



Tinubu calls for fairer global finance, healthcare at BRICS Summit **Pg 4**

Olubadan of Ibadan, Oba Olakulehin dies at 90 **Pg 6**



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Wike: Nigeria 'lifeless' before Tinubu came into power

By Damilola Olufemi



The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, has claimed that Nigeria was in a near-collapse state before President Bola Tinubu came into power.

Speaking during a thanksgiving service at St. James' Anglican Church in Asokoro, Abuja, on Sunday, Wike praised Tinubu's leadership for making tough but necessary decisions to revive the country.

"The country was dead. It takes hard decisions to bring it back to life. We know there are still challenges, but do we expect miracles in just two years? Governance isn't like prayer where you say, 'Be healed,' and it happens instantly."

The service marked a celebration of the successful commissioning of 16 infrastructure projects in Abuja under Wike's watch as FCT Minister. He used the occasion to caution Christian leaders and worshippers against repeating what he described as a near-costly mistake in the 2023 elections.

"We almost made a terrible mistake in 2023," he warned. "The Church must be

careful this time. Many were swayed by emotions and propaganda. Ask us questions. We're politicians. Don't let anyone blackmail you with sentiment."

Wike criticised former Labour Party presidential candidate, Peter Obi, questioning his democratic credentials.

"Some of you supported someone you didn't even know well," he said. "Peter Obi never conducted local government elections throughout his eight years as governor. He ran the councils by himself. And you call that democracy? Nobody asked questions then."

Turning to the recent N39 billion renovation of the Abuja International Conference Centre—now renamed after President Tinubu—Wike defended the investment and attacked past managers of the facility.

"People used to pay the government just N50 million a year for that place," he revealed. "Now, in just three weeks post-renovation, we've generated over N700 million. And these same people now claim they want to rescue Nigeria?"

Wike argued that those who failed to

deliver when they had power should not be trusted again.

"People were governors for eight or more years and did nothing. Now that they're out of office, they claim Nigerians are angry. If I say I want to rescue Nigeria, ask me what I did in Rivers State. I can point to my achievements—and I'm doing the same here in the FCT."

Wike dismisses critics

He further dismissed criticisms that the Tinubu administration is responsible for all the country's woes.

"Were trains being bombed under Tinubu? No. Was the fuel subsidy racket his doing? No. But now someone says, 'Enough is enough,' and suddenly, the people benefitting from the old system are shouting."

Wike appealed to the Church to stay prayerful and supportive of the Tinubu administration.

"All I ask is for the Church to be patient and continue praying for the President. Forget those who had the opportunity and failed. They won't get another shot."

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

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Tinubu calls for fairer global finance, healthcare at BRICS Summit

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has called for a comprehensive review of the current global governance structure, as well as reforms in the financial and healthcare systems, to promote greater equity and inclusion for low-income and emerging economies, particularly in Africa.

At the 17th BRICS Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, yesterday, Mr Tinubu highlighted the urgent need to address environmental degradation, the climate crisis, and global healthcare inequalities.

He noted that these challenges contributed to slow growth and widening development gaps.

Mr Tinubu, who attended the summit at the invitation of Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, reaffirmed Nigeria's support for BRICS' collective push for fair and inclusive global development.

"Nigeria aligns with the discussions and outcomes of the BRICS summit. The next critical step is to pursue financial restructuring and a thorough reevaluation of the global order," he said.

Mr Tinubu stressed that although Africa had contributed the least to global carbon emissions, it continued to suffer the most from climate-related consequences.

"We must chart a new course of justice based on fairness, sustainable technology transfer, and accessible financing, so emerging economies can fully benefit from global initiatives," he said.

The President pointed to Africa's proactive efforts through initiatives like the African Carbon Market Initiative and the Great Green Wall, expressing confidence that the upcoming COP-30 conference would further galvanise



commitment towards a healthier global environment.

"Nigeria cannot remain a passive participant in global decisions concerning financial restructuring, debt relief, climate action, environmental protection, and healthcare. We must be active architects of a future that addresses the specific needs of our youth, who make up 70 per cent of Nigeria's population," he said.

Mr Tinubu reaffirmed Nigeria's long-term development agenda, Vision 2050, and its nationally determined contributions aimed at advancing renewable energy, climate resilience, and universal health coverage.

He also underscored the importance of addressing non-communicable diseases as part of a collective global health priority.

"As we approach COP-30, BRICS should not merely represent a bloc of emerging economies but should stand as a beacon of innovative solutions built on solidarity, self-reliance, sustainability, and shared prosperity," Mr Tinubu

added.

He pledged Nigeria's continued commitment to strategic partnerships that would foster sustainable and inclusive growth.

The President was accompanied to the summit by Ambassador Yusuf Tuggar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Wale Edun, Minister of Finance.

Nigeria was formally admitted as a partner country of BRICS on 17 January 2025 under Brazil's pro tempore presidency.

The new partnership category, established at the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia in October 2024, includes Nigeria alongside Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.

As Africa's most populous country and one of its largest economies, Nigeria shares key priorities with BRICS, particularly in advancing South-South cooperation and pushing for reforms in the global governance system.

Obi slams continued detention of Nnamdi Kanu

By **Damilola Olufemi**

The Labour Party's 2023 presidential candidate, Peter Obi, has criticised the prolonged detention of Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), calling it senseless and unjust.

Speaking during an interview on Channels Television's Sunday Politics on July 6, 2025, Obi questioned the rationale behind keeping Kanu in custody, especially over what he described as non-violent offences.

"Why is he still being held? It doesn't make sense to me," he said when asked whether he would support a political resolution to Kanu's case.

Obi further argues

The former governor of Anambra State argued that allegations of using offensive language were not sufficient grounds for incarceration.

"Some say he used vulgar words... I haven't even seen it," Obi noted. "But even if he did, so what? It wouldn't bother me as president if someone called me a



thief or an idiot—which they already do today. That's not my focus. My responsibility is to ensure the average Nigerian can afford food and live decently."

Reaffirming his preference for dialogue over force in resolving national agitations and security challenges, Obi said he would always seek inclusive and peaceful

solutions first.

"If there are people I can talk to, I'll talk to them," he said. "Let's say there's a bandit in the North East—I'll engage him initially just to say, 'Enough is enough.' But that's just the entry point. After that, I'll take firm action."

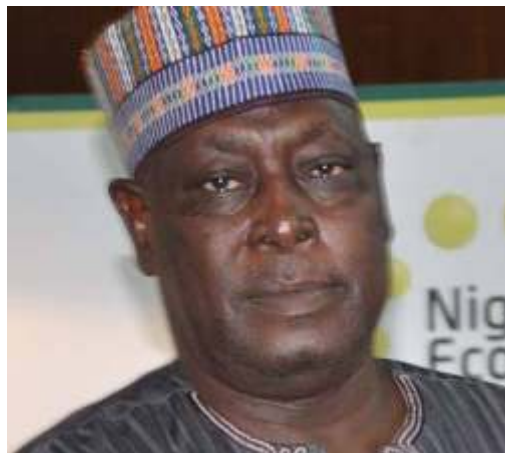
Ex-SGF, Babachir Lawal dumps APC, teases new political move

By **Damilola Olufemi**

Former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Babachir Lawal, has formally ended his association with the All Progressives Congress (APC), signalling a shift in his political allegiance.

In a resignation letter dated June 29, 2025, and addressed to the APC chairman in Banshika Ward, Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Lawal stated that his decision to exit the ruling party takes immediate effect.

While he did not disclose his next political destination, the former SGF hinted at aligning with a new platform. "I will soon make public my new political affiliation," he wrote, adding that the move is part of efforts "to join



other compatriots in working towards making Nigeria a better living place for all Nigerians."

Lawal distances self from APC

The former SGF, who served in President Muhammadu Buhari's first term, has in recent times distanced

himself from the APC's internal politics.

His departure comes amid growing speculation about his involvement with the emerging Nigerian National Opposition Coalition. Recently circulated photos on social media show Lawal in the company of key opposition figures, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, former APC Adamawa governorship candidate Binani Ahmed, and ex-senators Ahmed Barata and Abdulazeez Nyako.

Although Lawal has yet to officially declare for any party, the images have sparked rumours of a coordinated opposition front ahead of the 2027 elections.

Olubadan of Ibadan, Oba Olakulehin, dies at 90

By Damilola Olufemi



The Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Owolabi Olakulehin, joined his ancestors at the age of 90.

The monarch, who succeeded the late Oba Lekan Balogun, died early Monday morning (today) during the ongoing 90th birthday and first-anniversary coronation celebrations.

Oba Olakulehin's demise comes just two days after he marked his 90th birthday. The late Olubadan, Oba Olakulehin, was born on July 5, 1935. He was officially presented with the staff of office by the Oyo State Governor, Engr. Seyi Makinde, on July 12, 2024, as the 43rd Olubadan of Ibadanland.

Olubadan's death was rumoured in March 2025

In March 2025, it was rumoured that the monarch had died. However, the New Daily Prime reported that the Oyo State Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) spokesperson, Michael Ogunsina, has disclosed that the monarch was not dead in a terse statement, saying he spoke with the Commissioner for Culture and Tourism in Oyo State, Dr. Wasiu Olatubosun, who told him the Olubadan was alive.

Also, the Oyo State Government denied media reports suggesting that the revered monarch was alive.

Also, in a chat with our correspondent, the Chief Press Secretary to the Olubadan, Gbenga Ayoade, debunked the death rumours, saying that the monarch is hale and healthy.

"By the time I left the palace around 8 pm, there was nothing of such an incident. Things were moving well. There was no crisis. And when I contacted the palace after I left, they told me Baba was hale and healthy.

"The monarch just finished eating amala. He is hale and healthy. It is just a rumour. There is nothing of such," he had said in May.

SERAP to Tinubu: Prosecute those blocking NDDC audit report

By **Helen Okechukwu**



The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has urged President Bola Tinubu to publish the long-delayed forensic audit report of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and prosecute those allegedly obstructing its release.

In a letter dated 5 July 2025 and signed by its deputy director, Kolawole Oluwadare, SERAP called on Tinubu to instruct the Attorney-General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), and anti-corruption agencies to act swiftly on the audit, which exposes alleged misappropriation of over N6 trillion and identifies more than 13,000 abandoned projects in the Niger Delta between 2000 and 2019.

SERAP urges Tinubu

SERAP warned that failure to act would further erode public trust, stating that “justice delayed is justice denied” for victims of corruption in the region.

The organisation accused some powerful officials and politicians of deliberately blocking the report to shield themselves, citing allegations that the wife of a former minister received N48 billion within a year for vague “training” programmes. It also noted that many NDDC contracts allegedly went to members of the National Assembly.

“The forensic audit report of the NDDC can no longer be left to gather dust,” SERAP stated, adding that the Buhari administration failed to act on the report submitted in September 2021.

The group threatened legal action

before the ECOWAS Court if the report remains unpublished within seven days.

