and focused, combining footballing success with sustainable growth.

In summary, while the decision to part ways with a trophy-winning manager was painful, Tottenham's board believes it was necessary to achieve their goals. The appointment of Thomas Frank, a manager known for intelligence and player development, represents a fresh start as Spurs aim to build on their recent success and return to the Premier League's upper echelons.



# FA charges former referee David Coote over Klopp video

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Former Premier League referee David Coote has been charged by the Football Association (FA) over inappropriate comments he made about ex-Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp in a video leaked on social media. The 42-year-old, who was suspended in November 2024 and later sacked by the Premier League referees' body, now faces formal disciplinary action under FA rule E3.1 for alleged improper conduct and use of abusive and insulting language.

The controversy began in late 2024 when a video surfaced showing Coote making derogatory remarks about Klopp, including an "aggravated" breach related to referencing Klopp's nationality. The video quickly went viral, sparking outrage among football fans and officials. Coote's employer at the time, Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL), conducted a thorough investigation and dismissed him in December 2024.

In addition to the comments about Klopp, Coote was also accused of discussing issuing a yellow card to a player before a match, a potential gambling-related misconduct. However, the FA cleared him of any wrongdoing on that front. Coote strongly denied these allegations, calling them "false and defamatory."

Earlier this year, Coote was banned by UEFA from officiating European matches until June 30, 2026. This followed the emergence of a video from Euro 2024 showing Coote sniffing a white powder substance while on duty, further fueling controversy around his conduct.

Coote, originally from Nottinghamshire, made headlines in January 2025 when he publicly came out as gay. He revealed he had concealed his sexuality during his refereeing career due to fears of abuse and discrimination. In an interview with a major newspaper, he also admitted to struggling with drug



addiction, a habit he has since overcome through therapy.

Despite these personal challenges, the leaked video and his comments about Klopp have left a lasting stain on Coote's reputation within the football community. The FA now holds jurisdiction over his case as the comments surfaced while he was still an active official.

Under FA rules, if Coote admits guilt, an independent regulatory commission will decide his punishment, which could include fines or suspension from football activities. If he denies the charges, the commission will review the evidence and make a ruling accordingly.

The FA disciplinary regulations state that failure to pay any fines within the prescribed deadline will result in an automatic 25% increase in the fine amount. Continued non-payment for more than 35 days could lead to a suspension from all football-related activities until the debt is settled.

Currently, Coote is not involved in any

football activities. The FA's jurisdiction applies because the video was recorded and made public while he was still an active referee. If he were to make similar comments now while outside the football industry, the FA would not have authority to sanction him.

The case highlights the ongoing issues of professionalism and conduct in football officiating. Coote's situation serves as a reminder of the high standards referees must uphold both on and off the pitch.

As the disciplinary process unfolds, many in the football world await the commission's decision. The outcome will likely have implications for how football authorities handle cases of misconduct by officials, especially in the era of social media where private moments can quickly become public controversies.

David Coote's story is a complex one—marked by personal struggles, career highs, and significant lows. His upcoming hearing will determine his future within football and send a clear message about accountability and respect in the sport.