



Obi: I rejected N120m house gift, chose classrooms instead **Pg 2**

Shettima: Deforestation threatens Nigeria's economy, global trade access **Pg 4**



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Aisha Yesufu to join Natasha at Senate amid suspension dispute **Pg 6**



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Obi: I rejected N120m house gift, chose classrooms instead

By Damilola Olufemi



The Labour Party's 2023 presidential candidate, Peter Obi, says he once turned down a ₦120 million house gift during his tenure as governor of Anambra State, choosing instead to have classrooms built in its place.

Obi, who marked his 64th birthday on Saturday, July 19, made this known while expressing gratitude to Nigerians for their birthday wishes.

Though appreciative of the goodwill shown, he explained that he does not indulge in birthday celebrations and would rather see such gestures redirected to projects that serve the public good.

"I recall vividly when I turned 50 during my time as governor. One institution offered to build me a house in the village. When I asked for the cost, they said ₦120 million. I requested that the funds be used instead to build classrooms in three institutions across Agulu, Ekwulobia and Abatete. They obliged — and the impact

was far-reaching," he said.

Obi added that another group once planned a ₦20 million birthday celebration in his honour, which he also declined. Instead, he asked that the money be used to support education.

"They eventually donated 200 desktop computers, which we distributed to schools across Anambra," he recalled.

In a similar instance, Obi said an organisation that had intended to host a birthday event ended up donating buses to educational institutions and the iconic Old Rangers Association.

Obi, who spent his birthday in Rome, said he used the moment to pray for Nigeria and its leaders, urging for more compassion and justice in governance.

"The scale of suffering and deprivation among our people makes the idea of personal merriment difficult to contemplate," he said.

"This is why I have again asked those who wish to celebrate me to channel their goodwill to support the poor or struggling institutions in health and education.

"May we all find strength and grace to keep striving for a more just, compassionate, and equitable society."

Obi's lifestyle generates public interest. Obi's lifestyle, often described as modest, has continued to generate public interest.

Recently, he shared that he has no domestic staff and personally serves guests in his home — a comment that followed the circulation of videos showing him serving food at a charity event in Imo State.

Back in 2017, Obi also revealed that he owned only one wristwatch, which he had used for 17 years, and just two pairs of black shoes.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
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9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
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
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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14X2	109,500.00
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10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
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
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
5X3	57,819.00
5X2	40,379.50
4X4	55,000.00
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POLITICAL COLOUR

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10X5	192,305.50
10X4	142,787.50
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PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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QUARTER PAGE	84,641.50
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10X5	201,600.00
10X4	149,440.00
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9X4	137,875.00
9X3	112,875.00
8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
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3X2	19,750.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	6,500.00
1X1	3,292.00

PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

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10X5	162,222.445
10X4	103,963.00
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9X6	162,222.445
9X5	168,191.50
9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
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6X4	65,000.00
6X3	41,124.50
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5X6	71,378.00
5X4	42,825.00
5X3	29,858.00
5X2	22,841.00
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4X3	N/A
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3X2	14,923.00
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CONTACT US

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

E-mail Address:
info@newdailyprime.news
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Shettima: Deforestation threatens Nigeria's economy, global trade access

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has issued a warning about the severe economic consequences of deforestation in Nigeria.

He revealed that over 90% of the nation's original forest cover has been depleted, with an alarming annual loss of more than 400,000 hectares.

"This is not just an environmental crisis; it is an economic emergency," Shettima declared on Monday while inaugurating the Nigeria Forest Economy Summit 2025 in Abuja.

The summit, themed "Sustainability of Nigeria's Forests: Unlocking the \$2 billion potentials for economic and financial inclusion," was organised by the Presidential Committee on Economic and Financial Inclusion (PreCEFI) Secretariat.

Represented by Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Ibrahim Hadejia, he emphasised that neglecting forest resources directly impoverishes the nation.

He underscored the immense, yet largely untapped, potential of Nigeria's forests as a 'treasure trove of biodiversity, timber, medicinal plants, and other valuable products that underpin agriculture, trade, health, climate resilience, and finance.'

Shettima highlighted global examples, pointing out that Vietnam earns over \$15 billion annually from forest exports, Brazil's Amazon contributes 15% to its GDP from forests alone, and Ethiopia has generated 350,000 jobs through reforestation.

He urged Nigeria to not only replicate these successes but to lead Africa's forest industrialisation.

He also warned of impending European Union regulations that would forbid imports from lands deforested within five years, stressing that Nigeria risks losing market access if it does not immediately embrace sustainable forest management.

Shettima called for innovation and greater inclusion, suggesting that embedding financial services within forest-based livelihoods would enhance access to credit, savings, insurance, and digital tools.



This, he said, will make 30 million Nigerians who remain financially excluded, particularly women and girls.

He envisioned eco-industrial parks dedicated to bamboo, shea butter, medicinal plants, and carbon verification emerging as key economic drivers, urging attendees to turn trees into trillions and forests into futures.

He expressed hope that the summit would mark a turning point for investing, innovating, and industrialising Nigeria's forest economy.

Tech solutions and govt partnerships

Also speaking at the summit, Dr Sadiq Sani, Founder and CEO of Netzence Sustainability Limited, pledged to leverage technology to unlock over \$2 billion in potential from Nigeria's forestry sector.

"Netzence is contributing to providing the technology needed to unlock the potential of our \$2 billion for Nigerian forestry," Sani stated.

He elaborated on the company's core aim to measure greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions using proprietary technology called "CloseCarbon" to facilitate the realisation of carbon credits.

Sani explained that Netzence is developing models based on forest composition and decomposition to accurately assess emissions and calculate potential carbon credit values within forestry environments.

He confirmed active partnerships with the Federal Government, including the

Presidency, the Federal Ministry of Livestock Development, and the Ministry of Environment, to analyse greenhouse gas composition and monetise carbon credits.

Nurudeen Zauro, Technical Advisor to the President on Economic and Financial Inclusion and Secretary of PreCEFI, provided insight into the broader government vision, stating that identifying and unlocking untapped opportunities for inclusivity is a key part of President Bola Tinubu's agenda.

He emphasised that the summit's essence was to gather various stakeholders, including the Border Community Development Agency and WEN Synergy, to expose the immense economic potential of Nigeria's forests for sustainable economic and financial inclusion, aligning with the President's renewed economic agenda.

George Kelly, Executive Secretary of the Border Communities Development Agency, highlighted the vastness of Nigeria's forest wealth, noting that the country possesses over 10.6 million hectares of natural, planted, and reserve forests.

He projected that properly managed, this could yield more than \$2 billion annually, potentially reaching \$5.3 billion to \$10.5 billion, or even up to \$6 billion annually, which could significantly fund several states and alleviate rural poverty.

Kelly indicated that the next step involves consolidating data from all relevant government forestry agencies to facilitate actionable strategies.

Presidency denies Muhammed Babangida rejected BOA appointment, confirms his acceptance

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Presidency has denied reports that Muhammed Babangida, son of former military Head of State Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB), rejected his recent appointment as Chairman of the Bank of Agriculture (BOA) by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Contrary to claims made in a letter circulated on social media, presidential media aide Olusegun Dada stated via X (formerly Twitter) on Monday that Muhammed Babangida has accepted the appointment and expressed gratitude to the President.

“Muhammed Babangida has officially accepted his appointment as Chairman of the Bank of Agriculture (BOA), expressing deep gratitude to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for the trust reposed in him,” Dada wrote.

He further described reports of Babangida rejecting the role as false and malicious, aimed at misleading the public and undermining the credibility of the Tinubu administration.

Conflicting Letter

Despite the Presidency’s statement, a

letter dated 21 July 2025 and shared online by Dele Momodu, publisher of Ovation Magazine and a recent defector to the African Democratic Congress (ADC), appeared to contradict this. In the letter titled “Declining Appointment as Chairman, Bank of Agriculture”, Muhammed Babangida purportedly declined the role due to “personal and professional considerations.”

“After careful reflection and consultation, I have decided, with utmost respect, to decline the appointment,” the letter read.

“It stems from a convergence of personal and professional considerations, which, at this time, would not allow me to serve with the level of focus and commitment the position rightly demands.”

Momodu praised the alleged rejection on Instagram, calling the appointment a “Greek gift” and congratulating Babangida for distancing himself from it.

Political Fallout

The situation has sparked controversy, with the ADC accusing President Tinubu of attempting to ‘buy’ Northern Nigeria ahead of the 2027 general election, citing

the strategic nature of recent appointments.

In response, the Presidency reaffirmed its commitment to transparency and accountability and promised to investigate and identify those responsible for spreading the “fake news.”

“We remain committed to transparency, accountability, and fostering unity within our nation,” the Presidency said.

“Those spreading these falsehoods will be thoroughly investigated and brought to justice.”

Background

Muhammed Babangida’s appointment was announced just two days ago as part of a broader set of strategic leadership changes across key government institutions. His involvement was seen by many as a move to bring technocratic and northern elite engagement into the Tinubu administration.