SERAP insisted that publishing the report and bringing perpetrators to justice would demonstrate the Tinubu administration’s commitment to fighting corruption, as required under Nigeria’s Constitution and the UN Convention against Corruption.

The group also demanded that recovered funds be used to compensate affected communities and revive neglected infrastructure in the Niger Delta.

Despite the audit costing taxpayers N1.4 billion, its findings have remained hidden, raising concerns that the exercise was merely a political smokescreen.

Tinubu mourns Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Owolabi Olakulehin

By Friday Omosola



President Bola Tinubu has expressed deep sorrow over the passing of the Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Owolabi Olakulehin, who died at the age of 90.

In a condolence message, the President extended his sympathies to the royal family, the people and government of Oyo State, and the entire Ibadanland, describing the late monarch as a revered traditional ruler, statesman, and symbol of peace and wisdom.

Mr Tinubu celebrated the life and service of Oba Olakulehin, whom he described as a man of intellect, integrity, and leadership.

He praised the monarch's significant contributions to education, governance, and national

development, noting that his impact reached far beyond the palace.

"Oba Owolabi Olakulehin was not just a custodian of Ibadan's rich cultural heritage, but also a principled leader whose influence extended into public service and academia," Mr Tinubu said.

He added that the monarch's death was particularly shocking as he had only recently invited him to his 90th birthday and first coronation anniversary celebrations.

Born on July 5, 1935, in Okugbaja village, Oba Olakulehin rose through Ibadan's unique succession system and became Olubadan following the death of Oba Moshood Lekan Balogun in March 2024.

A distinguished academic, he held a

master's degree in administration and economics and pursued doctoral studies.

He lectured at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and was widely respected for his commitment to research, integrity, and principle-driven scholarship.

Mr Tinubu described Oba Olakulehin's legacy as one that successfully bridged tradition and modernity, and a source of stability for Ibadanland and the wider Yoruba nation.

He prayed for the peaceful repose of the monarch's soul and encouraged the people of Ibadan to find comfort in the rich legacy the late Olubadan left behind.

Sultan of Sokoto, Emir of Ilorin mourn late Olubadan Olakulehin

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, has paid tribute to the late Oba Owolabi Olakulehin, the 43rd Olubadan of Ibadanland, describing him as a giant in thought and action whose legacy will inspire generations.

In a condolence message released on Monday and signed by the Secretary to the Sultanate Council, Alhaji Sai'idu Maccido, the Sultan expressed deep sorrow over the monarch's passing, which he said leaves a significant void in traditional leadership.

"The passing of this great monarch leaves a void that will be felt across the land. He was a good-hearted giant in thought and action," the Sultan said.

Though Oba Olakulehin spent just one year on the throne, the Sultan praised his dedication to his people and the development of Ibadanland.

"Even though he spent just a year on the throne, his commitment to his people and devotion to development were truly commendable," he noted.

As Chairman of the National Traditional Rulers Council of Nigeria (NTRCN), the Sultan highlighted Oba Olakulehin's contributions to peace and unity, describing him as a monarch who prioritised national interest above personal gain.

He offered prayers for the royal family, the Olubadan-in-Council, and the people of Oyo State.

"May God grant the family and the good people of Ibadanland the fortitude to bear this irreparable loss. Ameen," he prayed.

Meanwhile, the Emir of Ilorin and Chairman of the Kwara Traditional Rulers Council, Ibrahim Sulu-Gambari, has mourned the death of Oba Owolabi Olakulehin, the 43rd Olubadan of Ibadanland, who passed away on Monday at the age of 90.

The Emir's condolence message, issued through his spokesman, Dr Abdulazeez Arowona, and made available to the News Agency of Nigeria in Ilorin, described the passing as the divine will of

Almighty Allah.

Oba Olakulehin's reign, though brief at just one year, was noted for its peaceful nature and his dedication to sustaining the cultural heritage and traditions of Ibadan and the wider Oyo State.

The Emir praised the late monarch's contributions to the preservation of the rich history and unity of the ancient city.

Sulu-Gambari extended heartfelt sympathies to the immediate and extended family of the late Olubadan, the Olubadan-In-Council, the Oyo State Traditional Rulers Council, as well as the government and people of Oyo State.

In his prayer, the Emir asked God to grant eternal rest to the soul of Oba Olakulehin and to provide strength and patience to the people of Ibadan and humanity at large as they mourn the loss of a revered traditional ruler.

The Emir's message reflects the deep respect and solidarity among traditional institutions in Nigeria during times of bereavement.

Tinubu vows to tackle inflation, boost fiscal transparency

By Gbenga Olaleye



President Bola Tinubu has restated his administration's resolve to tackle inflation and promote economic stability through fiscal discipline, transparency, and active citizen engagement.

Speaking at the opening of the National Conference on Fiscal Governance, Transparency and Accountability in Abuja on Monday, Tinubu said the government is taking steps to strengthen financial systems across ministries, departments, and agencies. The three-day event was organised by the National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee.

Represented by the Minister of State for Finance, Dr Doris Uzoka-Anite, the president outlined key initiatives, including support for the Office of the Auditor-General, improved

procurement processes, and the adoption of digital finance tools.

"Public funds must be traceable, and officers accountable. Transparency and accountability are not optional, they are key to Nigeria's future," Tinubu said.

He emphasised the importance of tackling structural problems in food production and supply chains as a means to reduce inflation, while also calling for a concerted effort to eliminate wasteful government spending.

"Oversight is not a political tool. It is a patriotic duty," he told lawmakers, urging the National Assembly to remain diligent in its supervisory role.

Tinubu also called on civil society,

the media, and citizens to be proactive in holding government accountable and participating in governance processes.

Also speaking at the event, the British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Richard Montgomery—represented by William Robinson—commended Nigeria's recent economic reforms, including the removal of fuel subsidies and ongoing tax reforms.

Montgomery reiterated the United Kingdom's support for Nigeria's fiscal reform agenda but stressed that real progress depends on transparency, accountability, and the active involvement of citizens. He also encouraged the use of digital tools and innovation in managing public finances.

Aregbesola under fire over half-salary payments during his tenure as Osun Governor

By Friday Omosola



Since Rauf Aregbesola was appointed interim national secretary of the newly launched African Democratic Congress (ADC) in Abuja, a coalition aiming to unseat President Bola Tinubu in 2027, numerous claims regarding his past leadership have surfaced online.

Mr Aregbesola, once a close ally of Mr Tinubu, and other ADC members have highlighted several perceived shortcomings under the current All Progressives Congress (APC) administration.

They are campaigning on a promise of superior governance should Nigerians elect the ADC in the upcoming general election.

As this newly formed party continues to advocate for its agenda,

loyalists of the APC are actively exposing the alleged failures of many of these coalition leaders, including prominent figures like Atiku Abubakar, Peter Obi, Rotimi Amaechi, and Nasir El-Rufai.

These critiques focus on their performance during their tenures as governors or in other significant leadership roles.

Amidst the growing scrutiny of these new coalition leaders, who campaign under the slogan of 'Rescue Nigeria', Reno Omokri, an aide to former President Goodluck Jonathan and a staunch supporter of President Tinubu, has publicised alleged failures of Mr Aregbesola during his time as governor of Osun State and as Minister of Interior under former President Muhammadu Buhari.

Claims

On 5 July, Mr Omokri on his X page claimed Mr Aregbesola as a governor paid Osun civil servants half salary and earned the nickname, "Baba Halfusa".

He tweeted, "Someone who was paying Osun civil servants half salary, which earned him the nickname, Baba Halfusa, and still owed even that, is now accusing President Tinubu, who pays Federal workers the new minimum wage, and doesn't owe them, of inflicting suffering on the masses? Thank God for ADC, that Nigerians have short memories."

**Continue reading
on next page**

Cont from page 11

As of 7 July, Mr Omokri post has been viewed by 157 thousand X users, reposted by 374 and liked by 1,208 users.

Did Aregbesola pay half salaries?

Mr Aregbesola was first elected as governor of Osun State in 2010 and later secured a second term. His administration came to an end in 2018.

In a report published by The Punch on 1 May 2016, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) in Osun State condemned Mr Aregbesola's decision to pay civil servants half salaries, a practice that reportedly began in July 2015.

Yusuf Gambi, who at the time led a faction of the NLC in the state, described the development as deeply regrettable.

He lamented that it was always the workers who bore the brunt whenever the government faced financial difficulties.

Gambi further criticised the administration for prioritising capital projects while employees continued to suffer, stressing that the half salaries, in addition to being insufficient, were also paid inconsistently.

In 2017, Mr Aregbesola, through his then Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Adelani Baderinwa, acknowledged the half-salary payments to civil servants.

According to a Premium Times report published on 29 October 2017, Mr Aregbesola expressed his displeasure over the situation while

addressing the federal government's digital switchover team during their courtesy visit to his office.

He stated that no sensible government or leader would take pride in failing to meet its obligations.

He attributed the financial crisis that led to the salary cuts to the administration of former President Jonathan and the then-ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP).

He said, "Economic downturn induced by brazen corruption, wanton theft of crude oil and mismanagement of the country's resources by the last administration forced the state to what it was witnessing today."

He, however, clarified that not all employees were affected by the half salary payment, stating that, "Workers on levels 1-7, being the most vulnerable and the largest chunk of the workforce are being paid full salary. Workers on levels 8-10 receive 75 per cent of their salary, while levels 12 upward collect 50 per cent of their salary."

"The workers have shown maturity, support and understanding. We acknowledge and appreciate the sacrifices and support of the workers."

Backlog of half-salary arrears

Adegboyega Oyetola took over from Mr Aregbesola as governor in 2018 and served until 2022, when Ademola Adeleke assumed office.

In July 2023, Channels Television

reported that Mr Adeleke approved the disbursement of payments to clear the backlog of half-salary arrears accumulated during Mr Aregbesola's administration.

The initiative was part of Mr Adeleke's broader effort to fulfil his 2022 campaign pledge to address salary debts and provide financial relief to Osun's workforce.

He has since been paying the outstanding half-salaries and pensions in phases, having inherited approximately ₦26 billion in unpaid salaries and around ₦50 billion in pension liabilities from his predecessors.

By December 2024, Mr Adeleke announced that within his two years in office, his government repaid ₦62.31 billion in domestic debt and reduced the state's foreign debt by \$13.61 million.

According to him, Osun's domestic debt, which stood at ₦148.37 billion when he took office in December 2022, had been reduced to ₦86.06 billion by June 2024. Similarly, the state's foreign debt decreased from \$91.78 million to \$78.17 million over the same period.

Conclusion

Available records and public reports show that Mr Aregbesola paid half salaries during his time as governor of Osun State and left office without settling all the salaries owed to state workers during his second term, citing national economic challenges.

Lagos hosts revenue recovery summit, pushes for speedy resolution of revenue cases

By Friday Omosola

The Lagos State Government has convened a landmark Revenue Recovery Summit, aimed at accelerating the resolution of revenue-related cases in the courts.

