



Natasha: Senate yet to be served CTC of judgment
- Spokesperson **Pg 2**

Tinubu orders Military to crush terrorists, bandits **Pg 4**



The New Daily Prime

f @new daily prime x @prime_daili149 @ @new_daily_prime

...your prime source for excellence in journalism

Obi, Atiku, Amaechi: Citizens speak on who should lead ADC **PAGES 8 & 9**



EU in last-ditch talks to avert Trump's 50% tariff threat **Pg 21**

WORLD

Pg 23

UK backs UN proposal for higher global taxes



WORLD

Pg 27

Conservative party calls for ban on foreigners claiming disability benefits



Natasha: Senate yet to be served CTC of judgment, says Spokesperson

By Oluwatosin Ologun

The Senate on Sunday said the Federal High Court in Abuja has not served the certified true copy of the judgment which nullified the six-month suspension of Kogi Central Senator, Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan.

On Friday, Justice Binta Nyako ordered the Senate to reinstate Natasha, describing her suspension as excessive.

But Senate spokesman, Senator Yemi Adaramodu, said the upper chamber has acknowledged the judgement of the court, but are yet to serve the CTC.

“Since no party to the case has been officially served the enrolled order of the judgment, none can enforce any perceived order or relief,” he stated.

“The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria acknowledges that judgment was delivered on 4th July 2025 by the Federal High Court, Abuja, in the suit instituted by Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan. However, the Senate is yet to be served with the Certified True Copy (CTC) of the said judgment.

“Our legal representatives, who were in attendance at the proceedings, have confirmed that the complete judgment was not read in open court.

“Consequently, we have formally applied for the CTC to enable a thorough review and informed determination of the appropriate legal response, particularly in view of the uncertainty surrounding whether the court made any direct order nullifying the suspension of Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan.”

Adaramodu, the Chairman of Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, stated that, “Pending receipt and examination of the CTC, and acting on the advice of counsel, the Senate shall refrain from taking any steps that may prejudice its legal position.



“The Senate remains committed to upholding the rule of law and will act strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria upon full clarification of the court’s pronouncements. We urge the public to remain patient and assured of the Senate’s fidelity to due process.”

See the full statement below:

Statement by the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria acknowledges that judgment was delivered on 4th July 2025 by the Federal High Court, Abuja, in the suit instituted by Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan. However, the Senate is yet to be served with the Certified True Copy (CTC) of the said judgment.

Our legal representatives, who were in attendance at the proceedings, have confirmed that the complete judgment was not read in open court. Consequently, we have formally applied for the CTC to enable a thorough review

and informed determination of the appropriate legal response, particularly in view of the uncertainty surrounding whether the court made any direct order nullifying the suspension of Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan.

Since no party to the case has been officially served the enrolled order of the judgement, none can enforce any perceived order or relief.

Pending receipt and examination of the CTC, and acting on the advice of counsel, the Senate shall refrain from taking any steps that may prejudice its legal position. The Senate remains committed to upholding the rule of law and will act strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria upon full clarification of the court’s pronouncements.

We urge the public to remain patient and assured of the Senate’s fidelity to due process.

Senator Yemi Adaramodu, Chairman, Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

EFFECTIVE FROM DECEMBER 1, 2024

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	372,500.00
HALF PAGE	213,000.00
QUARTER PAGE	106,500.00
14X2	118,000.00
10X6	261,585.50
10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	8,600.00
1X1	4,400.00

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	329,868.50
HALF PAGE	192,500.00
QUARTER PAGE	100,000.00
14X2	109,500.00
10X6	242,500.00
10X5	237,500.00
10X4	192,500.00
10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
5X3	57,819.00
5X2	40,379.50
4X4	55,000.00
4X3	31,000.00
4X2	22,003.50
3X2	17,260.00
2X2	12,945.00
2X1	8,630.00
1X1	4,315.00

POLITICAL COLOUR

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,200,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	885,000.00
FULL PAGE	420,000.00
HALF PAGE	213,250.00
QUARTER PAGE	115,012.50

POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,050,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	745,000.00
FULL PAGE	315,777.50
HALF PAGE	184,700.00
QUARTER PAGE	95,222.50

CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	254,533.50
HALF PAGE	142,787.50
QUARTER PAGE	80,706.50
14X2	78,222.50
10X6	217,830.00
10X5	192,305.50
10X4	142,787.50
10X3	121,355.50
9X6	192,305.50
9X3	107,757.50
8X6	170,725.00
8X3	70,390.00
7X4	58,666.50
6X4	67,048.00
6X3	53,361.50
6X2	37,694.00
5X6	83,850.00
5X4	55,900.00
5X3	43,705.00
5X2	27,938.00
4X4	44,493.00
4X3	33,524.00
4X2	22,350.00
3X2	16,763.00
2X2	10,877.00
2X1	5,588.50
1X1	2,795.50

SPECIAL POSITIONS

2X6 FRONT PAGE	700,000.00
2X6 BACK PAGE	300,000.00
2X6 INSIDE PAGE	155,000.00
3X6 FRONT PAGE	1,200,000.00
4X6 FRONT PAGE	2,250,000.00
5X6 FRONT PAGE	3,350,000.00
10X6 FRONT PAGE	8,250,000.00
EARPIECE FRONT PAGE(1.5X2)	246,500.00
EARPIECE INSIDE PAGE(1.5X2)	117,875.00
EARPIECE BACK PAGE	236,796.50
CENTRE SPREAD COLOUR (PUBLIC NOTICE)	1,027,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD COLOUR (PRODUCT)	929,000.00
CENTRESPREAD B&W	800,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	575,000.00
CENTRESPREAD STRIP COLOUR	191,668.50
DOUBLE SPREAD COLOUR	721,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	432,881.00
DOUBLE SPREAD STRIP COLOUR	144,294.00
CENTRE SPREAD B&W	835,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF PAGE B & W	550,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD B & W	725,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF B & W	425,000.00
FULL WRAP AROUND	15,000,000.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	8,500,000.00
HALF PAGE FRONT	5,500,000.00

PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	280,690.00
HALF PAGE	164,178.00
QUARTER PAGE	84,641.50
10X6	228,000.00
10X5	201,600.00
10X4	149,440.00
10X3	127,108.00
9X6	201,600.00
9X5	169,050.00
9X4	137,875.00
9X3	112,875.00
8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
5X2	32,916.50
4X4	52,666.50
4X3	39,499.50
4X2	26,333.50
3X2	19,750.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	6,500.00
1X1	3,292.00

PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	210,795.50
HALF PAGE	124,236.00
QUARTER PAGE	70,950.00
14X2	76,128.35
10X6	194,961.00
10X5	162,222.445
10X4	103,963.00
10X3	N/A
9X6	162,222.445
9X5	168,191.50
9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
7X4	72,676.00
6X4	65,000.00
6X3	41,124.50
6X2	29,858.00
5X6	71,378.00
5X4	42,825.00
5X3	29,858.00
5X2	22,841.00
4x4	N/A
4X3	N/A
4X2	17,737.50
3x3	23,458.00
3X2	14,923.00
2X2	10,200.00
2X1	5,439.50
1X1	2,700.00

ALLURE RATE

SIZE	RATE	TOTAL
CENTRESPREAD		967,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD		806,250.00
ALLURE COVER		750,000.00
(IBC) Inside Back Cover		376,250.00
(IFC) Inside Front Cover		430,000.00
(BC) Back Cover		483,750.00
Full Page		430,000.00
10X5		295,625.00
Half Page		225,000.00
EVENT		250,000.00

PICTURE & CAPTION

SIZE	RATE	7.5% VAT	TOTAL
PHOTO NEWS PAGE 2	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
PHOTO NEWS (3X3)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
PRESS RELEASE (4X4)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
EVENT COVERAGE	100,000.00	7,500.00	107,500.00
FEATURES	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00

GENERAL INFORMATION

SERIES DISCOUNT
5 PAGES 2.5%
10 PAGES 5%
15 PAGES & ABOVE 7.5%

SURCHARGE
PAGE 3 (100%)
PAGE 4, 5, 7 AND 8 (50%)
PAGE 2 (75%)