As of press time, Muhammed Babangida himself has not issued a direct personal statement, leaving room for further speculation amid conflicting narratives.

Aisha Yesufu to join Natasha at Senate amid suspension dispute

By Damilola Olufemi

Activist Aisha Yesufu has declared her support for Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, pledging to accompany the Kogi Central lawmaker to the National Assembly on Tuesday, as the senator insists on resuming duties despite objections from the Senate leadership.

Speaking on Channels Television's Sunrise Daily on Monday, Yesufu argued that the senator had every legal right to return to office, referencing a court decision that nullified her suspension.

"I think Senator Natasha has every right to resume office, and by tomorrow, she is not going to resume alone. Some people are going to go with her, and I'll be one of them," she said.

"We'll be with her and stand with her. And if the Senate decides they are going to kill us, let them kill us."

Yesufu went on to criticise the marginalisation of women in politics, describing it as a broader systemic issue.

"We are not even one-third. Out of 109 senators, we have only four women. Yet you go after them — you're going after this particular lady who has done nothing other than discharge her duty the way it should be. Enough of us being treated in this country as if we are second-class citizens."

She described Natasha's suspension as "unconstitutional" and accused the Senate of acting outside its bounds.

"The suspension by the Senate is unconstitutional. It's unlawful. It should never have happened in the first place — especially coming from an institution supposed to uphold the constitution," she stated.

According to her, the court never barred Akpoti-Uduaghan from performing her legislative duties, thus the lawmaker retains full rights to resume her seat.

"The court didn't stop Natasha from going in, so she has a right to resume office. The court has ruled that the whole suspension is unconstitutional. The Senate didn't make Natasha a senator —



her people did — and there's no way you can deprive them of their representation."

Yesufu also accused the Senate of disobeying court orders and claimed the judiciary no longer acts independently.

"There was a ruling telling them to halt the suspension process, but they didn't obey. The Senate is sending a message to Nigerians that it can act with impunity and disregard court rulings.

"The judiciary, which should be the last hope of the common man, is now a pawn in the hands of corrupt politicians. Even when a judgment is delivered, the judiciary now looks at the body language of those dictating what should be written."

Despite the Senate's position, Senator Natasha remains resolute. Over the weekend, she announced her decision to return to the Red Chamber on Tuesday, July 22.

"I have pretty much two months left before the six months expire. However, I've written to the Senate again, telling them that I'm resuming on the 22nd, which is Tuesday, by the special grace of God," she said while speaking in her hometown of Ihima, Kogi State.

"I will be there because the court did decide on that. They may argue that it's not an order, but it is a decision."

The senator said that although she has remained active through empowerment programmes in her district, her suspension has kept her from sponsoring bills and contributing to Senate debates.

In May, Justice Binta Nyako of the Federal High Court in Abuja ruled that her suspension was unconstitutional and directed the Senate to reinstate her. But Senate President Godswill Akpabio's legal team appealed the ruling, arguing that it breached legislative independence and cited Section 251 of the Constitution to support their position.

On Sunday, Senate spokesperson Yemi Adaramodu restated that there was no binding court order compelling her immediate reinstatement.

"It is therefore surprising and legally untenable that Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan... is attempting to act upon an imaginary order of recall that does not exist," he said.

The Senate also issued a caution, warning that her return would be deemed premature and a challenge to the institution's authority.

"The Senate, as a law-abiding institution, is committed to upholding the rule of law and the integrity of its proceedings. It will not tolerate the disruption of its proceedings," Adaramodu stated.

Retired police officers begin nationwide protest, IGP directs full security

By Friday Omosola



Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Kayode Egbetokun has instructed police commissioners nationwide, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), to ensure comprehensive security arrangements for a planned peaceful demonstration by retired police personnel.

Force Public Relations Officer, Olumuyiwa Adejobi, confirmed the directive in a statement, also cautioning against the dissemination of misleading information surrounding Monday's nationwide protest.

"The IGP has ordered that the rights of our retired officers who have chosen to protest must be protected, and the protest should serve as a model of dignified expression of grievance," Adejobi said.

He claimed that certain narratives were being intentionally distorted to undermine both the federal government and the current leadership of the force.

He clarified that the retired officers' demand to withdraw from the Contributory Pension Scheme is not a new issue, noting that previous IGPs had supported this agitation.

However, he explained that progress has been hampered by legal restrictions, complexities involving various agencies, and financial limitations.

He issued a strong warning against attempts by some individuals to politicise the legitimate concerns of the retirees, describing such actions as 'disruptive and manipulative.'

Adejobi expressed disappointment, stating, "It is disheartening to observe how certain actors have chosen to politicise a sensitive welfare issue, weaponising the legitimate grievances of our retired colleagues for ulterior motives."

Consequently, Adejobi said the IGP

has directed all Commissioners of Police to ensure the demonstration proceeds peacefully within their respective areas, particularly in the FCT and other states where formal notification has been received.

Their directives include providing adequate security for the protesting former colleagues, preventing the demonstration from being hijacked by troublemakers, political figures, or unauthorised agitators, and educating their officers on the constitutional right to peaceful assembly.

He said the IGP urged officers to treat their retired colleagues with the utmost respect, while strategically deploying resources to safeguard lives, maintain public order, and protect the institution's integrity.

Adejobi appealed to the protesters themselves to ensure their demonstration remains peaceful.

ADC addresses delay in Obi, El-Rufai's full membership

By Damilola Olufemi



The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has addressed growing questions around the delay in the full membership of former Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate, Mr. Peter Obi, and former Kaduna State governor, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai.

The clarification came as the former Director-General of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governors' Forum, Mr. C.I.D. Maduabum officially resigned from the PDP and joined the ADC.

In a related development, APC chieftain in Delta State, Chief Ayiri Emami, dismissed speculation that former Deputy Senate President, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege, plans to defect from the APC to the ADC ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Meanwhile, members of the Obidient Movement have cautioned the ADC leadership against auctioning its 2027 presidential ticket to the highest bidder.

Also weighing in, former Director-General of the Voice of Nigeria (VON),

Mr. Osita Okechukwu, declared that no ADC leader could inherit the late President Muhammadu Buhari's 12 million bloc votes.

At a media briefing in Abuja over the weekend, ADC Interim National Publicity Secretary, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi, explained that both Obi and El-Rufai were still wrapping up political commitments with their former parties.

"They were given the opportunity to finalise pending elections, including by-elections and the selection of governorship candidates, within their legacy parties," Abdullahi said.

He added that both men remained committed to the ADC coalition and would formally complete their transition after concluding those engagements.

Abdullahi also addressed internal concerns about fairness and transparency in the party. "We have no hidden agenda or preferred candidate. Everyone will have a fair chance in the

race for the party's ticket," he assured.

On the issue of legal standing, he dismissed reports that the ADC was entangled in legal disputes: "We are confident in the legality of every step we have taken. We made sure we closed all loopholes the ruling party might try to use against us."

ADC condemned Edo gov

He also condemned recent remarks by Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, who reportedly declared Peter Obi unwelcome in the state, calling it an undemocratic move and a dangerous trend among APC governors.

"Nigeria is a free country, and every citizen has the right to travel freely across the nation. We don't need visas to move within our own country," Abdullahi said.

"Since they failed to turn Nigeria into a one-party state, their new strategy is to issue threats, warning us not to visit their states. This is unacceptable and goes against the principles of democracy."

Concerns over Ganduje's health unfounded – Aides say

By Gbenga Olaleye



Ongoing speculation about the health of former APC National Chairman and ex-Governor of Kano State, Dr Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, has been dismissed by close aides and family members, who insist he is in good health despite reports claiming he is in critical condition at a hospital in London.

In an exclusive interview on Monday, Ganduje's Chief of Staff and former Kano State Commissioner for Information, Comrade Mohammed Garba, addressed the rumours directly.

He confirmed that the 75-year-old politician is indeed in London, but strongly denied suggestions that his condition is critical.

"He is fine," Garba said. "Of course, it is rare for someone of Ganduje's age not to have some minor health concerns, but it is not true that he is in critical condition as people are

claiming."

Garba went on to explain that Ganduje has been in the UK since the passing of former President Muhammadu Buhari — a reason cited for his absence at the late President's funeral. "We spoke with him just last night, and there is no problem. Anyone can fall sick, but as far as I know, he is in stable health."

He added that if the former governor's health were seriously deteriorating, his supporters would have been informed so that prayers could be offered on his behalf. "There would be no reason to hide such a thing," Garba said.

A family source, speaking on condition of anonymity, echoed these sentiments, saying that the widespread rumours were baseless.

"I have not spoken to him directly, but I have spoken with those who are with him over there, and there is nothing

like what is being spread. We are also just seeing these rumours everywhere," the source added.

Dr Ganduje, who assumed leadership of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2023, later resigned from his post, citing health concerns. However, his subsequent appointment as Chairman of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) raised eyebrows, with some questioning the sincerity of his resignation.

The move also sparked speculation about internal political manoeuvrings, particularly concerning efforts to court his long-time rival, Dr Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, back into the APC fold.