The summit, themed “Speedy Dispensation of Revenue Cases in Court,” was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, and brought together key stakeholders in the justice and revenue sectors.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Judge of Lagos State, Justice Kazeem Alogba, who was represented by Justice Hakeem Oshodi, restated the judiciary’s commitment to improving judicial efficiency.

He announced that specialised judges would be assigned to handle revenue cases, supported by the integration of modern technology to streamline the process.

“Justice delayed is indeed revenue denied,” Justice Alogba declared, assuring that the judiciary would continue to work closely with revenue-generating agencies and the Ministry of Justice to ensure prompt case resolution.

The Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Lawal Pedro, delivered the keynote address, stressing the importance of timely revenue recovery for the effective delivery of public services in areas such as health, education, security, and infrastructure.

Pedro warned that when revenue cases are trapped in lengthy legal processes, it is ordinary citizens who ultimately bear the cost.

He highlighted several state initiatives to fast-track revenue disputes, including the establishment of the Commercial Courts Complex in Tapa, now serving as the Revenue Court, and the creation of a Revenue Recovery Unit within the Ministry of Justice.



He pointed to enabling legal frameworks like the Lagos State High Court (Civil Procedure) Rules 2019 and the Tax Administration Act 2025, which support the swift and transparent handling of outstanding revenue matters.

“The government’s policy is clear: all revenue cases must be heard and determined speedily. Delay in revenue cases is a delay in governance,” Pedro said, urging the judiciary, tax authorities, and legal practitioners to adopt case management strategies that ensure a fast and accountable system.

In his welcome remarks, the Solicitor General and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Hameed Oyenuga, described the summit as a call to collective action.

He emphasised that delays in revenue adjudication compromise the government’s ability to deliver essential services to the people.

Also speaking, the Chairman of the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS), Ayodele Subair, represented by the Director of Legal Services, Seyi Alade, lamented the slow pace of revenue litigation.

He noted that protracted cases hamper effective revenue administration and discourage voluntary tax compliance.

Alade commended the Ministry of Justice for organising the summit and called for specialist training for revenue judges, enforcement of strict litigation timelines, and the establishment of a Revenue Justice Working Group.

He highlighted recent LIRS reforms, including the deployment of the e-Tax platform, advanced tax intelligence systems, and improved enforcement measures.

“Justice delayed in revenue matters is not only justice denied, but development deferred,” Mr Alade said.

The summit was attended by senior judicial officers, government officials, legislators, and legal practitioners, including Justices Jumoke Pedro, Yhaqub Oshoala, and Anjorin-Ajose; Chairman of the House Committee on Finance, Femi Saheed; former Attorney General of Lagos State and current Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Ade Ipaye, and other stakeholders.

ASUU members begin strike over delayed June salaries

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) across Nigeria have begun withdrawing their services following a directive issued by the union's National Executive Council (NEC). The action is in response to the Federal Government's failure to pay June 2025 salaries by the agreed timeline, in line with the union's "No Pay, No Work" resolution.

Branches of the union at the University of Jos and the University of Abuja are among the first to have commenced the strike action. The President of ASUU, Professor Chris Piwuna, confirmed the development on Monday in Abuja, stating that all unpaid branches are expected to join the industrial action.

"What they are doing is just enforcing a NEC resolution," Professor Piwuna said. "We agreed at NEC that our members are going through a lot since our migration out of the Integrated Personnel Payroll and Information System (IPPIS). Certainly, our salaries are delayed for a week and sometimes 10 days before our members receive the paltry amount we get to help us carry out our duties well. Therefore, we agreed that if there is no pay, there will be no work."

Professor Piwuna expressed deep frustration over what he described as the government's "lackadaisical attitude" towards lecturers' welfare, noting that despite engagements with relevant officials, including the Minister of Education and the Accountant General of the Federation, no solution has been provided.

The union blames the recent transition to the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) for worsening delays in salary disbursement, though ASUU insists the problem lies not in the platform itself, but in deliberate inaction by officials at the Office of the Accountant General.

"The platform through which the payment is effected has not been the problem," Piwuna added. "It's just a deliberate effort by the Office of the Accountant General to delay the release of the funds. The platform is working well, but those who make it work are not willing to make it work."

Chairman of the University of Jos branch of ASUU, Jurbe Molwus, confirmed the strike by members, saying the decision

was based on both the NEC resolution and the consensus reached at the local congress. He stated that academic staff had stopped attending lectures and statutory meetings, with a strike monitoring team activated to ensure full compliance.

Similarly, members of the University of Abuja branch of ASUU reportedly withdrew their services on Monday due to the salary delay, although the branch chairman, Dr Sylvanus Ugoh, was unavailable to confirm. When contacted, the University's spokesperson, Dr Habib Yakoob, declined to comment on the matter, referring enquiries to the ASUU branch.

ASUU's President also issued a warning to the Federal Government over the outstanding N10 billion in Earned Academic Allowance (EAA). He stated that while N50 billion was initially pledged, only N40 billion has been disbursed to date.

"We hope that this is paid quickly so that we do not have to fight over it," he said, noting that the EAA issue, if not resolved soon, could spark another round of industrial unrest.

Oyebanji swears in Ogunmoye as Ekiti Chief Judge, urges courage, integrity

By Friday Omosola

Governor Biodun Oyebanji of Ekiti State on Monday swore in Justice Lekan Ogunmoye as the sixth substantive Chief Judge of the state, with a charge to uphold justice with courage, integrity, and an unwavering sense of duty.

Justice Ogunmoye had served in an acting capacity since November 5, 2024, following the death of his predecessor, Justice Oyewole Adeyeye.

His appointment was confirmed by the Ekiti State House of Assembly on 3 July after a recommendation by the judiciary committee.

Speaking during the swearing-in ceremony held at the Conference Hall of the Governor's Office in Ado Ekiti, Mr Oyebanji described the judiciary as the last hope of the common man and pledged continued support for judicial reforms, improved welfare, and the independence of the judiciary.

The governor urged the new Chief Judge to protect the long-standing reputation of excellence within the Ekiti judiciary and to lead with distinction.

He emphasised that history would remember Ogunmoye not by the honour of his inauguration, but by the legacy he would leave behind.

"Your Lordship, courage and integrity must be your constant companions. Let it be said in years to come that under your leadership, the judiciary of Ekiti State attained a higher standard—one that delivered justice for all, irrespective of status or circumstance," Mr Oyebanji said.



While congratulating Justice Ogunmoye, the governor reiterated his administration's commitment to supporting judicial reforms, enhancing infrastructure, and promoting initiatives that would ensure efficient and prompt service delivery in line with global best practices.

"The judiciary is the last hope of the common man because it guarantees equality before the law. It must not be guided by sentiment, fear, or favouritism, but by the constitution and the rule of law," Mr Oyebanji added.

Earlier, the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr Dayo Apata, commended Mr Oyebanji for adhering strictly to due process and the rule of law in the appointment of the Chief Judge.

He noted that the appointment was in line with legal provisions requiring

the recommendation of the National Judicial Council and confirmation by the State House of Assembly.

In his response, Justice Ogunmoye expressed gratitude to the Governor for the trust placed in him and promised not to betray the confidence of the government and the people.

He outlined his vision to lead a digitally driven judiciary aimed at improving efficiency, accessibility, transparency, and accountability across the justice system.

Dignitaries at the event included the President of the Ekiti State Customary Court of Appeal, Justice Monisade Abodunde; Head of Service, Folakemi Olomjobi; members of the State House of Assembly and Executive Council; traditional ruler, the Ewi of Ado Ekiti, Oba Rufus Adejugbe; and key stakeholders from the legal community.

Aiyedatiwa appoints Ategbale as Ondo hospital board chair

By Helen Okechukwu

Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa of Ondo State has approved the appointment of Olusegun Ategbale as the new Chairman of the Ondo State Hospital Management Board.

Ategbale's appointment took immediate effect following the exit of Taiwo Fasoranti, who now serves as the Secretary to the State Government (SSG).



With over 30 years of medical practice,

Ategbale has served in several hospitals and health institutions across Nigeria and the United States.

He hails from Oka Akoko in Akoko South West Local Government Area of the state.

Mr Aiyedatiwa urged the new chairman to use his extensive experience to improve the management of healthcare services across the state.

Osun INEC sets August dates for voter registration ahead of 2026 poll

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Osun State office of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced dates for the commencement of the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise, in preparation for the 2026 governorship election in the state.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Dr Mutiu Agboke, made the announcement on Monday during a strategic meeting with Electoral Officers (EOs) in Osogbo.

The meeting was held as part of efforts to evaluate readiness for the CVR and to deliberate on operational issues ahead of the exercise.

According to Dr Agboke, the CVR will begin in two phases: the online registration is scheduled to commence on 18 August 2025, while physical, in-person registration will start on 25 August 2025.

This announcement follows INEC's formal declaration of 8 August 2026 as the date for the Osun State governorship election.

"The meeting was designed to examine the state of affairs with respect to the CVR as it provides a platform for internal review before engaging with wider stakeholders," Dr Agboke stated.



He stressed the importance of aligning strategies and understanding operational realities before the commencement of the exercise.

"It is important for us to understand each other and align our strategies before we begin," he added.

Dr Agboke also noted that the meeting would feature a general assessment of INEC offices at the local government level, focusing on infrastructure, logistics, and workforce preparedness.

"We want to critically examine INEC local government offices and their officers to ensure everything is in order. The meeting is crucial for us to talk to ourselves and have an understanding before we bring the general stakeholders on board," he said.

Commending the Electoral Officers for their commitment, Dr Agboke acknowledged their efforts in maintaining operational efficiency despite various challenges. "I appreciate your commitment to ensuring that the INEC LG offices keep functioning effectively ahead of the exercise," he remarked.

In response, Chairman of the Osun Electoral Officers Forum and EO of Ifelodun Local Government, Abdulkadir Azeez, expressed gratitude to the REC for his leadership and inclusive approach.

"Your trust in us as EOs has been encouraging. We appreciate the REC for his open-door policy and constant engagement," Azeez said, assuring that all Electoral Officers in the state are fully prepared for the upcoming registration exercise.

"We have been working towards this, and we remain confident that the CVR will be hitch-free. We are ready, and I can vouch for the ability and competence of every EO in this state," he concluded.

The Continuous Voter Registration is a key part of the electoral process, enabling eligible citizens to register, update their details, or transfer their voter registration ahead of the 2026 polls.

TUC, JOHESU debunk leadership crisis at Lagos hospital

By Helen Okechukwu



Following speculation of an alleged power tussle at Yaba Hospital, the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Lagos State Chapter, and the Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU), Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital (FNPHY), Yaba branch, have dispelled claims of a leadership crisis.

This was debunked on Monday during a media briefing held by the TUC Lagos State Chairman, Mr Ekundayo Olugbenga.

The meeting aimed to address and clarify the circulated speculation and highlight hospital developments.