LOOSE INSERT
LEAFLET, POSTERS 1,000 COPIES
SPECIAL INSERTS (8 PAGES) COPIES
SPECIAL INSERTS (4 PAGES) 1,000 COPIES
HANDLING CHARGES FOR LESS THAN 35,000 COPIES
HANDLING CHARGES MORE THAN 35,000 COPIES

CLASSIFIED ADVERT RATES
CHANGE OF NAME
GUIDE BLACK & WHITE
GUIDE COLOUR

25,000.00
45,000.00
30,000.00
75,000.00
100,000.00

2,000.00
3,750.00
4,250.00

CONTACT US

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

E-mail Address:
info@newdailyprime.news
Terms and Conditions apply

ALL RATES ARE VAT INCLUSIVE

Tinubu orders Military to crush terrorists, bandits

By Oluwatosin Ologun



President Bola Tinubu, on Sunday, issued a marching order to the military to confront Boko Haram terrorists, bandits, separatists, and other criminal gangs threatening the peace and sovereignty of the nation.

President Tinubu, who gave the charge at the grand finale of the 2025 Nigerian Army Day celebration held in Kaduna State, stated that the time to crush the criminals is now.

He reaffirmed his administration's unwavering commitment to the welfare of officers and soldiers of the armed forces.

President Tinubu also promised to continue to invest in modern equipment, intelligence, and human capital that would improve the effectiveness of the military.

Represented by Vice President Kashim Shettima, Tinubu reminded the officers and men to discharge their duties with a high sense of professionalism, courage, discipline,

and honour, guided by the nation's constitution and international best practices.

"The Nigerian Army has never been just a force of arms. It has been a symbol of unity and duty. It brought the Nigerian Civil War to a close. With those immortal words uttered by retired General Yakubu Gowon, right now seated in this venue. No victor, no vanquished, reminding us that we are one people with one destiny, and beyond our borders, our men and women have carried our flag high on peacekeeping missions across the continent and around the globe," Shettima stated.

Speaking further, he said, "They have fought not for conquest, but for peace. They have stood not for power, but for principle. Today, we honour the enduring sacrifice of these men and women. We honour those who have paid the supreme price. And we honour those who continue to wear the uniform, who stand at the gates of our democracy, shielding us from those who would

tear it down.

"I find it fitting and visionary that the theme for this year's celebration is peace. It reflects not just strategy but humanity. You cannot build a great army without building strong soldiers, their welfare, morale, equipment, and sense of purpose are not afterthoughts. They are the bedrock of national security.

"I commend your commitment. I assure you that this administration stands firmly with you on that path. We are not unaware of the challenges that confront our nation. Terrorism, insurgency, banditry, and separatist agitations have threatened our peace.

"These are not mere security threats; they are existential ones. And let it be said plainly, these evils do not discriminate by tribe or people. They destroy churches and mosques alike. They abduct children without asking why they worship. Therefore, our response must be united, firm, and uncompromising."

Wike holds thanksgiving for completion of Abuja projects

By Damilola Olufemi

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, on Sunday held a thanksgiving service to celebrate what he described as the successful completion of key infrastructural projects recently commissioned in Abuja.

The service was held at St. James Anglican Church in Asokoro and broadcast live on major television stations, including Arise TV, News Central, and AIT. Notable attendees included former governors Samuel Ortom of Benue State and Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State.

The thanksgiving comes on the heels of a 19-day inauguration marathon initiated by the FCT Administration in June to mark President Bola Tinubu's second year in office. During the ceremony, Wike showcased a series of projects completed under his leadership.

Among the projects unveiled were the refurbished Abuja International Conference Centre (ICC), the Idu-Zuba link road, the A2 junction-Pai town road, and the Life Camp junction-Ring Road project.



A major highlight of the inauguration was the reopening of the ICC, which was renamed in honour of President Tinubu. The renovation cost, pegged at N39 billion, sparked public backlash over what many described as excessive spending.

Wike slams critics

However, Wike dismissed the criticisms, insisting that the expense was justified for

a country of Nigeria's status.

"People who criticise this project have no good taste," he stated. "Nigeria, as the giant of Africa, must not only claim the title — people must see why we are the giant of Africa."

The minister further asserted, "Nobody who loves this country would criticise the International Conference Centre."