Despite the political intrigue and public speculation, those closest to Ganduje maintain that he remains in good health and continue to urge the public to disregard unverified reports.

Katsina gov Radda escapes with minor injuries in road accident

By **Damilola Olufemi**

Katsina State Governor, Dikko Umaru Radda, sustained minor injuries in a road accident that occurred along the Daura-Katsina highway while on official assignment.

The incident was confirmed on Monday by the Governor's Chief Press Secretary, Ibrahim Mohammed, who assured the public that the governor is in stable condition and has not suffered any serious harm.

Despite the mishap, Mohammed noted that Radda remains in high spirits and is grateful to Almighty Allah for divine protection. He also extended appreciation to the people of Katsina and other well-wishers for their outpouring of prayers and concern.

"I'm pleased to confirm that I remain in good health and high spirits," the governor stated in a message released to the public.

Radda expresses thanks



Quoting the governor further, Mohammed added: "Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim. Dear brothers and sisters of Katsina State and beyond, we are deeply grateful for all your prayers and concern. By the will of Allah, we were tested with a car accident—but Alhamdulillah, we came out safe and unharmed."

"Once again, thank you for your heartfelt prayers. Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullah," the message concluded.

Governor Radda also appeared in a brief live video from his residence on Sunday, following initial medical assessments. He said he remained under observation purely as a precaution to ensure his well-being.

Anxiety over PDP NEC meeting, as low turn out of participants looms

By **Alade Adisa**

The National Executive Committee, NEC, meeting of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, fixed for Thursday this week is generating anxiety among party leaders and members.

The main reason, according to findings by New Daily Prime, is that the turnout may be too low.

The reason for the anticipated poor attendance is because members that would have attended have left the party in droves.

The meeting will be the 100th NEC meeting of the party and it is expected to be attended by members of the National Working Committee led by the Acting National Chairman, Umar Damagun, state governors, members of the National Assembly, as well as former Presidents,



former Vice President, former leaders of the National Assembly produced by the party among others.

However, the gale of defection of party leaders to the African Democratic Congress, ADC, has depleted the rank of those that should attend.

Only a few days ago, two senators elected

on the banner of the party defected to the All Progressives Congress, APC.

Speaking on the matter, the State Public Relations Officer of Ekiti State PDP, Mr Jackson Adebayo, said those who have left would not attend, and that turnout may not be impressive because of internal wranglings in the party.

"It is just unfortunate what has become of a vibrant party. A party that ruled this country for 16 years. Apart from those that have left for the ADC, some are probably waiting to see whether the party would be able to get over those troubling issues.

"We just need to get our acts right. There is nothing that has a beginning that does not have an end one day all these issues would be resolved," he stated.

UBEC criticises states over N250bn unspent education funds

By **Gbenga Olaleye**

The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) has criticised state governments across Nigeria for failing to utilise over ₦250 billion in intervention funds meant to improve basic education infrastructure and teaching conditions.

The Executive Secretary of UBEC, Dr. Aisha Garba, raised the alarm on Monday during the inauguration of a three-day Financial Management Training for fund managers from State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The training targets Directors of Finance and Accounts, Heads of Internal Audit, and Matching Grant Desk Officers, aiming to boost their capacity in effectively managing and disbursing Universal Basic Education (UBE) funds.

Dr. Garba revealed that while ₦92.4 billion in matching grants had been accessed by 25 states and the FCT between January and June 2025, a staggering ₦250 billion remains unused in state accounts.

“The challenge is not just in accessing the UBE Matching Grant, but in the slow and poor utilisation of these funds,” she said. “In some cases, we are seeing non-compliance with fund utilisation guidelines, fund diversion, failure to remit taxes, and disregard for due process in contract awards.”

She noted that these issues undermine the Commission’s efforts to ensure improved teaching and learning conditions in basic schools across the country.

In response to these concerns,



UBEC has initiated several reforms, including:

- A review of utilisation guidelines
- Development of a new SUBEB Action Plan template
- Capacity-building programmes for UBEC and SUBEB personnel both locally and internationally

Despite these reforms, Dr. Garba stressed that the slow utilisation of funds remains a major setback.

She also announced that in addition to the matching grants, UBEC had disbursed:

1. ₦19 billion for the 2023/2024 Teacher Professional

Development (TPD) fund to 32 states and the FCT

2. ₦1.5 billion for the School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) School Improvement Programme, benefiting 1,147 communities across Nigeria

“This training is aimed at equipping fund managers with the skills and accountability tools to ensure that funds are accessed, utilised on time, and properly monitored,” she added.

The Commission hopes this renewed focus on financial management will help ensure that intervention funds directly benefit schools and pupils, especially in underserved communities across Nigeria.

Again, court rejects Yahaya Bello's request for abroad medical trip

By Friday Omosola

The Federal High Court in Maitama, Abuja on Monday once again denied former Kogi State Governor Yahaya Bello permission to retrieve his passport for a medical trip to the United Kingdom.

Justice Emeka Nwite rejected Bello's application, citing insufficient evidence to justify overseas treatment for his reported ailments.

Bello is currently facing a 19-count money laundering charge, alongside his nephew Ali Bello, Dauda Suleiman, and Abdulsalam Hudu.

The charges, brought by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), involve an alleged sum of N80,246,470,088.88.

Justice Nwite's ruling highlighted several deficiencies in Bello's application.

The judge noted that the defence failed to demonstrate that local health facilities could not manage his condition.

Furthermore, the medical doctor from Confluence University of Science and Technology who diagnosed Bello did not specify his area of medical competence, and the letter of invitation from the UK medical consultant lacked a signature, rendering it invalid in the eyes of the law.

The court also observed that Bello sought to travel to the UK for hypertension treatment without providing evidence of a deterioration in his condition.

During a previous sitting on June 27, 2025, Bello's counsel, J.B. Daudu, had urged the court to temporarily release his client's passport for the UK medical journey.

Daudu argued that Bello posed no flight risk, citing his lack of a criminal record abroad and his assurance to return before the end of August.

The application was filed under



Section 173(2)(a) of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) and the court's inherent jurisdiction, supported by a 22-paragraph affidavit from Bello himself, alongside a medical report from Confluence University and an unsigned invitation from a UK-based cardiologist.

However, prosecuting counsel Kemi Pinheiro vehemently opposed the application, labelling it an abuse of court process.

Pinheiro contended that Bello had previously filed similar applications before the FCT High Court, which he described as improper.

Pinheiro presented five primary reasons for denying the request.

He argued the motion was "technically incompetent" because the sureties for Bello's bail were not informed or included in the application, raising questions about their liability should Bello fail to return.

He also emphasised the international nature of the money laundering charges, pointing to allegations of property acquisitions in Dubai and funds in bank accounts in the US and UK.

Pinheiro added that Bello is already subject to a "red notice and international alert," risking arrest and extradition if he travels abroad.

The prosecution further discredited the submitted medical report, noting the absence of the signing doctor's specialisation.

Pinheiro also argued that the health concerns cited by Bello, such as low potassium and mild hypertension, could be managed within Nigeria and did not warrant a trip to the UK.

He sarcastically suggested that Bello utilise the "ultra-modern hospital" he reportedly built in Kogi State during his tenure, stating, "From Abuja to Lokoja is two hours. I advise him to visit that hospital rather than take a six-hour flight abroad."

CDCFIB recruitment portal inaccessible on reopening day, applicants frustrated

By Gbenga Olaleye



Many Nigerians hoping to complete their job applications with the Civil Defence, Correctional, Fire and Immigration Services Board (CDCFIB) have been left frustrated as the recruitment portal remained inaccessible on Monday, despite promises of a reopening.

The CDCFIB had earlier announced that applicants who had begun the process would be able to resume and complete their applications starting 21 July.

Even President Bola Tinubu reaffirmed this via a post on Monday morning, stating that the portal would reopen as scheduled.

However, throughout the day, users reported that the website was not loading or functioning as expected.

One applicant, posting under the name Able God Digital on social media platform X, shared their frustration:

“Omo, wetin my eye don see for this application ehn, I fit use one week cry if I’m not shortlisted. How on earth will I be the developer and still be applying? I’m telling people network issue is not politic.”

Another user, Victor.dev, criticised the portal’s performance, asking, “Why not hire efficient developers to enhance and optimise this their website? How much could it even cost the government? Omo.”

Similarly, Ayomide Jamilu urged the authorities to take action, writing, “The portal is not working. Kindly help inform those in charge.”

This marks the second delay in the reopening of the portal. Last week, the CDCFIB temporarily suspended the recruitment process, citing the need to upgrade the system due to overwhelming traffic.

In a statement last Thursday, the Board Secretary, retired Maj.-Gen. Abdulmalik Jubril, explained the pause was necessary to “optimise the efficiency of the recruitment portal.”

Despite growing concerns, no new update has been issued by the CDCFIB as of the time of filing this report. Applicants across the country now await clear communication and urgent resolution to continue the application process.