Mr Olugbenga, who was represented by a member of the state administrative council, Adegoke Monsuru, noted that the claim was politically motivated and intended to destabilise the hospital's leadership. On this note, Olugbenga described it as false.

JOHESU defends acting FNPHY boss

The JOHESU also strongly defended the Acting FNPHY boss, Dr Olugbenga Owwoeye, amid mounting criticism from the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) and the MDCAN.

“There is no crisis in FNPHY. What we see is a clear attempt by NMA and MDCAN to dominate leadership through pressure and propaganda.”

“The same group opposed the implementation of the pharmacy consultancy cadre approved at the national level; a reform which Owwoeye courageously executed,” they echoed.

JOHESU, in a joint statement signed by the Senior Staff Association of Universities, Teaching Hospitals, Research Institutes and Associated Institutions (SSAUTHRIAI), Medical and Health Workers' Union of Nigeria (MHWUN), Nigeria Union of Allied Health Professionals (NUAHP), and the hospital's JOHESU branch, reaffirmed their confidence in Dr

Owwoeye. They praised his transparent leadership, inclusive approach, and commitment to staff welfare.

“His administration has delivered impactful welfare policies that benefit every cadre of staff,” the statement read.

They dismissed accusations linking staff welfare delays to Owwoeye as baseless and misleading.

The union urged all stakeholders to focus on patient care and uphold professionalism, unity, and stability in the institution.

“FNPHY belongs to every healthcare professional. No association has the monopoly to dictate leadership,” they said.

JOHESU called on the Federal Ministry of Health and the Presidency to ignore politically driven distractions and support the hospital's ongoing transformation.

Diarrhoea: Kaduna govt seeks end to open defecation

By Helen Okechukwu

Global Afrobeats sensation, Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun, popularly known as Wizkid, has shared a deeply personal moment with fans, revealing that he had a heartfelt conversation with God and asked Him to remove everything evil from his life.

The Grammy-winning singer made this emotional confession on Tuesday via a post on his Instagram story. According to him, since that prayer, he has been noticing signs that his request is being answered.

A new chapter for the superstar

Wizkid, known for hits like Essence, Ojuelegba, and Fever, said the change in his life began after he made the spiritual request. He told his over 17 million Instagram followers that he spoke directly to God and pleaded for divine help.

“I told God to take everything evil out of my life, and I’ve been seeing signs,” Wizkid wrote in his Instagram story. “Work with God.”

The message was brief, but it carried deep meaning for fans who view the singer as more than just a performer, but also as a role model. It also marks a rare moment where the usually private artist opened up about his personal and spiritual life.

Fans react with support and praise

Wizkid’s message quickly caught the attention of fans and followers across social media platforms. Many praised him for acknowledging God publicly and taking a spiritual step towards self-growth and peace. Others shared how they were inspired by his words and planned to do the same in their own lives.

One fan commented on X (formerly Twitter), “Wizkid just reminded me that no matter how big you get, you still need God.”

Another added, “He didn’t have to say



much. Just a simple message, and I feel so motivated to talk to God again.”

A pattern of reflection

This is not the first time Wizkid has spoken about deeper issues beyond music. In the past, he has hinted at the importance of family, humility, and keeping a close circle. However, this message is one of the clearest signs that the artist is entering a more reflective and possibly spiritual phase in his life.

Observers say this may also reflect the emotional growth that comes with age and experience. The 34-year-old father of four has been in the music industry for over a decade and has faced both success and challenges along the way.

Encouraging others to walk with God

Wizkid did not stop at sharing his personal story. He also used the opportunity to urge his fans to build a closer relationship with God.

“Work with God,” he advised in his post, a direct message to fans encouraging them to involve faith in their lives and decisions.

For some, it felt like more than just a suggestion; it felt like guidance from someone who has walked a long road

and learned important lessons.

Growing influence beyond music

As one of the biggest names in African music, Wizkid’s influence goes far beyond the studio or stage. His words carry weight, especially among young people who look up to him not only for his talent but also for his attitude and lifestyle.

Experts say that when celebrities open up about their spiritual journeys, it can have a positive ripple effect across communities. In a world filled with pressure and distractions, a simple reminder to seek peace through faith can make a big difference.

Final thoughts

Wizkid’s message may have been short, but it was powerful. It gave fans a glimpse into his private world and reminded many of the power of prayer and personal transformation.

In an industry often defined by fame, money, and attention, the Starboy is showing that spiritual health matters too.

And for many fans, that message came right on time.

U.S. faces worst measles outbreak in over 30 years

By **Damilola Olufemi**

The United States is grappling with its most severe measles outbreak since 1992, with 1,277 confirmed cases reported across nearly 40 states in 2025, according to new data released Monday by Johns Hopkins University. Texas has emerged as the epicentre, accounting for over 60% of all infections.

The resurgence of measles—a disease once declared eradicated in the U.S. due to successful vaccination campaigns—comes amid declining immunisation rates and a growing wave of public distrust in health authorities.

So far, three deaths have been linked to the outbreak, including two young children. All were reportedly unvaccinated. Public health experts warn that the true toll may be higher due to underreporting in some areas.

“This is a wake-up call,” one health official said. “We are seeing the consequences of vaccine hesitancy play out in real-time.”

Last major measles outbreak occurred in 2019

The last major U.S. measles outbreak occurred in 2019, concentrated in Orthodox Jewish communities in New York and New Jersey, where 1,274 cases were reported but no fatalities. Before that, the last measles-related infant death in the U.S. occurred in 2003, three years after the disease had been officially declared eliminated nationwide.

Much of the criticism surrounding the 2025 outbreak has been directed at U.S. Secretary of Health, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a known sceptic of vaccines. Kennedy has long questioned the safety of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine, falsely suggesting it contains harmful substances, including so-called “fetal



debris.”

Public health advocates accuse Kennedy of fanning the flames of anti-vaccine sentiment and contributing to the current crisis. His controversial statements, they argue, have undermined trust in science-based medical guidance and emboldened vaccine-resistant communities.

The outbreak reportedly began in late January in a rural part of Texas, severely affecting a Mennonite Christian community known for resisting vaccinations. From there, the disease spread quickly through under-immunised populations, exacerbated by close communal living and limited access to public health infrastructure.

The ripple effects have extended beyond U.S. borders. Canada has recorded over 3,500 measles cases this year—including one fatality—mostly in Ontario. In Mexico, nearly 2,600 cases and nine deaths have been confirmed, according to the Pan-

American Health Organisation.

WHO sounds alarm

The World Health Organisation has already sounded the alarm, noting that Europe’s measles cases doubled in 2024, reaching a 25-year high. Experts fear the trend could undermine decades of global progress in combating vaccine-preventable diseases.

“Measles is not a harmless childhood illness—it can kill,” one infectious disease specialist emphasised. “It’s entirely preventable with a vaccine that has been proven safe and effective for decades.”

As the outbreak escalates, pressure is mounting on U.S. federal health agencies to launch more aggressive immunisation campaigns, combat misinformation, and rebuild public trust. Many warn that without urgent intervention, measles could become a recurring public health threat.

Nollywood Actor Saka opens up on getting married at 40

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



Popular Nigerian actor and comedian Saka has spoken candidly about the reasons behind his late entry into marriage.

Saka, whose real name is Afeez Oyetoro, in a recent interview with media personality Chude Jideonwo on the With Chude podcast, the beloved actor shared personal details about his life, career journey, and the challenges he faced before settling down.

Saka shares reasons

Saka, who also serves as a theatre arts lecturer at the Lagos State University of Education, revealed that he didn't get married until the age of 40. He attributed the delay to a mix of personal insecurities and financial instability.

"I lacked confidence," he admitted. "I'm a very reserved person. I got married late because of two major reasons: myself and my profession."

No money in theatre arts

The veteran actor explained that, at the time he was building his career, theatre arts was not a lucrative profession. While many pursued it out of passion, there was little to no recognition or financial reward.

"There was no money in theatre arts back then. Nobody even recognised the artistes. We were just doing it for the love of art," he said. "And to make things worse, we were only taught how to act, not how to make money from acting."

Saka recounted that he finished school without owning a single car or any valuable possessions. His lack of material success made it difficult for him to attract a life partner.

The actor shared a painful memory involving a woman he once considered marrying. According to him, she dismissed his career and

mocked his prospects.

"One lady told me outright that I was wasting my life. She said I should leave the theatre and find something more relevant to do," he recalled. "Another woman insisted I must own two cars before she could marry me. At that moment, something in me said, 'This is not your wife.'"

Despite these setbacks, Saka remained committed to his craft. His love for acting kept him going even when the rewards were not visible.

How Saka found true love

Eventually, Saka met and married his wife, Olaide Oyetoro, in 2003. The couple has since been blessed with three children. Reflecting on his journey, he expressed gratitude for how things eventually turned out.

"Today, I'm paying school fees with grey hair," he said with a laugh, showing appreciation for how far he has come despite the odds.

Zinoleesky shares 'bad things' he did for music

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular Nigerian singer, Zinoleesky, has opened up about the challenges he faced in his journey to becoming a music star.

In a recent interview with SB Live, the Afrobeats sensation revealed that he made bold and “crazy” decisions to follow his passion for music — including running away from home at a young age.

Choosing music over convention

The Marlian record label singer, whose real name is Oniyide Azeez, explained that his decision to pursue a music career was met with strong resistance from his family. Like many Nigerian parents, he was more comfortable with traditional career paths, such as law, medicine, engineering, or learning a trade.

“Nigerian parents are always in denial whenever you want to do stuff like music,” he said during the interview. “They want you to go for a professional course or learn a skill. So you just have to find your way. For me, I did some crazy things. I ran away from home to do music.”

His story reflects the reality of many young Nigerian talents who struggle with parental expectations and societal norms that discourage careers in the entertainment industry. But Zinoleesky knew what he wanted and was determined to chase it.

Starting with rap

Before his fame in Afrobeats, Zinoleesky began his music journey as a rapper. According to him, his early days were shaped by rap music, but he later transitioned to singing as he explored different styles and found his voice in Afrobeats.



This shift paid off, as it allowed him to connect with a wider audience and build a unique sound that blends street vibes with catchy melodies. His talent soon caught the attention of social media users, and his freestyles started making waves online.

Zinoleesky's rise to fame through social media

Zinoleesky became a household name in 2017 after several of his freestyle videos went viral. His growing popularity online quickly turned into real-world fame, as fans embraced his energy and street-inspired lyrics.

Many were drawn to his raw talent and relatable stories, which mirrored the daily lives of Nigerian youth. His ability to blend street slang with emotion-filled vocals helped him carve a niche for himself in a highly competitive industry.

Record labels offer, breakthrough

As his fame grew, so did the interest of top players in the Nigerian music scene. There were reports that Zinoleesky received an offer to join Davido's record label, DMW, but he

reportedly turned it down. Instead, he chose to sign with Marlian Music, the label owned by controversial street-pop artist, Naira Marley, in December 2019.