Zulum debunks ADC defection speculation

By Friday Omosola

Governor Babagana Zulum of Borno State has denied claims suggesting he is planning to join the African Democratic Congress (ADC) alongside five other governors.

In a statement released by his spokesperson, Dauda Iliya, Mr Zulum dismissed the reports as baseless and said they were the work of mischief-makers trying to gain attention.

He reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to the All Progressives Congress (APC).

"We are aware of a false narrative circulating on social media, alleging that I intend to leave the APC for the ADC



along with five other governors. Let me state clearly that this story is entirely fabricated and has no connection to reality, Mr Zulum was quoted as saying.

He accused those behind the rumour of attempting to stir unnecessary political

tension and distract him from his responsibilities.

"These are people who contribute nothing meaningful to Borno State or the country. Their claims are simply cheap political propaganda," he added.

The governor urged residents of Borno and Nigerians at large to disregard the false reports and focus on the state's ongoing development efforts.

"We have no time for petty politics. Our priority remains the rebuilding and advancement of Borno State," he stressed.

2027: I'll contest for president, not as Atiku's running mate – Obi

By Friday Omosola



The 2023 Labour Party presidential candidate, Peter Obi, has confirmed that he will run for the presidency in the 2027 general election.

He firmly rejected speculations that he might team up with Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as a vice-presidential candidate.

Speaking during an appearance on Sunday Politics, Obi declared he will contest for the presidency because he's fully qualified and prepared for the role.

When asked whether he was considering the possibility of becoming Atiku's running mate, Obi dismissed the idea.

"That has never come up. No one has approached me with such a proposal. People are just speculating," he said.

Obi, who previously served as governor of Anambra State, reiterated his loyalty to the Labour Party while also maintaining his active involvement in the African Democratic Congress (ADC)-backed coalition formed by opposition figures with the goal of unseating President Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress

(APC) in 2027.

"I am fully committed to the coalition's mission to present a presidential candidate with the competence and compassion required to rescue this nation," he said.

Obi added that he would need no more than four years to deliver impactful governance.

He stressed that the damage done to the country in the past two years can be reversed within the same time frame.

"In two years, so much harm has been done. But two years is also enough to begin real change. Nigerians deserve a president who genuinely cares about their well-being and can lead with empathy," he stated.

The opposition coalition gained significant traction on 2 July when Atiku, Obi, former Senate President David Mark, former ministers Rauf Aregbesola and Rotimi Amaechi, and ex-Kaduna State governor Nasir El-Rufai publicly endorsed the ADC as the platform to challenge Tinubu, whose administration

has been widely criticised for worsening economic conditions, record-breaking inflation, and a sharp rise in the cost of living.

The coalition's strategy is to capitalise on the combined strength of the votes secured by Atiku and Obi in the 2023 elections.

Collectively, the two candidates polled over 12 million votes, which was more than four million votes ahead of Tinubu's total, though the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) ultimately declared Tinubu the winner.

Addressing claims that the coalition is composed of outdated politicians and former government insiders, Obi argued that their experience remains invaluable.

According to Obi, both success and failure offer critical insights.

"We need people with all kinds of experience—those who know where the system broke down and those who know how to fix it. That knowledge is essential for moving the country forward," he said.

Bayero, Atiku pay tribute to late Aminu Dantata

By Friday Omosola



The deposed Emir of Kano, Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero, and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar have paid glowing tributes to the late elder statesman and renowned industrialist, Alhaji Aminu Dantata, describing him as a national treasure and a rare gem whose contributions to Nigeria's development will be remembered for generations.

Bayero made his remarks on Sunday shortly after returning from Madinah, Saudi Arabia, where he had led funeral prayers for the late business mogul. Upon his return to Kano, he paid a condolence visit to the bereaved family, accompanied by senior members of the Kano Emirate Council, district heads, and loyal subjects.

According to a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Abubakar Balarabe Kofar Naisa, Bayero stated, "The entire world will remember the immense contributions of Alhaji Aminu Alhassan Dantata. He devoted his life to supporting humanity through faith, commerce,

education, and philanthropy."