Lagos govt reaffirms commitment to flood prevention through drainage upgrades

By Friday Omosola



The Lagos State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to upgrading and constructing resilient drainage infrastructure to combat flash flooding across the state.

Commissioner for the Environment and Water Resources, Tokunbo Wahab, gave the assurance during an inspection tour of ongoing drainage and urban regeneration projects.

The tour included key flood-prone areas such as Onikoyi on Banana Island, Femi Pedro Avenue in Parkview Estate, and parts of Lagos Island.

Wahab explained that once the Lagos Island regeneration project is completed, it will significantly address persistent flooding in the area and its surroundings.

He also expressed satisfaction with the ongoing drainage works near Gorodom Market, where secondary collector drain lining is underway.

During a visit to Ikoyi, Wahab said recent investigations had revealed a blocked underground culvert along the Shoreline near Turnbull/Banana Island Road.

He noted that recent torrential rain had

impacted the road but assured that remedial and upgrade work had been carried out.

He added that the rapid development on Banana Island Road has overwhelmed the existing tertiary drainage system, and the state may upgrade one of the drains to a secondary collector to allow proper discharge into the Lagoon via the Mojisola Onikoyi channel.

The Commissioner also visited two other locations, Underbridge Idumagbo and the section beneath the Third Mainland Bridge along Oja Oba Street, Adeniji Adele.

He condemned the return of traders to these sites, where enforcement had previously taken place, and ordered their immediate evacuation.

Wahab clarified that the government does not aim to disrupt livelihoods but insists that selling under bridges is unsafe and unacceptable.

He recalled that traders had earlier been permitted to operate under regulated conditions, but their actions continue to undermine state infrastructure.

He revealed that some private individuals had proposed converting the under-bridge spaces into parks and that LASPARK already provided designs for the transformation, stressing that traders must vacate the areas without delay.

The inspection tour concluded at Parkview Estate, where Wahab assessed drainage works designed to channel stormwater from Femi Pedro Avenue directly into the Lagoon.

The project is expected to be completed within 90 days.

Emphasising the state's vulnerability to climate change impacts such as sea-level rise, excessive rainfall, and heat, Wahab said human activities must not be allowed to compromise drainage infrastructure.

Former Deputy Governor, Otunba Femi Pedro, who joined the tour, commended the government for the ongoing improvements in Parkview.

He noted that the new secondary collector drains along Olufemi Pedro Avenue and Agodogba Estate are deeper and wider, which he believes will bring an end to flooding in the area.

APC members defect to PDP in Kogi to back Senator Natasha

By Gbenga Olaleye

The political landscape in Kogi State has shifted significantly as scores of members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) have defected to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), pledging their loyalty and support to Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan.

The mass defection took place in Ihima, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State, where Senator Natasha, the current representative of Kogi Central Senatorial District, personally received the new PDP members in what is being described as a major political statement in the region.

Prominent among the defectors are the former Chairman of Okehi Local Government, Hassan Yusuf; Special Adviser to the Okehi Council Chairman, Hajia Rafatu Haruna; and a notable APC stalwart, Omuya Longman. They were joined by dozens of their supporters, all of whom publicly renounced their allegiance to the APC.

In her remarks, Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan welcomed the defectors warmly, emphasising that grassroots mobilisation and community engagement remain central to her political philosophy.

READ ALSO: Senate tells Natasha to stay away from National Assembly Tuesday

“This is not just about strengthening the PDP in Kogi Central,” she said. “It’s about building a formidable political force that cannot be defeated in any free and fair election in Nigeria.”

She reassured the new members of her commitment to inclusive leadership and reiterated that her core responsibility as a PDP senator is to widen the party’s reach and consolidate its influence across the region.



“My responsibility is to strengthen the PDP and bring more people into our fold. The movement you are witnessing here is not ordinary—it’s a reflection of the trust people have in our vision for a better Kogi,” she added.

Senator Natasha also used the occasion to call for ideological clarity in Nigeria’s political system. She lamented that many political parties in the country often turn to violence and intimidation when ideology and genuine engagement fail.

“I look forward to a time when Nigerian political parties will be defined by their beliefs and principles. When that is missing, desperation takes over,” she warned.

In a show of solidarity, the Kogi State PDP Chairman, Enemona Anyebe, described the wave of defections as a resounding vote of confidence in

Senator Natasha’s leadership style and vision.

“This is not an ordinary event,” Anyebe said. “It’s a political revolution happening under our eyes. The people are clearly responding to Senator Natasha’s inclusive, transparent, and development-driven approach.”

Political analysts believe the latest developments are a warning sign for the APC in Kogi, especially as the 2027 general elections begin to appear on the horizon. Senator Natasha’s growing influence in the state—and within the PDP—may reshape the balance of power, particularly in Kogi Central, a region long considered a battleground.

As the PDP continues to consolidate its base in Kogi State, many observers are watching closely to see how the APC will respond to what appears to be an increasingly energised and expanding opposition.

Rivers CP urges public support in ongoing crackdown on child trafficking rings

By Helen Okechukwu

The Rivers State Commissioner of Police (CP) Olugbenga Adepoju, has called on members of the public to support the police in its intensified efforts to dismantle human trafficking networks operating within and beyond the state.

This appeal comes on the heels of the recent arrest of two suspected child traffickers and the rescue of a pregnant woman from captivity.

The suspects, Sunshine Hart, 28, and Kingsley Ekocha, 38, were apprehended in Aba, Abia State, during a targeted police operation on 24 June.

The Command's spokesperson, SP Grace Iringe-Koko, confirmed the rescue of 24-year-old Regina Sunday during the operation.



According to her, the victim went into labour on 30 June and was rushed to the Police Clinic in Port Harcourt, where she delivered a healthy baby boy.

Both mother and child are currently receiving medical attention and are reported to be in stable condition.

In a statement released on Monday, CP Adepoju reaffirmed the Command's commitment to protecting lives and eradicating crime.

He stressed the importance of community involvement in security operations, urging residents to report any suspicious activities that could help law enforcement apprehend other members of the trafficking syndicate.

The police have assured that investigations are ongoing and that efforts are underway to track down other individuals connected to the trafficking ring.

Kogi commissioner calls for passage of bill on special seats for women in NA

By Helen Okechukwu

The Kogi State Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Hajia Fatimah Momoh, has called on stakeholders and policymakers to rally support for the passage of the bill seeking special seats for women in the National Assembly (NA).

She made the appeal during a meeting of the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) structure convened in Lokoja by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.

The meeting brought together key stakeholders and technical partners focused on promoting gender equality, uplifting vulnerable groups, and supporting individuals with disabilities.

Momoh emphasised that increasing the representation of women in legislative processes is critical to achieving meaningful and inclusive development in Nigeria.

According to her, the bill for special seats is a vital step towards correcting gender imbalance in governance and ensuring



that women have a stronger voice in national decision-making.

She also expressed appreciation to the Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Ahmed Usman Ododo, for his inclusive governance approach, which has significantly improved women's participation in state affairs.

The commissioner reiterated the ministry's commitment to empowering women and girls across the state, particularly through increased access to

education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

She also pledged continued efforts to tackle gender-based violence and drive community engagement on gender issues.

Participants at the meeting, including development partners and civil society organisations, echoed the need for improved coordination and consistent support for the implementation of the GEWE initiative across Kogi State.

Ex police officers protest at National Assembly over poor welfare

By Alade Adisa



Despite heavy downpour, hundreds of retired police officers on Monday besieged the gate of the National Assembly Complex in Abuja to register their protest against poor welfare and the delay in getting their retirement benefits.

Regarding their pensions, the retirees called on the authorities to remove the Nigeria Police Force from the Contributory Pensions Scheme.

They described the scheme as exploitative.

Their grouse is that the scheme not only delays their entitlements from being paid, but also that it is not the true reflection of how their dues should be paid.

Speaking during the protest, a

retired Chief Superintendent of Police, CSP Manir Lawal (retd.) said, "We are here to ask the government to remove us from the CPS. The pension scheme is exploitative and unjust.

"I am 67 years old. Many of us here are in our 60s and 70s. We have served this country faithfully and deserve to retire in dignity. This scheme has impoverished us. It is our right to demand better".

Meanwhile, the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, has mandated police formations nationwide to handle the protests with civility.

Former policemen had earlier given notice that they would embark on nationwide protests from Monday over issues concerning their welfare.

Egbetokun's order was contained in a statement by the Force Police Public Relations Officer, Muyiwa Adejobi.



NMA threatens nationwide strike as July 23 deadline nears

By **Damilola Olufemi**



With its 21-day ultimatum to the Federal Government set to expire on July 23, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) has warned of a possible nationwide shutdown of medical services if its demands are not addressed.

The NMA President, Prof. Bala Audu, reaffirmed the association's readiness to take decisive action, saying, "We have made our position clear. The ultimatum ends on July 23, and if the Federal Government does not address our demands, we may have no choice but to proceed with a strike."

The ultimatum, issued on July 2, was prompted by a circular from the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission, which introduced revised allowances for medical and dental officers in the federal service. The NMA contends the new directive violates previously reached agreements and undermines the welfare of its members.