The partnership marked a turning point in Zinoleesky's career. With the support of Marlian Music, he was able to release more polished work and reach a larger audience. The move proved to be a wise decision.

Debut album and hit songs

In 2020, Zinoleesky released his debut extended play (EP) titled *Chrome Eccentric*, which featured popular tracks like “Ma Pariwo” and “Kilofeshe.” The songs quickly became street anthems and helped cement his place in the Afrobeats scene.

His unique sound, catchy hooks, and consistent delivery have kept him at the forefront of Nigeria's new generation of music stars. Today, Zinoleesky continues to release chart-topping singles and collaborate with other major artists, further expanding his reach both locally and internationally.

Ruth Kadiri breaks silence on marriage with husband

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nollywood actress Ruth Kadiri has opened up about her decision to keep her husband, Mr. Ezerika, away from the public eye.

In a candid conversation on the Dear Life podcast hosted by Diary of a Naija Girl, Kadiri addressed ongoing rumours surrounding her marriage and cleared the air about her private family life.

The actress explained that her marriage is not a secret. Instead, she chooses to keep it private to avoid unnecessary attention and drama. Kadiri made it clear that her decision is not about hiding her husband but about protecting her peace.

Privacy, not secrecy

Kadiri, who is a mother of two, said she and her husband share a close bond and attend public functions together. However, she prefers not to make their relationship the centre of attention. She noted that this approach has worked well for her family.

“My husband is not a secret. People who know me personally, know him. And for me, that’s enough,” she said during the interview. “I don’t see the need to prove anything to the public.”

She emphasised that her choice is based on a desire to avoid drama and unnecessary opinions from strangers on social media. “People just want something to talk about. If you put your relationship out there, they will judge you. If you don’t, they will still talk. So why not protect your peace?” she added.

She further revealed that, contrary to public perception, her husband is very much involved in her public life. According to her, they go to church together, and attend events, and he is often present at her personal and professional gatherings.



“We go to church together, we attend events together,” she said. “In the events I organize, my husband is always there.”

This, she said, shows that her marriage is not hidden. Rather, it is private in the sense that it is not constantly displayed online or in the media.

The actress questioned the idea that being married requires public validation. She expressed confusion over the pressure that comes with having to prove one’s relationship status to others. In her words, “I don’t know why I’ll sit down and be thinking, ‘What am I proving?’”

She added that there is nothing to prove to people who are not part of her daily life. For her, the opinions of outsiders do not count as long as she and her family are happy and secure.

The actress believes that social media has created a false sense of entitlement among followers, who expect celebrities to share every detail of their personal lives. Kadiri, however, is not swayed by such demands.

Ruth Kadiri has earned respect in the Nigerian film industry not just for her acting talent, but also for how she handles her personal life. She is one of the few Nollywood stars who have

managed to keep their families out of the spotlight while maintaining a successful career.

By setting clear boundaries, Kadiri says she has been able to enjoy both fame and a peaceful home. She encourages others in the public eye to find a balance that works for them and not to feel pressured by public expectations.

Fans react to Ruth Kadiri’s stand

Many fans have taken to social media to support Kadiri’s decision, praising her for setting a positive example. They applauded her maturity and her efforts to keep her family away from online drama.

Some social media users also agreed that celebrities should not be forced to share private aspects of their lives just to satisfy public curiosity.

In a time when many celebrities share every moment online, Kadiri’s approach stands out. She remains focused on her career and her family, without feeling the need to constantly explain herself.

Her message is clear: privacy is not secrecy, and peace of mind is more important than public approval.

Cynthia Morgan slams ex-record label boss, Jude Okoye

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian dancehall star Cynthia Morgan, now known as Madrina, has once again brought her long-standing dispute with her former record label boss, Jude Okoye, to the public eye.

In a strongly worded statement posted on her Instagram page, the singer accused Okoye of badmouthing her behind her back and avoiding every attempt she has made to resolve their differences face-to-face.

Background of the dispute between Cynthia Morgan and Jude Okoye
Cynthia Morgan's fallout with Jude Okoye dates back to around 2016 when she suddenly faded from the spotlight despite being one of Nigeria's most promising female dancehall artists. In 2020, she opened up during an Instagram live session, claiming that her contract with Northside Entertainment left her financially and emotionally drained. She also revealed that she lost access to her stage name, social media accounts, and royalties.

In response at the time, Jude Okoye denied the allegations, stating that he did not take ownership of her name or music rights. He also shared parts of her contract to back his claims. The controversy sparked mixed reactions among fans and music industry stakeholders, with many calling for more transparency in label-artist agreements.

Accusations of backdoor talks

The singer, who once enjoyed massive popularity under Okoye's Northside Entertainment, expressed her frustration over the music executive's alleged refusal to communicate directly with her. According to her, all her efforts to schedule a physical meeting with Okoye since their falling out in 2016 have failed.

In her Instagram post, she stated plainly, "All you have done since 2016 is talk behind my back. All efforts to see you in person have been to no avail."

She claimed that rather than seeking a resolution, Okoye has chosen to stay



silent while continuing to speak negatively about her in private.

Disappointment and accusations of dishonesty

Morgan didn't hold back in expressing her disappointment. She suggested that Okoye's silence and unwillingness to meet may be rooted in guilt and shame over how their professional relationship ended.

"It is news that I am disappointed in you and I know you are also disappointed in yourself, hence your no-face policy," she wrote, implying that Okoye was avoiding confrontation because of his own conscience.

She also accused him of dishonesty and alleged that he had been instrumental in blocking her progress by withholding what she believed she rightfully earned.

The singer added a spiritual undertone to her post, suggesting that their unresolved conflict has moral and divine consequences. She reflected on the idea of reaping what one sows, acknowledging that she may have made mistakes in the past, but insisting that Okoye, too, must answer for his actions.

"But you see, I know I had to reap my destruction for sowing in flesh," Morgan wrote. "And you too will reap yours for



being an instrument and for holding back such earnings through dishonesty. As we all know, God cannot be mocked."

Her statement hints at both regret and a sense of justice. While she admits to personal failings, she maintains that Okoye's role in the breakdown of their working relationship cannot be overlooked.

However, Okoye, a music executive known for managing the now-defunct music duo P-Square, has remained largely silent regarding the matter in recent months. He has not responded to Morgan's latest claims.

A pattern of industry conflicts Cynthia Morgan case

Cynthia Morgan is not the only Nigerian artist who has spoken out about challenges with record labels. In recent years, several artists have come forward with stories of contract disputes, unfair treatment, and emotional stress during and after their time under various music management deals.

Her renewed outburst adds to the growing list of industry feuds that highlight the need for better legal protection, transparency, and communication between artists and label executives.

EeZee Tee negotiating royalty settlement with Mercy Chinwo, manager discloses

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The Managing Director of EeZee Conceptz Limited, Nancy Nnadi, widely known as Coach Nancy, has confirmed that discussions are ongoing to resolve a royalty dispute with popular gospel singer, Mercy Chinwo.

Nnadi made this known in a recent Instagram post, where she also retracted an earlier statement she made, which Chinwo had described as defamatory.

Background to the dispute between Mercy Chinwo and EeZee Tee

The disagreement between Chinwo and her former record label dates back to January 2025, when the singer filed a lawsuit against Ezekiel Onyedikachukwu, also known as EeZee Tee. Onyedikachukwu is the founder and former head of EeZee Conceptz, the label that helped launch Chinwo's music career.

According to court filings, Chinwo accused him of diverting \$345,000 in music royalties. The legal action came two years after the singer parted ways with the label. At the time, both parties gave no detailed explanation for the split, but sources cited unresolved financial disagreements.

Fresh accusations and legal backlash

Amid the royalty battle, Nancy Nnadi publicly accused Mercy Chinwo of financial misconduct. The claims, made through her social media channels, stirred further tension and public debate.

Reacting to the accusation, Chinwo responded with a defamation lawsuit against Nnadi. In her court documents, the gospel singer demanded a public apology and the immediate deletion of



the offensive posts.

Coach Nancy apologises

Over the weekend, Coach Nancy took to Instagram to withdraw her earlier statements. She explained that the retraction followed legal advice and was also motivated by a desire for peace.

She wrote, "On the advice of my lawyer, and for the sake of peace and the love of God, I retract my earlier post about Minister Mercy Chinwo. I also pray that Almighty God perfects the ongoing settlement process being facilitated by the Fathers of Faith between her and EeZee Conceptz."

Religious leaders step in

Nnadi revealed that respected religious leaders have stepped in to mediate between Chinwo and the label. She described them as "Fathers of Faith," implying that notable figures in the Christian community are working to resolve the dispute amicably.

While no official names have been

mentioned, the involvement of church leaders suggests that both sides are open to a peaceful resolution.

Hopes for a peaceful resolution

Industry watchers believe that the public apology by Nnadi and the involvement of religious leaders signal a positive turn in the prolonged conflict.

Mercy Chinwo, known for hits like Excess Love and Chinedum, remains one of Nigeria's top gospel artists. Her fallout with EeZee Conceptz had raised concerns among fans and fellow gospel musicians, many of whom have urged both sides to settle the matter privately.

Meanwhile, as of the time of filing this report, Mercy Chinwo has not released any official statement in response to Nnadi's apology or the update on the peace talks.

However, insiders suggest that negotiations are moving forward, and both parties are considering options outside the courtroom.

Trump vows to slam extra 10% tariffs on Nigeria for joining BRICS

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

President Donald Trump has announced that Nigeria will be among countries facing an additional 10% tariff for aligning with what he described as the “anti-American policies of BRICS.”

President Trump made the declaration on Sunday via a post on Truth Social, adding fresh uncertainty to global trade relations.

Trump’s announcement, which did not elaborate on any specific policy of BRICS, came as the group’s meeting was underway in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The Brazilian government, on January 17, 2025, announced the formal admission of Nigeria as a partner country of the grouping.

Nigeria became the ninth partner country of BRICS, joining Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan. This partner-country category was created during the 16th BRICS Summit held in Kazan in October 2024.

No exception of policy – Trump

The bloc’s leaders appeared to aim for Trump’s sweeping tariff policies in a joint statement on Sunday, warning against “unjustified unilateral protectionist measures, including the indiscriminate increase of reciprocal tariffs.”

Without calling out the U.S., the leaders voiced “serious concerns about the rise of unilateral tariff and non-tariff measures which distort trade and are inconsistent with WTO rules,” warning that the “proliferation of trade-restrictive actions” threatens to disrupt the global economy and worsen the existing economic disparities.

“Any Country aligning itself with the anti-American policies of BRICS will be charged an ADDITIONAL 10% Tariff. There will be no exceptions to this policy,” Trump said in a post on Truth Social Sunday evening, stateside.



At the Summit, President Bola Tinubu reaffirmed Nigeria’s commitment to the BRICS partnership and the Global South.