The monarch offered special prayers for the repose of Dantata's soul, asking God to grant his family, the people of Kano, and the nation at large the strength to bear the loss. In a separate condolence visit to Mariya Dantata, Bayero prayed for divine forgiveness and for Dantata's admittance into Aljannatul Firdaus (Paradise).

In a parallel show of respect, former Vice President and 2023 presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar, also visited the Dantata residence in Kano on Sunday. He was received warmly by political associates and supporters before offering prayers and words of comfort to the grieving family.

Atiku described the late industrialist as a "national treasure," whose legacy in business, philanthropy, and national development would continue to inspire Nigerians.

"Alhaji Aminu Dantata's contributions to Nigeria's economic development and his deep commitment to humanitarian causes are exemplary. His memory will continue to inspire future generations," Atiku said.

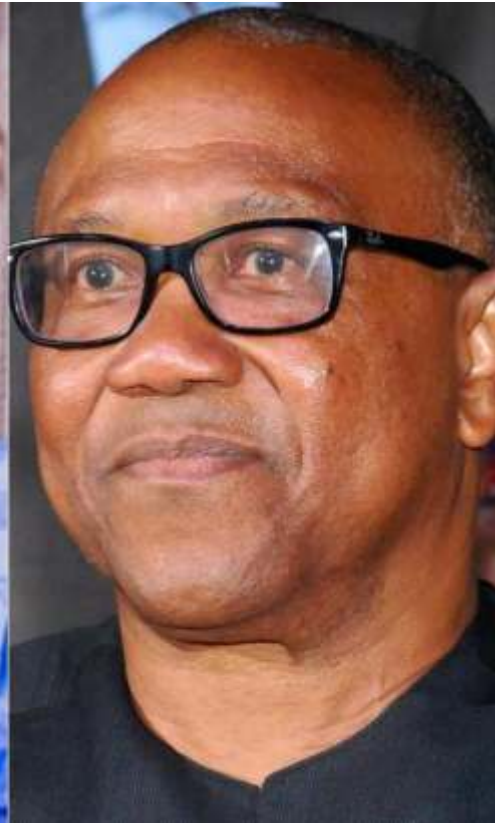
The Waziri of Adamawa further prayed, "May Allah (SWT) forgive his shortcomings and grant him Aljannatul Firdaus."

During his visit to Kano, Atiku also paid a courtesy call on Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf and was accompanied by high-profile dignitaries, including former Attorney General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami SAN.

Alhaji Aminu Dantata, who passed away recently at an advanced age, was a towering figure in Nigeria's business landscape. Widely respected for his generosity, commercial achievements, and dedication to Islamic values, Dantata leaves behind a formidable legacy of service to community and country.

Obi, Atiku, Amaechi: Citizens speak on who should lead ADC

By Helen Okechukwu



As the African Democratic Congress (ADC) positions itself as a major opposition force for the 2027 presidential election, Nigerians voice their preferences on who should carry the party's flag.

On Friday, the African Democratic Congress (ADC) coalition was officially launched in Abuja, positioning itself as a political force with the stated aim of challenging President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the 2027 presidential election.

The coalition brings together several prominent political figures, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, former Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai, former Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi, former Minister of Transportation Rotimi Amaechi, and former Senate President David Mark.

While none have formally declared their candidacy under the ADC banner, all are reported to have expressed interest in contesting the next presidential race.

Although the coalition has yet to unveil its presidential flag bearer, there is widespread speculation that the

eventual candidate will emerge from among these seasoned politicians, who have all held high-level roles—ranging from ministerial and gubernatorial positions to national leadership posts.

Diverse Voices from the Electorate

To understand public sentiment, New Daily Prime spoke to Nigerians from different parts of the country about who they believe is the best candidate to lead the ADC in 2027.

In Rivers State, local resident Mr. Olaka Olaka expressed strong support for Mr Amaechi. “Out of all the aspirants, Mr Amaechi deserves to be the next president after Tinubu. Whether he contests in 2027 or 2031, no one else deserves it more than him,” he said.

According to Olaka, Amaechi's accomplishments during his tenure as governor qualify him for national leadership. However, he also urged caution, arguing that discussions about unseating the incumbent might be premature.

“I don't think we should already be

talking about elections when we haven't even addressed the outcome of the last one. In my polling unit and in my ward, someone else won—but a different name was declared by the powers that be,” he added.