"We have rejected that circular outright," Prof. Audu said. "We expect that any new directive affecting our members should be the

outcome of mutual consultation, not something imposed."

According to him, the association's demands are essential to the survival of Nigeria's health system and to ensuring fair treatment for medical professionals.

Prof. Audu revealed that the NMA had engaged the government in talks to avoid a crisis. A previous meeting involving key officials, including the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Pate, and other senior representatives from the health ministry, addressed the doctors' grievances. However, a follow-up meeting scheduled for last week was postponed due to the death of former President Muhammadu Buhari.

"The next meeting is supposed to involve the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health, and the Salaries and Wages Commission," he said. "We hope that after the funeral ceremonies, talks can resume—hopefully by Monday."

NMA calls for swift action

He warned that unless discussions resume swiftly and yield results, the

association may have no alternative but to begin industrial action. "If the government fails to prioritise this matter, a strike may be inevitable," he cautioned.

Meanwhile, the Katsina State branch of the NMA has also voiced strong opposition to the controversial circular. In a communiqué issued after its State Executive Council meeting on Saturday, the branch described the circular as unacceptable and demanded immediate withdrawal.

The statement, signed by Dr. Muhammadu Sani (Chairman) and Dr. Yahya Salisu (Secretary), declared, "NMA Katsina State branch hereby rejects National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission's (NSIWC) circular dated June 27, 2025... and demands urgent government withdrawal and fulfilment of all the demands."

The Katsina NMA warned that continued government silence could result in service disruptions, stressing it would not be able to guarantee the uninterrupted operation of health facilities if no action is taken.

Health leaders call for increased budget allocation to meet Abuja declaration target

By Helen Okechukwu



Health officials and managers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have called for a substantial increase in health sector funding, in line with the 15 per cent target set by the Abuja Declaration of 2001.

The call was made at the close of a four-day capacity-building workshop in Abuja, organised by the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The training focused on developing data-driven, budget-linked Annual Operational Plans (AOP) for the FCT health system.

The programme, held under the National Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative (NHSRII), aimed to boost leadership, strategic planning, and health systems strengthening efforts across the territory.

Mandate Secretary for the FCT Health Services and Environment Secretariat, Dr Adedolapo Fasawe, described the training as a major step towards preparing a smarter and more responsive 2026 operational plan.

She emphasised the importance of linking the plan to available budget lines to maximise benefits from Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs).

Over 70 senior officials, including programme managers and planning officers from across the FCT and its area

councils, took part in the workshop alongside development and implementing partners.

Fasawe urged all stakeholders, especially donor agencies, to align their plans and investments with the FCT Health Sector Strategic Blueprint and the AOP to improve collaboration and impact.

The FCT Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) Desk Officer, Dr Theresa Nwachukwu, noted that the training was funded and facilitated by the Ministry and executed through the NHSRII and the SWAp Coordinating Office.

She explained that the workshop was designed to equip participants with practical skills for developing the 2026 AOP based on the Health Sector Strategic Blueprint.

Nwachukwu also highlighted the integration of key national priorities into the planning process, including the HOPE Health Agenda, the Maternal and Neonatal Mortality Reduction Innovation Initiative (MAMII), and the broader Renewed Hope Health Agenda of the current administration.

The training offered tools for effective leadership, planning, and governance, with an emphasis on evidence-based budgeting, results-driven strategies, and cross-sector collaboration.

Participants received guidance on health systems thinking, disbursement-linked indicators, bottleneck identification, and intervention prioritisation, alongside training in data use, performance monitoring, and accountability mechanisms.

They also engaged with a web-based AOP development tool and gained skills in team building and change management.

A key takeaway from the workshop was the identification of significant health financing gaps in the FCT, including weak budgetary support for monitoring and evaluation and a lack of funding provisions for critical programmes at the area council level.

Participants stressed the importance of donor alignment with local strategies, urging development partners to jointly plan with government institutions to ensure resources are targeted to actual health priorities.

Other recommendations included increasing health sector funding at both the state and local levels, ensuring timely release of budgeted funds, and improving overall financing for primary healthcare services.

The workshop concluded with a strong appeal for both domestic and external partners to commit more resources to strengthening the FCT's health system.

BBNaija's Tacha eyes political career, calls for youth inclusion in governance

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular reality TV star Anita Natasha Akide, better known as Tacha, has revealed her growing interest in stepping into the world of politics.

In a recent interview with media personality Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, the former Big Brother Naija housemate opened up about her frustration with the leadership in Rivers State and her desire to be a part of the change she wants to see.

Tacha, who hails from Port Harcourt, Rivers State, expressed deep concern over the state's underdevelopment. She described the region as full of potential, yet overlooked and mismanaged. Comparing the progress of other major cities, she said Rivers State is lagging far behind.

"When I look at places like Abuja and Lagos, I see how far they've come. But when I turn my eyes back to Rivers State and think of all the potential it has, it breaks my heart," she said. "There are so many young people there, so many talented individuals, and yet nothing is being done to harness that."

Tacha blames govt for minor effort in talent support

She didn't hold back in pointing fingers at the government for not doing enough to support local talent and create meaningful opportunities for young people. Her remarks highlight a growing sentiment among Nigerian youths who feel disconnected from the political decisions affecting their lives.

Tacha stressed that change will not happen by standing on the sidelines. Instead, she believes real progress can only come through active participation in governance. According to her, criticising from afar is no longer enough; it's time to step up and get involved.

"We always talk about bad governance, but we need to be the change. It's not



enough to speak on social media or in interviews. We need to get in there and fix things from the inside," she said.

When asked directly about whether she plans to run for office, Tacha hinted that something is already in motion. However, she was careful not to reveal too much too soon. She explained that she prefers to be more prepared before going public with her plans.

"It's something I'm seriously working on," she said. "But I want it to be at least 70% ready before I start talking about it openly. It doesn't make sense to keep talking about leadership and politics without being a part of it."

Her comments suggest a determined and strategic approach to entering the political arena. Though she did not specify the position she may be targeting, it's clear that she is laying the groundwork for a future role in public service.

Beyond politics, Tacha also shared her plans to break a Guinness World Record. She announced that she intends to attempt the record for the most makeup applications in 24 hours, aiming to work on 150 people within that time frame. This challenge, she

said, is part of her broader efforts to inspire and push boundaries in everything she does.

The former BBNaija housemate has consistently used her platform to speak out on social issues, particularly those affecting young Nigerians. From gender equality to youth empowerment, Tacha has positioned herself as more than just a reality star; she is becoming a voice for change.

Her latest move into political conversations reflects a growing trend among Nigerian celebrities who are choosing to engage more directly with the country's leadership and policy issues. With a massive fan base and influence across social media, Tacha's entry into politics, if it materialises, could shake things up and encourage more youth participation in governance.

For now, the star says she's taking her time, doing the work behind the scenes, and preparing herself for the responsibilities ahead. But one thing is clear: Tacha is no longer content to just watch from the sidelines. She wants a seat at the table, and she's getting ready to take it.

Jim Iyke stirs reactions with birthday message to Kate Henshaw

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nollywood actor Jim Iyke has stirred a wave of reactions on social media following a bold and emotional birthday message to veteran actress Kate Henshaw.

In a lengthy Instagram post shared on Sunday, Iyke opened up about his past feelings for Henshaw, reflecting on their early years in Nollywood and the deep bond they once shared.

The tribute, which combined admiration, nostalgia, and a dose of blunt honesty, quickly caught the attention of fans and critics alike.

According to the actor, Henshaw played a vital role in his early career, offering both emotional and financial support during his struggling days.

He revealed that she often gave him money for food and transportation, helped him with audition tips, and stood by him when he had very little.

Despite all this, she always treated him like a younger brother, something he found difficult, considering he harboured romantic feelings for her.

“You knew all that time I wanted to hit that,” Iyke wrote, using a blunt phrase that drew mixed reactions online. The post, filled with raw language and unapologetic honesty, painted a complex picture of their friendship, one that hovered between affection, unspoken desires, and missed opportunities.

Iyke did not shy away from admitting that their bond eventually weakened as fame crept in. He acknowledged that the demands of stardom, along with his reckless behaviour, made it hard to build a lasting relationship.

“By the time we finally shared an intimate moment, I was already too wild, too restless to hold anything down,” he confessed, suggesting that the timing was never quite right for anything serious to blossom between them.



He also touched on her eventual marriage and the birth of her daughter, calling it “a union that ultimately ended in praise.” While he didn’t delve into the details of her personal life, his tone suggested both respect and quiet reflection.

Despite the candid nature of the post, Iyke managed to inject humour into his tribute. He jokingly blamed Henshaw for setting an impossibly high standard of beauty in the industry. According to him, young women in Nollywood now go to extreme lengths to imitate her timeless looks, trying “too hard” to match her natural elegance.

Jim Iyke’s post went viral

The actor’s tribute quickly went viral, sparking a flood of reactions on Instagram and X (formerly Twitter). While some fans praised his honesty and emotional depth, others criticised the use of crude language and questioned whether such personal details should have been shared publicly.