In a statement signed by his spokesperson, Bayo Onanuga, President Tinubu declared: “Nigeria, therefore, associates with what I have heard today and all that has happened in BRICS. The next issues are financial restructuring and reevaluation of the global structure.”

He noted that environmental degradation, climate crisis, and global healthcare inequalities were shared concerns pertinent to Africa.

“Africa has contributed the least to global emissions but suffers the most,” he added.

President Tinubu emphasised the need for a new path of justice, anchored in fairness, sustainable technology transfer, and accessible financing so that emerging economies can fully benefit from various initiatives.

“The African continent is creating the path through the African Carbon Market Initiative and the Great Green Wall. We

believe that COP-30 will strengthen our resolve to adopt a strategic approach to achieving a healthy global environment.

Nigeria strongly believes in South-South cooperation. We can, therefore, not be passive participants in global decision-making on financial restructuring, debt forgiveness, climate change, environmental issues, and healthcare.

“We must be the architects of a future that addresses the specific needs and concerns of youths, who represent 70 per cent of our population in Nigeria. Therefore, Nigeria remains guided by our long-term vision, 2050, and nationally determined contribution.

“We are taking bold steps to accelerate renewable energy adoption, mainstream climate action, promote nature-based solutions, strengthen urban resilience, champion South-South cooperation, align with the global renewal framework, and achieve universal health coverage for all,” the President stated.

President Tinubu also said that addressing non-communicable diseases must remain a collective health concern.

Phillipson: UK set to withdraw support for special needs pupils

By Fatimah Idera

The United Kingdom Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson, refused multiple times on Sunday to confirm whether legally binding Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) would be retained under the new system. These plans currently guarantee tailored support for nearly 640,000 children in England, covering areas such as teaching assistance, therapy, and specialist school placements.

This was as the UK Government is considering scrapping the current system of personalised education plans for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including autism and ADHD, as part of a wider review aimed at reforming the UK's special needs provision.

Laura Kuenssberg, Ms. Phillipson, said only that the government would make sure that every child gets the support they need, but stopped short of ruling out scrapping EHCPs entirely.

EHCPs form the backbone of support for many children with complex needs, and their potential removal has sparked serious concern among charities and advocacy groups. Critics fear that reforms could amount to a cost-cutting exercise, stripping children of vital legal protections.

The rising number of EHCPs is up 11% in the past year and has placed increasing strain on local authority budgets, which are legally obliged to fund the often costly support packages. Some EHCPs require local councils to fund placements at private special schools charging up to £100,000 per year.

The government argues that the current system is inefficient and fails to deliver better outcomes despite an annual special needs budget of £11 billion. Officials say the review is focused on reducing administrative burdens and redirecting resources into mainstream schools to provide earlier, more inclusive support.

A government source said the plan was to slash costly bureaucracy and reinvest the savings, adding that there will always be a legal right to the additional support that children with Send need.



However, campaigners warn that dismantling the EHCP system without a robust alternative would leave many families without recourse if support is withdrawn or denied.

"EHCPs are the only legal framework that guarantees joined-up support across education, health, and care," said Tom Nicholls, assistant policy director at the National Autistic Society. "Removing them risks removing accountability and protections from the most vulnerable children."

Autism UK's chief executive, Henry Shelford, acknowledged the system's flaws but voiced scepticism about the Government's true intent. "There's no doubt that the EHCP system could be improved," but it's hard to trust that this isn't about cutting support under the guise of reform," he said.

The number of EHCPs has nearly doubled in six years, with most covering children diagnosed with autism, ADHD, or speech, language, and communication difficulties. These three areas now account for nearly 75% of all EHCPs, while support for children with physical disabilities or severe learning difficulties remains limited.

There are also concerns that Labour's new 20% VAT on private school fees may lead to a surge in applications for EHCPs, as more

parents exit the independent sector and seek state-funded support for children with special needs. Around one in five pupils in private schools are believed to have some form of Send.

Current system broken – Phillipson

Ms. Phillipson has called the current system broken, and a white paper setting out the Government's proposed reforms is expected in the autumn. But the potential shift has already set the stage for clashes with Labour backbenchers and special needs charities, particularly after Sir Keir Starmer's recent welfare policy reversal.

In response to growing concern, the Department for Education insisted the government is working closely with parents and experts to deliver a better, more sustainable system.

"There are no plans to abolish. Send tribunals or remove support," a spokesperson said. "We are investing £740 million to help councils create more specialist places in mainstream schools and are focused on early intervention to prevent needs from escalating."

The government says its reforms aim to restore confidence in the system and ensure every child receives the support needed to thrive, but for many families, any suggestion of dismantling the EHCP framework raises fears of losing a hard-won legal lifeline.

Trump slams 25% tariff on Japan, South Korea, warns of more to come

By **Damilola Olufemi**

The United States of America President Donald Trump on Monday announced a 25% tariff on imports from Japan and South Korea, citing imbalanced trade relationships with both countries.

The decision was disclosed in official letters sent to the respective governments as part of a broader trade push by the White House.

In the nearly identical letters, he stated that the new tariffs would take effect on August 1, arguing that current trade arrangements were “far from reciprocal.” He warned of further punitive measures if either country retaliated.

The announcement follows the U.S. president’s earlier pledge to send notifications to up to 15 nations about reinstating duties that had previously been suspended. Back in April, Trump had dubbed April 2 “Liberation Day” when he first revealed sweeping tariffs, claiming the U.S. was being unfairly treated in global trade. Although he paused those tariffs for 90 days, that grace period is now nearing expiration.

Trump left the door open for talks Despite the aggressive stance, Trump left the door open for talks. In the letters, he said the tariffs could be adjusted downward if Japan and South Korea revised their trade policies.

Japan’s Prime Minister, Shigeru Ishiba, responded on Sunday, saying he “won’t easily compromise” in negotiations with the U.S.

Although the Trump administration once boasted about pursuing “90 deals in 90 days,” progress has been slower than anticipated. So far, only trade agreements with the United Kingdom



and Vietnam have been confirmed, while a temporary tariff truce with China remains in place until mid-August.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent hinted at more deals coming soon. “We are going to have several announcements in the next 48 hours,” he told CNBC, adding that he’d received “a lot of new offers, a lot of new proposals” overnight.

Asked whether Trump might officially push back the tariff reimplementation date, the White House offered no immediate clarification. However, Bessent noted the letters serve as a final warning: countries can renegotiate terms or face the new levies.

Bessent also revealed plans to meet with his Chinese counterpart in the coming weeks. Previous rounds of negotiations have already taken place in Geneva and London.

Despite modest results, Trump’s trade adviser Peter Navarro insisted the administration is satisfied with current progress. “Every country that we run a major deficit with is fully engaged,” Navarro said on Monday

In a separate development, Trump threatened to impose another 10% tariff on nations aligning themselves with BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), accusing the bloc of promoting “anti-American policies.” The warning came after the BRICS group condemned Trump’s trade measures at a recent summit.

With the August deadline fast approaching, Washington’s trading partners are scrambling to avert further escalation. According to the European Commission, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had a “good exchange” with Trump on trade during a Sunday call, indicating that negotiations remain ongoing.

Starmer bows to pressure, waters down welfare bill to prevent rebellion

By Fatimah Idera



Sir Keir Starmer's welfare bill has passed through the House of Commons, but only after a major U-turn on key proposals in an effort to calm a growing rebellion within the Labour Party.

The government dropped controversial plans to change how people qualify for Personal Independence Payments (PIP), which had sparked anger among Labour MPs. Originally, the Bill proposed stricter criteria that would have made it harder for some disabled people to receive support.

However, this clause was removed following widespread criticism, and ministers confirmed that no changes will be made until a full review known as the Timms Review is completed.

Despite this concession, 49 Labour MPs still voted against the Bill, making it the biggest rebellion of Starmer's premiership so far.

Another 149 MPs backed a separate amendment to scrap the legislation altogether.

The climbdown has drawn

heavy criticism from opposition parties, who called it a sign of weak leadership and policy chaos. Some accused Labour of failing to deliver meaningful welfare reform and warned the changes leave a significant gap in funding plans.

While the Bill has now cleared this stage in Parliament, uncertainty remains over whether the dropped PIP changes will ever be brought back. For now, the government insists that all current PIP recipients will continue to receive their payments.

Iran President Pezeshkian alleges Israel assassination

By Damilola Olufemi

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has alleged that Israel attempted to assassinate him during last month's brief but intense conflict between both countries.

In an interview released Monday with U.S. broadcaster Tucker Carlson, Pezeshkian claimed, "They did try, yes. They acted accordingly, but they failed." He emphasized that it was not the United States behind the attack, but Israel. "I was in a meeting... they tried to bombard the area in which we were holding that meeting," he said, speaking through a Persian translator.

The comments appear to reference an alleged Israeli strike during the 12-day war that erupted in June.

On June 13, Israel reportedly carried out a series of targeted bombings inside Iran, which resulted in the deaths of senior military officers and nuclear experts. The attacks took place just days before



scheduled nuclear negotiations between Tehran and Washington, which resumed on April 12.

According to Iran's judiciary, more than 900 people died during the conflict. In retaliation, Iran launched multiple drone and missile attacks that killed 28 people in Israel, officials confirmed.

The brief but deadly war also saw Israel and the U.S. reportedly striking Iranian nuclear sites in Fordo, Isfahan, and Natanz.

Pezeshkian expressed Iran's willingness

return to negotiating table

Despite the conflict, Pezeshkian expressed Iran's willingness to return to the negotiating table, though he stressed the need for assurances. "We see no problem in re-entering the negotiations," he said. "But how can we trust the United States again? If we return to talks, how do we know the Israeli regime won't be allowed to strike us again midway?"

The interview comes as Iran continues to seek support from allies, including members of the BRICS bloc, following global condemnation of the strikes.

Flood kills 82 in Texas as search continues

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Residents across central Texas observed a day of prayer on Sunday as the death toll from Friday's catastrophic flash floods rose to at least 82, with dozens still missing and search efforts shifting from rescue to recovery.

Authorities confirmed that the sudden flooding, triggered by torrential pre-dawn rain, caused the Guadalupe River to rise 26 feet (8 metres) in just 45 minutes, devastating riverside communities and leaving a trail of destruction in its wake.

Particularly hard-hit was Camp Mystic, an exclusive summer camp for girls located along the river. Ten girls and one camp counsellor remain unaccounted for, heightening fears as the search enters its third day.



Sheriff Larry Leitha of Kerr County announced on Sunday that 68 people have been confirmed dead in the area, including 28 children. A further 10 fatalities were reported in neighbouring counties, bringing the confirmed statewide total to 82. Texas Governor Greg Abbott said 41 individuals

were still officially missing.

"We are seeing bodies recovered all over, up and down," Kerrville city manager Dalton Rice told reporters during a press briefing.

850 persons rescued after flood

Approximately 850 people have been rescued, with over 400 personnel, using boats, helicopters, and drones, actively involved in ongoing operations. However, continued rainfall over the weekend has hampered progress.