In Lagos, businessman David Zamani offered a contrasting view, naming former Vice President Abubakar as his preferred candidate for the ADC presidential ticket in 2027.

“I chose Atiku because he understands Nigeria inside and out,” Zamani said. “He's more experienced than both Peter Obi and Rotimi Amaechi.”

He added that Atiku enjoys significant support in the northern part of the country and is well-positioned to mount pressure on the incumbent administration.

**Continue reading
on next page**

Cont from page 8

"In my view, we need someone capable of standing up to the ruling party. If the South-South is our only viable option, then we must put forward strong, influential figures—people with the capacity to build momentum and challenge the status quo. This current administration is doing everything it can to entrench itself in power, so the opposition must present a candidate who can genuinely compete."

Zoning and Political Calculations

In Minna, Niger State, businessman Samson Famous expressed his support for Obi, describing him as the most suitable among the four leading aspirants to contest the ADC's 2027 presidential ticket.

According to Famous, the ADC's focus on addressing Nigeria's pressing security and economic challenges aligns closely with Obi's leadership profile. He also referenced Nigeria's informal power-sharing arrangement known as zoning, which typically sees the presidency alternate between the North and South every eight years.

"The South is meant to serve eight years, and so far, only four have been completed under President Tinubu. This means four more years should come from the South," he explained.

"Given that, candidates like El-Rufai should not be in the running if we truly respect that arrangement. Of course, both El-Rufai and Atiku have every constitutional right to contest, but for the sake of peace, fairness, and national cohesion, they ought to voluntarily step aside."

He continued: "That narrows the conversation to Rotimi Amaechi and Peter Obi. One of them should emerge as the coalition's flag bearer to fulfil the Southern mandate. Based on the political momentum from last year, it's clear that both have the influence and structures needed to mobilise voters. But among the two, Obi stands out."

While comparing Mr Amaechi and Mr Obi, he said the record and achievements of the former Anambra State governor were far better than those of the former

Rivers State governor.

Obi's Supporters Cite Accountability and Simplicity

Dr Samuel Otikor, a lecturer at the University of Port Harcourt, also threw his weight behind Peter Obi, praising his political history, overwhelming youth support, and clean governance record.

"From the 2023 election, it was clear that Nigerians were united in their call for change—and that movement still aligns with Peter Obi," he said.

"I stand with them—the new generation of Nigerians rallying behind Obi. We are yet to see any real impact from the narrative that claims someone who developed Lagos can automatically develop Nigeria."

Otikor added: "At the very least, Peter Obi was accountable during his time in public office. While he may not have completely transformed Anambra, he showed a commendable ability to manage public resources—something this country urgently needs. Even if he doesn't have all the answers to national development, let the resources be there and let the people guide him, saying: 'We have the resources—please use them to work for us.'"

Also, Smith Nwakocha, a resident of Rivers State, described Mr Obi as the most outstanding choice among the potential

candidates, citing his leadership track record and personal integrity.

"My vote will always go to Mr Obi, and I will continue to stand with him," Nwakocha said. "I believe he has the capacity and the qualities needed to lead this country."

He added that Obi's tenure as governor of Anambra State reflected his competence in governance.

"He significantly improved infrastructure and education. He's 63 years old and doesn't depend on government money to survive."

Speaking to Obi's character, Nwakocha continued: "He is humble, noble, and simple—and that's exactly what Nigeria needs. We want a leader who leads by example and holds himself accountable. Even his followers must be held to that same standard—to do the work they were elected to do."

Nwakocha concluded with a strong personal conviction: "As far as I'm concerned, once he's in power, I believe he'll bring these values to the national level. He's already proven himself in several capacities. Just look at the kind of pressure and resistance he has faced—yet the youth and many Nigerians still rally behind him. If we're being honest, he won the last election. But the system did what it always does."



Nigeria's debt service rises to 4.1% of GDP in 2024 – AfDB Report

By **Damilola Olufemi**

Nigeria allocated 4.1 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to debt servicing in 2024, marking an uptick from 3.7 per cent in 2023, according to the African Development Bank's (AfDB) latest Country Focus Report.