Critics argued that the tone of the message was inappropriate for a birthday tribute, especially one addressed to a respected colleague. “There’s a fine line between being

honest and being disrespectful,” one user commented. “Some things are better left unsaid.”

Others, however, defended Iyke, saying his words reflected a rare level of vulnerability not often seen in celebrity culture. “He was just speaking his truth,” a fan wrote. “It’s messy, sure, but real.”

As of Monday afternoon, Kate Henshaw had not responded to the tribute, and it remains unclear how she feels about the post.

Iyke’s message, though controversial, has reignited public interest in his relationship with Henshaw and the behind-the-scenes stories of Nollywood’s golden era.

It also highlights a broader conversation about boundaries, celebrity transparency, and the extent to which personal history should be shared in the public eye.

While opinions remain divided, one thing is certain: Jim Iyke’s tribute has once again reminded fans of the raw and unpredictable nature of fame, friendship, and forgotten love in the world of entertainment.

Timini Egbuson reflects on missed Big Brother Africa slot, calls it a blessing in disguise

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular Nollywood actor Timini Egbuson has opened up about a major turning point in his career, revealing how losing a coveted spot on Big Brother Africa turned out to be one of the best things that ever happened to him.

Speaking on a recent episode of The Culture League podcast, Egbuson shared how close he came to representing Nigeria on the popular reality show. According to him, he was among the final five selected candidates and had even gone as far as packing his bags and hiring a social media manager in preparation for the show. But in a last-minute decision, the producers dropped him from the final list.

“It was really close,” he recalled. “We had done everything, all the interviews, all the paperwork. They told us to pack and wait for the final call. I was ready. I even brought someone on board to manage my social media while I was in the house. But in the end, they didn’t pick me.”

While most would see this as a major career setback, Egbuson said it ended up being a blessing in disguise. That same year, he landed a role on MTV Shuga Naija, a television drama series that would eventually launch his acting career and place him firmly in the spotlight.

“Looking back, not getting into Big Brother Africa was one of the best things that could have happened to me,” he said. “That year, I joined MTV Shuga, and that role opened every door I needed. If I had gone on Big Brother, maybe the hype would have died down by now. Maybe I wouldn’t have had the chance to become who I am today.”

Egbuson shares lesson

Egbuson explained that his experience taught him a valuable



lesson, not all missed opportunities are truly losses. Some can redirect you to something greater.

“I’ve seen it happen many times. There were roles I wanted badly, and I didn’t get them. Some opportunities went to other people. But I’ve also had chances others didn’t get. And in the grand scheme of things, everything has worked out the way it was supposed to,” he noted.

The actor stressed the importance of trusting the timing of one’s journey. He believes that his career path, though not always straightforward, has been divinely guided.

“I truly believe I’m where God wants me to be,” he said. “If I had taken certain roads, I might have ended up in a different place entirely, maybe even a worse place. So I’ve learned to see disappointments as part of the process.”

He continued, “Sometimes we put all our hopes in one opportunity, and when it doesn’t happen, it crushes us. But you have to get up, dust

yourself off, and keep going. There’s always something better around the corner, even if you can’t see it yet.”

Egbuson’s story serves as a reminder that success is rarely a straight line. For him, the detour away from reality TV led him directly to the big screen, where he has since become one of Nollywood’s most recognisable faces.

In the years following MTV Shuga, Timini has starred in a string of hit films and television series. He has earned critical acclaim for his performances and continues to be a leading voice in the new generation of Nollywood talent.

His message to young creatives is clear: “Don’t let one ‘no’ define your story. Sometimes, the opportunity you think you’ve lost is just a setup for something even bigger.”

With his career still on the rise, Timini Egbuson proves that every setback can be the beginning of a breakthrough.

Cubana Chief Priest recalls son's near-drowning during ocean bonding session

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular entrepreneur and socialite, Cubana Chief Priest, recently shared a frightening experience that nearly turned a fun outing with his son into tragedy.

The well-known businessman, whose real name is Pascal Okechukwu, revealed that he and his son fell into the ocean during a water ride while on vacation.

The incident, which he described as a “near-death” experience, happened during what was supposed to be a father-son bonding challenge. He said they were enjoying the day together when things suddenly went wrong.

Cubana Chief Priest took to Instagram to share the terrifying ordeal with his followers. According to him, the day began with excitement and adventure, but a dare from his son, known on Instagram as @donaldsfastfood, led them straight into danger.

He explained that his son had challenged him to join in on a high-speed water ride. The challenge, which seemed harmless at first, quickly turned risky.

“My son @donaldsfastfood challenged me to this ride. Boom! We fell into the ocean,” he wrote in his post, still in disbelief at how fast the situation escalated.

The powerful water currents proved too much for them to handle. The ride, likely intended to be thrilling, became a nightmare as father and son were suddenly thrown into the open ocean.

Cubana Chief Priest notes life jacket use

Cubana Chief Priest said the impact was shocking and disorienting. For a brief moment, fear took over as



the two struggled to remain calm while floating in the water.

The fall came without warning, and in the chaos, the only thing keeping them safe was their life jackets and a bit of swimming knowledge.

Thankfully, both were wearing life jackets at the time of the fall. This, along with their basic swimming skills, helped them stay afloat until help arrived.

Though shaken, the socialite expressed deep gratitude that the situation didn't end in tragedy. He stressed the importance of wearing safety gear during such activities.

“Life jacket saved us with our swimming ocean skills,” he wrote, clearly relieved. He also joked that his wife, @deangels, would not be happy about the risk they took.

The post quickly gained attention on Instagram, with fans and followers flooding the comments section. Many expressed concern

and thanked God for their safety, while others admired how Cubana Chief Priest turned the terrifying moment into a teachable and humorous story.

Some praised his openness in sharing the experience, noting that it served as a reminder about water safety. Others teased him for taking on such a risky challenge at the request of his son.

While Cubana Chief Priest is known for his lavish parties, flashy lifestyle, and bold personality, this incident showed a more vulnerable and relatable side of him. It also highlighted the unpredictable nature of adventure sports and the importance of safety precautions.

He didn't give further details about where the incident happened, but the tone of his message made it clear that it was a close call. Fortunately, the experience ended with no injuries and an important life lesson.

Court grants Scott Iguma bail in PWAN defamation suit

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular media personality and social media influencer Scott Iguma, has been granted bail by the Lagos State High Court.

The ruling came on Monday, just three days after Iguma was remanded in prison following his arrest on charges of defamation.

The case stems from Iguma's recent public allegations against PWAN Group, a well-known real estate company. In a viral video posted last Monday, the influencer accused PWAN of defrauding customers by issuing receipts instead of actual land ownership documents. He backed his claims by submitting more than 130 petitions to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), all from individuals who alleged they were victims of the company's activities.

The allegations quickly attracted public attention. Iguma's bold claims and the volume of petitions he submitted painted a troubling picture that sparked heated conversations online. In response, PWAN's founder, Dr. Augustine Onwumere, filed a formal complaint against Iguma, accusing him of defamation.

By Thursday, police arrested Iguma, and the court ordered his remand in prison on Friday morning, pending further proceedings. His detention triggered a wave of reactions across various social media platforms. Prominent voices such as influencer Tunde Ednut, controversial commentator VeryDarkMan, content creator Stanley Ontop, and musician Kokopee all spoke out, criticising both the Nigeria Police and PWAN for what they described as an attempt to silence a whistleblower.

The situation ignited a larger conversation about freedom of speech, the role of influencers in



holding companies accountable, and the potential misuse of legal power to suppress public dissent. Many Nigerians, especially those in the digital space, argued that Iguma's arrest was unjust and signalled a threat to individuals who dare to challenge powerful corporations.

On Monday, a glimmer of relief came when the court ruled in favour of granting bail to Iguma. The announcement was made by singer Kokopee, one of his vocal supporters, in a video shared on social media.

"After the hearing, the judge has granted Scott Iguma bail," Kokopee said in the video. "His legal team is working tirelessly to meet all the bail conditions. One thing Nigerians must remember is this, we cannot stay silent when we see signs of oppression. Injustice for one is injustice for all."

Kokopee also issued a stern warning to PWAN, urging the company to come forward with evidence if it truly believes it has been wrongly accused. "PWAN, be warned," he said. "If you say you're innocent, bring out the proof. The people deserve to know the truth."

Iguma's supporters continue to demand transparency from both the police and PWAN, insisting that the real issue lies in the numerous complaints filed by customers who claim to have been misled by the real estate company. For many, the influencer's arrest felt like an effort to distract from the growing outcry of consumers who say they have been scammed.

Iguma's legal team finalising release. As of the time of reporting, Iguma's legal team is still working to finalise the conditions of his release. Details of the bail terms have not been made public, but sources close to the case say his release could happen within the next 24 hours.

The case has become a flashpoint in the broader conversation about digital activism, accountability in real estate practices, and the limits of free speech in Nigeria.