"The height the rushing water reached, to the top of cabins, was shocking," Governor Abbott wrote on X (formerly Twitter), following a tour of the devastated camp. "We won't stop until we find every girl who was in those cabins."

UK tops world's investment destination after U.S trade deal

By Friday Omosola



Britain has surged to the top of global investment rankings following a new trade agreement with the United States, according to a survey of top finance executives conducted by Deloitte.

The British country has overtaken major economies like the US, Japan, and Middle Eastern nations to become the most attractive destination for investment. Just six months ago, the country ranked sixth in the same survey.

Deloitte credited the dramatic leap to the UK-US trade deal, announced in early May, which has boosted confidence among corporate leaders. Geopolitical instability in the Middle East and fluctuating oil prices have also reduced the relative appeal of rival investment hubs.

“Despite conflict in the Middle East and volatility in oil prices, levels of concern about geopolitical risk fell slightly in the second quarter,” said Ian Stewart, chief economist at Deloitte UK.

“This may reflect an easing of concerns around trade in the light of the UK-US trade deal.”

The agreement was first struck by the US

under President Donald Trump’s new trade strategy, which was hailed as a landmark by the British government. It includes tariff reductions on British car exports to the US and protections for the UK aerospace industry. Mr Trump described the UK as truly one of our great allies when the deal was signed.

Chief executive of Deloitte UK, Richard Houston, said the new data highlights renewed confidence in the UK economy.

“This renewed confidence, coupled with a rise in risk appetite, is welcome and underscores the considerable investment potential the UK offers.”

The survey showed that a net 13% of UK finance chiefs now see Britain as a very or somewhat attractive place to invest, placing it in joint first position with India.

Furthermore, 17% of respondents said now is a good time to take business risks, a notable increase in corporate optimism.

The findings provide a timely boost for the Labour Government, which has faced political pressure over recent welfare spending disputes and falling foreign direct investment (FDI) levels. Official figures show that inbound FDI

projects dropped to 1,375 last year, a 12% fall from the previous year, and the lowest on record.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves welcomed the report that “Finance leaders see the UK as the best place in the world to invest. Under this government, we are open for business, delivering more investment, more jobs, and putting more money in people’s pockets across Britain.”

Meanwhile, global markets are bracing for a return of US tariffs when a temporary suspension expires this Wednesday. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent confirmed on Sunday that new tariffs would take effect from August 1 unless further trade deals are concluded in time.

“We’re going to be very busy over the next 72 hours,” Bessent told the media. “If you don’t move things along, then on Aug 1, you will boomerang back to your April 2 tariff level.”

Despite global uncertainty, the British country’s latest trade breakthrough has positioned it as a prime destination for investors to navigate a rapidly changing global economic landscape.

US tariffs to kick in Aug 1 barring trade deals – Treasury Secretary

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



US tariffs will kick in on August 1 if trading partners from Taiwan to the European Union do not strike deals with Washington, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Sunday.

The rates will “boomerang back” to the sometimes very high levels which President Donald Trump had announced on April 2, before he suspended the levies to allow for trade talks and set a July 9 deadline for agreement, Bessent told CNN.

The Treasury Secretary confirmed comments by Trump to reporters aboard Air Force One on Friday in which he also cited a new deadline: “Well, I’ll probably start them on August 1. Well, that’s pretty early. Right?”

The president said he had signed 12 letters to be sent out, likely on Monday.

The tariffs were part of a broader announcement in April where Trump imposed a 10% duty on goods from almost all trading partners, with a plan to step up these rates for a select group within days.

But he swiftly paused the hikes until July 9, allowing for trade talks to take place.

Countries have been pushing to strike

deals that would help them avoid these elevated duties.

So far, the Trump administration has unveiled deals with the United Kingdom and Vietnam, while Washington and Beijing agreed to temporarily lower staggeringly high levies on each other’s products.

Bessent

Administration was “close to several deals” – Treasury Secretary
“I would expect to see several big announcements over the next couple of days,” he said.

But he would not say which countries he was referring to, adding: “I don’t want to let them off the hook.”

As his July 9 deadline approaches, Trump has repeatedly said he plans to inform countries of US tariff rates by sending them letters.

Aboard Air Force One on Friday, Trump said sending notices would be much easier than “sitting down and working 15 different things... this is what you have to pay if you want to do business (with) the United States.”

Bessent pushed back at CNN host Dana Bash’s assertion that the administration was using threats rather than negotiations and denied that Trump was setting a new deadline with the August 1 date.

“It’s not a new deadline. We are saying, this is when it’s happening. If you want to speed things up, have at it. If you want to go back to the old rate, that’s your choice,” he said.

He said the playbook was to apply “maximum pressure” and cited the European Union as an example, saying they are “making very good progress” after a slow start.

EU and US negotiators are holding talks over the weekend, and France’s finance minister said Saturday he hoped they could strike a deal this weekend. Other countries were still expressing unease, however.

Japan’s Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said Sunday he “won’t easily compromise” in trade talks with Washington.

And BRICS leaders meeting in Rio de Janeiro are expected to decry the tariffs Sunday, saying they are illegal and risk hurting the global economy.

NHS faces new strikes as resident doctors demand 29% pay rise

By Fatimah Idera

Hospitals across England are preparing for fresh strikes by resident doctors, formerly known as junior doctors, who are demanding a 29% pay increase, a move that NHS leaders warn could lead to widespread disruption and the cancellation of hundreds of thousands of appointments and operations.

A ballot of the 55,000 resident doctors represented by the British Medical Association (BMA) closes on Monday, with results expected the following day. NHS officials fear a strong vote in favour of industrial action, potentially triggering six months of rolling strikes that could stretch into January 2026.

The looming dispute comes despite a recent 5.4% pay rise for 2024–25 the largest increase in the public sector this year, awarded by Health Secretary Wes Streeting. It followed a previous 22% pay uplift over two years, which ended a wave of strikes that had seen doctors walk out for a combined 44 days between March 2023 and July 2024.

However, the BMA has described the latest award as derisory and is pushing for a total 29% increase to restore what it claims is a 23% real-terms pay cut since 2008. The union argues this is essential for achieving full pay restoration and retaining doctors in the NHS.

“If members vote yes, they’ll be sending a clear message to the government that pay reform can’t wait,” said Dr Ross Nieuwoudt and Dr Melissa Ryan, co-chairs of the BMA’s resident doctors committee.

Nieuwoudt recently said many members are excited at the prospect of renewed strike action, with frustrations over pay and conditions still running high.

Wes Streeting has urged doctors not to strike again, warning of the damaging impact on patients and the NHS’s



recovery. “We can’t afford to return to a continuous cycle of standoffs, strikes, and cancellations,” he wrote earlier this year.

NHS bosses voice out concerns

Hospital bosses and NHS leaders have echoed those concerns. Danny Mortimer, chief executive of NHS Employers, said further walkouts could “likely lead to tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of appointments and operations being cancelled.” While he acknowledged doctors’ frustrations, he warned strikes would have a huge impact on patient care.

Daniel Elkeles, chief executive of NHS Providers, added that prolonged industrial action would divert NHS trusts from their core mission. “Strikes would see hospital leaders spending time managing disruption rather than focusing on improving care.”

The potential return to strikes also casts a shadow over Labour’s flagship NHS pledge to restore the 18-week treatment target by 2029. Critics argue

that the goal may be unachievable if widespread disruptions continue.

Rachel Power, chief executive of the Patients Association, said she supported workers’ rights but urged compromise. “With the 10-year health plan aiming to rebuild the NHS and restore public trust, we must ask how this can be achieved amid the risk of continued industrial action,” she said.

The Department of Health and Social Care defended the government’s record, noting resident doctors have seen a 28.9% pay rise over the past three years. “We want to work constructively with all unions to avoid disrupting services for patients,” a spokesperson said.

The spokesperson added that a government review into training and a long-term health plan to cut red tape would help improve working conditions. “We’re committed to reducing bureaucracy and ensuring doctors can focus on what they do best caring for patients.”

Iran deports Afghans in mass exodus as deadline expires

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Iran has begun mass deportations of Afghan refugees and migrants after a government-imposed deadline expired on 6 July, forcing hundreds of thousands to leave or risk arrest, according to a report by Al Jazeera.

The crackdown follows a decision earlier this year by Iranian authorities to give Afghans without legal residency until early July to exit the country voluntarily. The move affects many who fled Afghanistan following the Taliban's return to power in 2021 after the withdrawal of US and NATO forces.

With over 4 million Afghans currently residing in Iran, many of them long-term residents, humanitarian groups have expressed alarm. They warn that the deportations risk plunging already-impooverished Afghanistan into deeper instability.

The expulsions have intensified amid growing regional tensions and security concerns. In June, during a 12-day conflict with Israel, the United States launched airstrikes on Iranian nuclear sites in an operation dubbed "Midnight Hammer". Since then, Iran has significantly escalated its deportation

efforts.

According to the United Nations' International Organisation for Migration (IOM), over 700,000 Afghans have left Iran this year, with more than 230,000 departing in June alone. Al Jazeera reports that by late June, more than half of the 1.2 million Afghans who returned to Afghanistan in 2025 had come from Iran.

The scale of the deportations has surged sharply. Citing figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Al Jazeera said that Iranian authorities were returning more than 30,000 Afghans per day at the height of the recent conflict, up from a previous average of 2,000.

Iran officials maintain policy a matter of national security

Despite criticism, officials maintain the policy is a matter of national security.

"We have always striven to be good hosts, but national security is a priority, and naturally, illegal nationals must return," said government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani on Tuesday, as

quoted by Al Jazeera.

Scenes at the Iran-Afghanistan border have reportedly become chaotic and overwhelming. UNHCR official Arafat Jamal described the arrival of disoriented and desperate families, many of whom were forcibly returned.

"They are coming in buses, and sometimes, five buses arrive at one time with families and others, and the people are let out of the bus, and they are simply bewildered, disoriented, and tired and hungry as well," Jamal said.

Although some returns have been voluntary, UN agencies emphasise that many are being deported against their will. Aid workers fear the sudden influx will further strain Afghanistan's already fragile infrastructure, and have called for urgent international support to address the looming crisis.

With hundreds of thousands still at risk, rights organisations and humanitarian bodies are urging Iran to halt the deportations and reassess its approach in line with international refugee protections.

British teen Fakana freed from Dubai jail after sex with 17-year-old girl

By Fatimah Idera



An 18-year-old British teenager, Marcus Fakana, jailed in Dubai for having sex with a 17-year-old girl during a holiday, has been released and is now back in the UK, a campaign group has confirmed.

Fakana from Tottenham in north London was sentenced to a year in prison under the United Arab Emirates' strict laws prohibiting sexual relations with anyone under the age of 18. His release was secured after Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, granted him a royal pardon, according to the advocacy group Detained in Dubai.