The report highlights the growing cost of debt in the face of tightening global credit conditions and high domestic interest rates. It noted that the surge in debt service costs stemmed from rising interest payments on government securities and increased borrowing to cover fiscal deficits.

"Debt servicing increased to 4.1% of GDP from 3.7 % in 2023," the report stated, adding that "the debt servicing-to-federal-government-revenue ratio stood at 76.8% in 2023, rising slightly to 77.5% in 2024."

Despite recent fiscal reforms, the AfDB warned that Nigeria's public spending remains heavily tilted toward debt repayment, with limited room for investments in infrastructure and social services. The country's public debt surged to 52.3% of GDP in 2024, compared to 41.5% the previous year, largely due to expanded borrowing needs and a weakening currency.

The report noted that the Federal Government secured \$3.3 billion in new debt in 2024. Of this amount, \$2.2 billion came through Eurobond issuance, while the rest was sourced from multilateral institutions.

Even as the fiscal deficit slightly declined from 4.0% of GDP in 2023 to 3.9% in 2024, overall pressure on public finances remains significant.

AfDB analysts warned that the current trend in debt servicing could significantly limit the government's capacity to finance critical sectors such as education, health, and infrastructure, which are essential to long-term development goals.



Nigeria's tax-to-GDP ratio remains low. While the removal of fuel subsidies and efforts to unify the exchange rate have helped boost government revenues, they have not been enough to keep pace with expenditures. Nigeria's tax-to-GDP ratio remains low at 5.2%—among the lowest in Africa—pointing to enduring challenges in revenue collection.

The report linked weak revenue mobilisation to the dominance of the informal sector, which accounts for about 68% of the economy and more than 90% of employment. It recommended modernising tax administration through digital tools and improving compliance to broaden the tax net.

Although there was a notable rise in non-tax revenues, particularly from oil, after the full deregulation of the fuel market, Nigeria still faces a substantial annual financing gap. The AfDB estimates that the country requires \$47.6 billion annually to meet its development goals, with a current shortfall of \$31.5 billion, especially in infrastructure, innovation, and social

sectors.

Government spending remained modest in 2024 at 15.5% of GDP, well below the sub-Saharan African average of 21.4%. Key sectors such as education and health continue to suffer from inadequate funding, receiving 7.9% and 5.3% of the budget, respectively—levels that fall short of global benchmarks.

Despite these fiscal challenges, Nigeria's economy expanded by 3.4% in 2024, driven largely by the services sector and a slight rebound in oil production. However, the AfDB forecasts slower growth in the coming years—3.2% in 2025 and 3.1% in 2026—citing global headwinds, including fluctuating oil prices and geopolitical tensions.

The report called for sustained reforms aimed at stabilising public finances and reducing the country's debt burden. It urged increased investment in human capital and infrastructure, better tax collection, more efficient public spending, and creative financing solutions to attract private sector participation.

Peter Obi will never become Nigerian president – FCT minister Wike declares

By Gbenga Olaleye



Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, has declared that Peter Obi, the Labour Party's 2023 presidential candidate, will never again emerge as Nigeria's president.

Wike made the statement on Sunday during an official Thanksgiving Service marking the successful completion of projects commissioned by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The event took place at St. James' Anglican Church in Asokoro, Abuja, and was attended by several dignitaries and government officials.

Addressing the congregation, Wike argued that Obi's political era has passed and criticised the former Anambra State Governor's supporters for their emotional attachment rather than an informed understanding of his record.

"They say Peter Obi will be President, President where? Out of emotion, most of you are just following someone you don't know," Wike said,

emphasising that Obi's political relevance has diminished.

He further highlighted Obi's tenure as governor of Anambra State, pointing out that during his eight years in office, Obi did not conduct local government elections a crucial aspect of democratic governance.

"For eight years, Obi was a governor but he never conducted local government elections. Now he is saying that democracy is not working but it worked in his time," Wike added.

The minister also noted that Obi held the dual position of both governor and chairman of all local governments in Anambra State simultaneously, which he used to underscore what he saw as deficiencies in Obi's governance approach.

Wike concluded, "The time has passed, he won't have the opportunity again," signalling a strong belief that Obi's political future is limited.