Whether Iguma's claims hold water or not, one thing is clear, this case is far from over, and all eyes are now on both the courts and PWAN's next move.

Trump administration releases files on Martin Luther King Jr. assassination

By Oluwatosin Ologun

The administration of United States President Donald Trump on Monday released more than 230,000 pages of files relating to the 1968 assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence said the documents, which number over 230,000 pages, "had never been digitized and sat collecting dust in facilities across the federal government for decades, until today."

The records include the FBI's "discussion of potential leads, internal FBI memos detailing the progress of the case, and documents related to James Earl Ray's former cellmate, who stated he discussed with Ray an alleged assassination plot," according to ODNI. The agency says the release also includes CIA records on the search for Ray, who fled the U.S. before he was eventually captured and pleaded guilty to assassinating King.

"The American people have waited nearly sixty years to see the full scope of the federal government's investigation into Dr. King's assassination," Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard said in a statement.

ODNI called Monday's release "the first time these records are published online in one collection with minimal redactions," though it said some records had been made public previously through Freedom of Information Act requests.

ODNI said King's relatives were "provided an opportunity to review the files" two weeks ago.

Prior to the release, some relatives of King pushed back on the plan: "For us, the assassination of our father is a deeply personal family loss that we have endured over the last 56 years. We hope to be provided the opportunity to review the files as a family prior to its public release."

King's two living children, Bernice King and Martin Luther King III, said in a statement Monday they understood the



records have "long been a subject of interest," but urged people to engage with the files "with empathy, restraint, and respect for our family's continued grief."

The statement — released by the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change — pointed to the FBI's yearslong surveillance of King in the 1960s, which a Justice Department report later concluded was "very probably" illegal.

"While we support transparency and historical accountability, we object to any attacks on our father's legacy or attempts to weaponize it to spread falsehoods," the family members said. "Those who promote the fruit of the FBI's surveillance will unknowingly align themselves with an ongoing campaign to degrade our father and the Civil Rights Movement."

Bernice King addressed the release of the files in a "Vanity Fair" story Monday, writing, "I wonder why I have to be confronted once again with something that was very confusing and distressing for me as a five-year-old. I am, honestly, not prepared to revisit the gruesome details of this painful history. For me, there is no real value in it; there is only reliving the trauma." Later Monday, she wrote on X, "Now, do the Epstein files."

King's niece, Alveda King, said in ODNI's statement she supported the release, calling it "a historic step towards

the truth that the American people deserve."

Shortly after returning to office, Mr. Trump ordered the government to declassify and release federal records on President John F. Kennedy's 1963 assassination, along with the 1968 killings of King and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. Records on JFK were released in March, and the government released several tranches of documents on RFK starting in April.

All three assassinations have drawn decades of public curiosity, including theories about whether the people accused and convicted of assassinating the three men acted alone or were even responsible for the killings.

Ray pleaded guilty to murdering King in Memphis one year after the assassination and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. Still, he later recanted his guilty plea and spent years unsuccessfully seeking a new trial. He died in 1998.

Members of King's family have contended that Ray was not the shooter. Their statement Monday pointed to a 1999 wrongful death suit in Tennessee civil court in which a jury concluded a man named Loyd Jowers and other co-conspirators, "including government agencies," were linked to King's assassination.

UK's Labour to reassess state pension age

By Fatimah Idera

Labour has announced an early review of the state pension age, signalling that it could be raised sooner than currently planned.

Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall revealed on Monday that the statutory review originally due in 2027 will begin immediately, alongside the launch of a new pensions commission. The state pension age is presently 66 and is already set to rise to 67 between 2026 and 2028. A further increase to 68 is scheduled for the mid-2040s, but the timeline could now be accelerated.

Kendall acknowledged the challenges ahead, saying she was under no illusions about how difficult it would be to plan for the future of pensions in the context of rising living costs. "Many workers are more worried about putting food on the table and keeping a roof over their heads than saving for a retirement that feels distant, and many businesses are under strain in a volatile economic climate."

The decision to begin the review early comes amid growing concern over the long-term sustainability of the state pension, particularly with an ageing population and rising costs. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) recently warned that the triple lock, which guarantees annual pension increases by the highest of inflation, earnings growth, or 2.5% could add £15.5 billion a year to government spending by the next general election.



Financial pressures are mounting as nearly half of working-age adults are not saving into a private pension, according to government figures. To address this, the new pensions commission will explore ways to boost retirement savings across the population. It will be led by Labour peer and trade unionist Baroness Drake, who will chair a three-member taskforce focused on breaking down the barriers to saving.

Commenting on the outlook, Damon Hopkins of financial consultancy Broadstone said: "Given the demographic and fiscal pressures, an earlier increase in the state pension age would not be surprising. If state support is delayed or reduced, it only intensifies the need for reform in private pension provisions."

The issue remains politically

sensitive. Jeremy Hunt, while Chancellor in 2023, shelved plans to raise the pension age further due to falling life expectancy, which made the move harder to justify.

The government's relationship with older voters has already been tested. Chancellor Rachel Reeves came under fire after scrapping universal winter fuel payments last year to save £1.5 billion annually. She later reversed the policy, announcing that pensioners earning under £35,000 would still qualify for the benefit.

The early review signals that the Labour government is willing to tackle pension reform head-on but any changes to the retirement age are likely to face strong opposition from those nearing retirement, particularly amid widespread discontent seen across Europe in response to similar moves.

New round of Russia-Ukraine peace talks set for Wednesday – Zelensky

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Peace talks between Ukraine and Russia - the first in seven weeks - are planned for Wednesday in Turkey, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy quoted a senior Kyiv official as saying on Monday.

Zelenskiy appealed earlier in the day for greater momentum in negotiations.

Russia's state TASS news agency quoted a source in Turkey as saying the talks would take place on Wednesday. The RIA news agency, also quoting a source, said they would take place over two days, Thursday and Friday.

The Kremlin said it was waiting for confirmation of the date of the talks but said the two sides were "diametrically opposed" in their positions on how to end the war.

Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address that he spoke with Rustem Umerov, secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council, on Monday in preparation for a prisoner exchange and another meeting with Russia in Turkey.

"Umerov reported that the meeting is planned for Wednesday. More details will follow tomorrow," Zelenskiy said.

Umerov, previously defence minister, was appointed to his current role last week and headed the first two rounds of talks with Russia.

Ukraine has backed U.S. calls for an immediate ceasefire. Moscow says certain arrangements must be put in place before a ceasefire can be introduced.

Russian forces have launched sustained attacks on Ukrainian cities in recent weeks, including missiles and hundreds of drones on Monday night that killed two people and injured 15. Ukraine has also launched long-range drone attacks.



Zelenskiy said: "The agenda from our side is clear: the return of prisoners of war, the return of children abducted by Russia, and the preparation of a leaders' meeting."

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is under increasing pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to show progress towards ending the conflict, turned down a previous challenge from Zelenskiy to meet him in person.

Putin has said he does not see Zelenskiy as a legitimate leader because Ukraine, which is under martial law, did not hold new elections when his five-year mandate expired last year.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "There is our draft memorandum, there is a draft memorandum that has been handed over by the Ukrainian side. There is to be an exchange of views and talks on these two drafts, which are diametrically opposed so far."

NO CEASEFIRE BREAKTHROUGH

Ukraine and Russia have held two rounds of talks in Istanbul, on May 16 and June 2, that led to the exchange of thousands of prisoners of war and the remains of dead soldiers.

But the two sides have made no breakthrough towards a ceasefire or a settlement to end almost three and a half years of war. The Kremlin says Ukraine must abandon four regions Moscow says have been incorporated into Russia.

Trump said last week he would impose new sanctions in 50 days on Russia and countries that buy its exports if there is no deal before then to end the conflict.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, speaking in Kyiv after talks with Zelenskiy, noted Russia's refusal to implement an immediate ceasefire as well as its "maximalist" demands.

"Discussions must begin, but on a basis that respects the interests of both parties, because diplomacy is not submission," he told a news conference. "And diplomacy begins with meetings at the level of heads of state and government, something Volodymyr Zelenskiy has repeatedly called for."

Barrot said he favoured devising an even tougher sanctions package if Putin did not agree to a ceasefire.

Ecuador extradites drug lord 'Fito' to US after prison escape

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Ecuadorian government has extradited the country's most notorious drug trafficker, Adolfo Macías, known widely as "Fito", to the United States, over a year after his dramatic escape from a high-security prison.

Macías, leader of the powerful Los Choneros gang, arrived in New York state on Sunday night, according to flight-tracking data. He is due to appear in a Brooklyn federal court on Monday to face charges of cocaine distribution, conspiracy, and firearms violations, including weapons smuggling. His lawyer, Alexei Schacht, has confirmed that Macías intends to plead not guilty.

A letter filed by the US Department of Justice on Sunday confirmed the arraignment. Ecuador's national prison authority, SNAI, said Macías had been removed from his cell at a maximum-security facility in south-west Ecuador "for the purposes that correspond to the extradition process".