"Marcus is currently recovering," said Radha Stirling, the group's chief executive. "His case has attracted significant public attention due to concerns over the criminalisation of tourists and disproportionate sentencing. We believe this highlights the urgent need for faster legal processes for foreign nationals and protections against unnecessary jail terms."

The incident occurred during a family holiday in the UAE in late August, when Fakana began what the group described as a holiday romance with another teenager from London, who turned 18 the following month. After the pair returned to the UK, the girl's mother allegedly reported the relationship to the Dubai police after discovering photos and messages.

Fakana was arrested in a hotel

Fakana was arrested at his hotel during a return visit to Dubai and later voluntarily surrendered to authorities in December, intending to serve his sentence in al-Awir prison.

Speaking at the time of his arrest, Stirling expressed concern for the teenager's well-being. "I worry about the impact of Dubai prison on an 18-year-old's life. It wasn't easy to find the words to say to him as he surrendered his freedom."

UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy previously said Fakana would receive full consular support but stressed that

Britons abroad must respect local laws. "People need to follow the rules of the countries they visit," he said in December.

Stirling has been sharply critical of the UK government's handling of the case, calling the sentence an utter disgrace and accusing ministers of placing trade relations with the UAE above the rights of citizens. "The Labour government should be ashamed they have not secured the freedom of a teenage tourist. It wasn't a difficult job," she said.

Fakana, who described the relationship as genuine and mutual, told the campaign group that he and the girl really liked each other and had kept the romance secret from her family because they were strict. He said he was frightened when police came to arrest him.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is yet to comment.

Parisians swim in the Seine for first time in over 100 years

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



For the first time in over 100 years, the Seine River has been officially opened to the public for swimming, as Parisians and tourists alike braved the waters this weekend following a landmark environmental overhaul.

City authorities gave the green light after a massive clean-up project transformed the iconic river, once infamously polluted, into a safe and swimmable public space.

...At the wake of 2024 Paris Olympics

This move comes in the wake of the 2024 Paris Olympics, which saw the river used for competition and training, despite health concerns that disrupted some events, including the men's triathlon.

The ambitious €1.4bn (£1.2bn) project included connecting over 20,000 homes to the sewage network, stopping the direct flow of waste into the river, upgrading water treatment plants, and constructing vast stormwater storage reservoirs, the

equivalent of 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools. These measures were designed to prevent sewage overflows during heavy rainfall.

Paris's outgoing mayor, Anne Hidalgo, a vocal supporter of the initiative, famously took a dip in the Seine herself before the Olympics. Her gesture symbolised a wider movement across Europe to reclaim urban waterways as communal, natural spaces, particularly as cities grapple with rising summer temperatures.

Now, up to 1,000 swimmers per day can enjoy three designated bathing zones along the Seine's banks, free of charge, throughout the summer until the end of August. These swimming spots are strategically located near key landmarks: the Eiffel Tower (which features a more family-friendly area), Notre Dame Cathedral, and the National Library.

Lifeguards are on duty while changing, and shower facilities are available for public use. Water

quality will be monitored daily by health authorities, and a flag system will indicate whether it's safe to swim. Diving, however, is strictly prohibited due to the shallowness of the river in these zones.

Beyond the capital, a further 14 bathing spots are planned along the Seine and Marne rivers. Two of these, located along the Marne, opened in June, expanding access to more communities and reinforcing France's renewed relationship with its waterways.

The initiative has not only inspired other European cities to pursue similar environmental revivals but is also expected to become one of this summer's top tourist draws. Local tourist boards are already predicting the Seine swim to be one of the most talked-about activities of the season.

As for President Emmanuel Macron, with the river now open to the public, he may soon be held to his word, having once pledged to swim in the Seine when it was safe to do so.

Osimhen agrees permanent transfer to Galatasaray

By Gbenga Olaleye



Napoli striker Victor Osimhen has reportedly given the green light to a permanent transfer to Turkish giants Galatasaray, according to Nigerian sports journalist Buchi Laba, who has close ties to the Super Eagles forward.

Laba revealed the news on social media platform X, sharing an exclusive update that Osimhen has expressed a strong desire to continue his career with Galatasaray beyond his current loan spell.

“Exclusive: Victor James Osimhen says YES to Galatasaray & wants to continue with the Turkish team,” Laba wrote.

The Nigerian striker has been a key figure in Galatasaray’s attacking line-up since his arrival, and despite Napoli’s efforts to retain him, Osimhen has made his intentions clear. Laba noted that Napoli have spent weeks trying to convince Osimhen to stay at the Serie A club, but the forward remains steadfast in his wish to move on.

“Napoli for weeks have been pleading with Victor Osimhen to stay, Osimhen has made it very very clear that he wants to leave,” Laba added.

At present, Galatasaray and Napoli are engaged in negotiations over

the payment of Osimhen’s release clause, which will determine the terms of the striker’s permanent transfer. Both clubs are working towards reaching an agreement, with further updates expected in the coming days.

Osimhen’s potential permanent move to Galatasaray marks a significant moment in his career, as he continues to impress in the Turkish Süper Lig and aims to cement his place among Europe’s top forwards. Fans of both clubs will be watching closely as talks progress.

More information is expected to follow as negotiations continue.

Modric to join AC Milan after Club World Cup farewell

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



AC Milan have confirmed that veteran midfielder Luka Modric will join the Italian giants this summer following the end of Real Madrid's Club World Cup campaign.

The 39-year-old Croatian legend, who announced in May that he would leave Real Madrid after 13 years, will begin a new chapter in Serie A under returning manager Massimiliano Allegri. Speaking at his first press conference since replacing Sergio Conceicao, Allegri was full of praise for Modric.

"Modric will arrive in August," said the 57-year-old tactician. "He is an extraordinary player."

Modric has featured primarily as a substitute during Real Madrid's Club World Cup run in the United States, making five appearances from the bench, including in the recent 3-2 quarter-final win over Borussia Dortmund. Real Madrid are set to face Paris Saint-Germain in the semi-finals on Wednesday, a match that could mark Modric's penultimate appearance in the iconic white shirt.

A Ballon d'Or winner in 2018 and regarded as one of the greatest midfielders of his generation, Modric has built a glittering legacy since arriving at

Real from Tottenham Hotspur in 2012. Over 13 seasons, he has amassed 28 trophies, including six UEFA Champions League titles and four La Liga crowns.

This move to Milan represents both a major signing for the Rossoneri and a potential final chapter in Modric's illustrious playing career. Milan, who finished a disappointing eighth in Serie A last season, will look to the veteran's experience and composure to help rebuild a squad that has seen some key departures in recent weeks.

Midfielder Tijjani Reijnders has joined Premier League champions Manchester City in a high-profile transfer, while left-back Theo Hernandez is reportedly close to sealing a move to Saudi Arabian side Al-Hilal. Despite those exits, Allegri remains optimistic about retaining some of the club's core talents.

"While Reijnders and Hernandez won't be part of the team next season, Maignan and Leao seem willing to stay," said Allegri.

Goalkeeper Mike Maignan, a key figure for both Milan and the French national team, has attracted interest from Chelsea. However, the Premier League club were unwilling to meet Milan's valuation, believed to be in the region of £25

million. Star winger Rafael Leao, whose pace and creativity were bright spots in an otherwise inconsistent campaign, has also been the subject of transfer speculation but appears set to remain at San Siro.

Allegri's return to Milan marks a full-circle moment for the Italian manager, who led the club to their last Serie A title in 2011 during his first spell in charge. Tasked now with restoring Milan's domestic and European standing, Allegri will hope the addition of Modric adds leadership and quality to a team in transition.

The Rossoneri will kick off their 2025-26 Serie A season against newly promoted Cremonese on 23 August. Until then, fans will be eagerly awaiting Modric's arrival, hopeful that the Croatian maestro can bring a touch of magic to a midfield in need of inspiration.

For Modric, the move represents both a new challenge and a graceful exit from the club where he became a legend. As Real Madrid prepare for their next Club World Cup clash, their supporters will savor every remaining minute of his elegant presence on the pitch — before he trades Madrid white for Milan red and black.

Arsenal close in on £70m deal for Gyokeres

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Arsenal are edging closer to securing a marquee summer signing, with Sporting CP striker Viktor Gyokeres now firmly in their sights. The Gunners' pursuit of the prolific Sweden international has accelerated in recent days, with face-to-face negotiations taking place between Arsenal sporting director Andrea Berta and officials from the Portuguese club.

Berta flew to Lisbon late last week for high-level talks aimed at striking a deal believed to be worth around £70 million. Sources close to the negotiations have described the discussions as "positive," suggesting that a resolution could be reached in the near future.

Gyokeres, 27, is coming off an outstanding season in which he helped Sporting win back-to-back Portuguese league titles and the domestic cup. Known for his strength, movement, and clinical finishing, he has scored 43 goals in all competitions since joining Sporting from Coventry City in 2023.

Arsenal's interest in Gyokeres is no secret. Mikel Arteta and the club's recruitment team have been scouting the striker for months as they seek to address a long-standing need for a reliable centre-forward. With Gabriel Jesus struggling for consistency and Eddie Nketiah

expected to leave, Gyokeres is seen as a potential game-changer up front.

Although no final agreement has been reached, sources suggest that personal terms between Gyokeres and Arsenal are unlikely to pose a problem. The player is thought to be keen on the move, viewing it as a significant step in his career and a chance to compete in the Premier League and UEFA Champions League.

Berta's trip to Portugal underlines the urgency with which Arsenal are approaching this transfer window. After finishing second to Manchester City last season, the club is determined to strengthen key areas and challenge again for the title.

In addition to the Gyokeres talks, Arsenal are also finalizing a deal for Brentford captain Christian Norgaard. The Denmark international is expected to complete the formalities of his move to the Emirates in the coming days after a fee of up to £15 million was agreed between the two London clubs.

Norgaard, 30, will add depth and experience to the Gunners' midfield, especially with uncertainty surrounding the futures of Thomas Partey and Jorginho. A strong tackler and disciplined passer, Norgaard has been a standout

performer for Brentford in recent seasons.

Meanwhile, Arsenal are also weighing up whether to follow through on their interest in Chelsea winger Noni Madueke. The north London club have already agreed personal terms with the England international, but are yet to table an official bid.

Madueke, 23, is understood to be open to the move, and Chelsea are aware of Arsenal's interest. Whether a formal offer is made will likely depend on outgoings, with Reiss Nelson and Emile Smith Rowe among the players linked with exits.

As Arsenal look to build a squad capable of going one better next season, the club is wasting no time in targeting top talent. The combination of Gyokeres' goalscoring prowess, Norgaard's midfield control, and Madueke's attacking flair could transform Arteta's options across the pitch.

With pre-season fast approaching, Arsenal are eager to have new signings in place early to integrate them into the squad. Should the Gyokeres deal go through as expected, it will represent one of the Premier League's biggest moves of the summer—and a major statement of intent from the Gunners.