Macías, a former taxi driver turned drug lord, had agreed to the extradition in a Quito courtroom last week. His transfer marks the first time Ecuador has extradited one of its nationals since the approval of a new law passed via referendum last year. President Daniel Noboa had pushed for the measure as part of a broader crackdown on organised crime and gang violence.

Ecuador, once a relative oasis of calm between the world's two largest cocaine producers, Colombia and Peru, has seen a dramatic escalation in violence in recent years. Criminal gangs, many with links to powerful



foreign cartels, are engaged in brutal turf wars for control of the drug trade, using the country's strategic ports to ship narcotics abroad.

Following Macías's escape from prison in January 2024, President Noboa declared a state of internal armed conflict, ordering tanks and military forces into the streets to combat the escalating gang threat. While the move was welcomed by some as a firm stance on crime, it drew criticism from human rights organisations concerned about abuses and militarisation.

Macías's criminal empire, Los Choneros, is believed to have ties to Mexico's Sinaloa cartel, Colombia's Gulf Clan -the world's largest cocaine exporting group, and organised criminal networks in the Balkans, according to the Ecuadorian Organised Crime Observatory.

After months on the run, Macías was

captured on 25 June. He was discovered hiding in a secret bunker beneath floor tiles in a luxury residence in the coastal port of Manta, the stronghold of Los Choneros.

His escape had triggered widespread violence across the country, as well as a massive police and military manhunt. The Ecuadorian government even offered a \$1 million reward for information leading to his arrest.

In a CNN interview following the arrest, President Noboa stated: "The sooner, the better... We will gladly send him and let him answer to the North American law."

According to Ecuador's government, over 70% of the world's cocaine passes through the country's ports. In 2024 alone, Ecuador seized a record-breaking 294 tonnes of narcotics, the vast majority of it cocaine.

Russian missiles hit Kyiv metro station in deadly overnight strikes

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

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Report: Migrants shackled, forced to eat food off chairs, “like dogs”

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



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UK water bills to soar by 30% after years of low investment

By **Fatimah Idera**

Water bills are expected to rise by 30% over the next five years, according to a new report that highlights growing pressures on Britain's water infrastructure, including the rapid expansion of data centres to power artificial intelligence (AI).

The report, led by Sir Jon Cunliffe, a former deputy governor of the Bank of England, recommends the abolition of Ofwat, the UK's water regulator, and calls for a complete overhaul of how the water industry is governed.

Speaking to BBC Radio 4's Today programme, Sir Jon said that rising costs for drinking water production and wastewater treatment are unavoidable. He cited growing demand from population increases and the water-intensive requirements of AI data centres as key drivers of higher prices.

"When you look at the pressures on the water system, population growth and the need for new data centres, these developments place significant strain on water resources," he said. "We have to accept them, but we must plan for them, set clear priorities, and manage the trade-offs. At the moment, that simply isn't happening."

His report points to a lack of coordination between national infrastructure planning and the water industry. One example is a planned AI data centre at a former Ford factory in Bridgend, Wales, which is still awaiting approval. The report urges closer consultation with infrastructure experts before approving such projects, especially given their high-water needs. Research from Oxford University was cited, warning that regional water stress must be a critical factor when locating data centres.



The report has prompted a strong response from the Government. Environment Secretary Steve Reed described the current regulatory system as having completely failed, announcing plans to scrap Ofwat as part of what he called "the biggest overhaul of water regulation in a generation."

Speaking in south-west London, Mr Reed said: "Our rivers, lakes, and seas are polluted with record levels of sewage. The industry is broken, and the regulator has let them get away with it. Today marks the start of a water revolution."

Water Minister Emma Hardy also weighed in, criticising water company executives for awarding themselves huge pay rises" while public trust in the industry hits an all-time low.

"Everyone knows the system is broken," she told the media "I'm not saying government should set private

sector salaries, but I will say this: read the room. People are angry and fed up."

Trade unions have echoed those concerns. Gary Carter, national officer at the GMB union, accused water company bosses of profiting while neglecting infrastructure and allowing sewage to flood rivers.

"It's a disgrace and one that Ofwat has overseen," he said. "It's time for fundamental reform of the sector, and for the water industry to be brought back into public ownership."

The report and the government's response come amid increasing public frustration over water pollution, rising costs, and underinvestment in the sector. With AI and digital infrastructure expanding rapidly, the challenge of balancing innovation with environmental sustainability and public affordability is becoming more urgent than ever.

South African president fires education minister accused of graft

By New Daily Prime



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa fired Higher Education and Training Minister Nobuhle Nkabane, who is facing accusations that she misled parliament, eight days after he suspended a close cabinet ally for allegedly meddling in a murder probe.

Buti Manamela will replace Nkabane, the presidency said in a statement on Monday, without providing reasons for the change. Nomusa Dube-Ncube was appointed deputy higher education minister, a post previously held by Manamela.

The move follows Ramaphosa's July 13 suspension of Police Minister Senzo Mchunu over explosive allegations that he sabotaged an investigation into political assassinations. Both he and Nkabane have denied any wrongdoing.

Ramaphosa has faced mounting calls to act against colleagues suspected of

wrongdoing and show South Africa has emerged from the shadow of former President Jacob Zuma's almost nine-year rule, when members of his African National Congress were deeply implicated in corruption.

The Democratic Alliance – the second-largest party in the so-called government of national unity after the ANC — laid charges against Nkabane on July 1, accusing her of making false claims over appointments to industrial training boards.

It laid separate charges against Mchunu, a close ally of the president who helped him become leader of the ANC in 2017 and ultimately head of Africa's most industrialized nation and against Human Settlements Minister Thembisile Simelane, alleging that she defrauded state power utility Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd.

It also threatened to vote against budget

allocations to some government departments on Wednesday, including Higher Education and Human Settlements, unless action was taken against the ministers. A move that may have prevented the passage of the Appropriation Bill, which facilitates the allocation of funds.

"The president's dismissal of Nkabane is a step in the right direction and the DA will now support the departmental budget on Higher Education," DA spokesperson Willie Aucamp said by phone from Johannesburg. "Our caucus has still to meet and decide if the party will support the Department of Human Settlements' budget."

Ramaphosa formed the 10-party GNU with the business-friendly DA and other rivals after last year's parliamentary elections failed to produce an outright winner. Investors are counting on it to deliver reforms to boost anemic economic growth.

Bryan Mbeumo completes move to Man United from Brentford

By New Daily Prime

Cameroon winger Bryan Mbeumo said he “grew up wearing” the Manchester United shirt on Monday after joining the club from Brentford on a deal until 2030, with an option for a further year.

Mbeumo, 25, will reportedly cost the 20-time Premier League champions an initial £65 million (\$87 million) having scored 20 goals in 38 league games last season for the Bees.

Tottenham, now managed by former Brentford boss Thomas Frank, were also chasing the France-born attacker before United’s improved offer sealed the move.

United’s third bid, worth an initial £65m with £6m in add-ons, was accepted last week.

“As soon as I knew there was a chance to join Manchester United, I had to take the opportunity to sign for the club of my dreams,” Mbeumo said in a United statement.

“The team whose shirt I wore growing up.

“This is a massive club, with an incredible stadium and amazing fans, we are all really determined to challenge for the biggest trophies,” he added.

United coach Ruben Amorim has signed two other players during this summer in an attempt to avoid a repeat of last season’s catastrophic display.

They lost to Tottenham in the Europa League final and a 15th-place finish in the top flight was their lowest since 1973-74.

Wolves forward Matheus Cunha and teenage Paraguayan defender Diego Leon have also moved to Old Trafford.



‘Primary target’

Rasmus Hojlund and Joshua Zirkzee struggled as Amorim’s main strikers last term.

“My mentality is to always be better than I was yesterday,” Mbeumo said.

“I know that I have the spirit and character to reach another level here learning from Ruben Amorim and playing alongside world-class players.

Mbeumo blossomed in six years at Brentford, scoring 70 goals and providing 51 assists in 242 appearances in all competitions following his move from French club Troyes in 2019.

“There is always a right time for a player to move on and, for Bryan, that time is now,” Brentford director of football Phil Giles said.

“He has the opportunity to go to one of the biggest clubs in the world, and we are very happy for him,” he added.

Mbeumo helped the Bees win promotion to the Premier League in

2021 and was instrumental in their impressive 10th-place finish in 2024-25.

“We are delighted to have secured another one of our primary targets ahead of the pre-season tour,” the Red Devils’ director of football Jason Wilcox said.

“The experience in the US will be the perfect opportunity for Bryan to work with Ruben and his new team-mates as we prepare for an exciting season ahead,” he added.

In terms of United outgoings, Marcus Rashford is set to leave his boyhood club for Barcelona and an announcement could come on Tuesday.

Jadon Sancho, Alejandro Garnacho, Antony and Tyrell Malacia continue looking for new clubs and are not expected to fly to the US as part of the tour squad.

United start their pre-season tour of the United States on Sunday by facing West Ham before their opening game of the new Premier League season against Arsenal on August 17.