This is not the first time Wike has openly expressed his scepticism about Obi's presidential ambitions. Earlier in April, the minister revealed that he did not support Peter Obi during the 2023 presidential election, citing doubts about the Labour Party candidate's chances of winning the presidency.

Peter Obi, a former governor of Anambra State and a prominent figure in Nigerian politics, garnered significant attention during the 2023 election, particularly among young voters and those dissatisfied with the traditional political elite. Despite his popularity, Obi ultimately lost to Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Wike's remarks at the Thanksgiving Service reflect ongoing divisions within Nigerian politics and among opposition figures, with many debating the future viability of various presidential hopefuls ahead of the 2027 election cycle.

ADC coalition hampered by presidential ambitions – says Datti Baba-Ahmed

By Gbenga Olaleye



Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed, the former running mate of Peter Obi in Nigeria's 2023 presidential election, has highlighted the challenge facing the opposition coalition, the African Democratic Congress (ADC), describing it as being filled with individuals harbouring presidential ambitions.

The ADC coalition comprises several prominent political figures, including former Vice President Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, ex-Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi, former Minister of Transportation Rotimi Amaechi, ex-Kaduna State governor Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, and former Senate President David Mark, among others, DAILY POST reports.

In an interview with Trust TV, Baba-Ahmed noted that unlike previous political alliances, the ADC lacks a unifying figure similar to Bola Tinubu, who, in past elections, suppressed his own ambitions to support candidates

like Atiku in 2007 or Muhammadu Buhari in 2015.

"The coalition is full of options and resources, but the downside is that it is also full of ambitions," Baba-Ahmed said.

He stressed that managing these ambitions carefully is essential for the coalition's longevity and success in Nigerian politics.

Baba-Ahmed also expressed concern over the coalition's apparent lack of a clear strategy to defeat President Tinubu, emphasising that his remarks are not intended as criticism but as constructive observation.

"If you do business as usual against a sitting government like Tinubu's, the person would not win," he warned, adding that the coalition must think "outside the box." He argued that to achieve what seems impossible, an equally unprecedented strategy is

necessary.

Highlighting how Tinubu and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) have a well-established approach to countering Atiku Abubakar, Baba-Ahmed advised the ADC not to field Atiku as its presidential candidate in 2027.

"If you bring Atiku, they know how to work against Atiku, and he is welcome to win. If he wins, we will support him. You need a candidate they cannot understand, someone they do not know where to catch — that is how to win an election," he said.

Baba-Ahmed concluded by urging the ADC to present a candidate capable of securing victory in the 2027 presidential elections, similar to the APC's approach when Muhammadu Buhari was chosen as its candidate in 2015.

Verghis replaces Diop as World Bank Nigeria director

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

The World Bank has appointed Dr. Mathew Verghis as its new Country Director for Nigeria, effective July 1, marking a key leadership change in one of the institution's largest African portfolios.

Verghis, an Indian national, succeeds Dr. Ndiame Diop, who has moved to a new role within the organisation. The appointment was confirmed in a statement issued by the World Bank on Friday.

With more than 20 years of global experience in economic policy and development, Verghis has held senior positions across Africa, East Asia, Europe, and Central Asia. Most recently, he served as Regional Director for Prosperity in South Asia, based at the Bank's headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Speaking on his new assignment, Verghis said his arrival comes at a pivotal moment for Nigeria.



"I am honoured to take on this role and to work alongside the government and people of Nigeria," he said.

"There is real potential for transformative growth that can improve lives, create jobs, and expand opportunities for all.

I'm also excited to experience firsthand the rich culture and incredible energy of Nigeria."

As Country Director, Verghis will lead the Bank's strategic engagement in Nigeria—overseeing support for critical development programmes and strengthening partnerships with government institutions, civil society, and development partners.

The World Bank added that Verghis holds both a Master's and Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Notre Dame, USA. He has also published extensively on topics such as economic growth, fiscal policy, poverty, and labour markets.

His appointment signals the World Bank's continued commitment to supporting Nigeria's economic reform agenda amid evolving challenges and opportunities.

Rivers police declare 32 wanted for attempted murder, others

By Damilola Olufemi

The Rivers State Police Command on Sunday declared 32 suspects wanted in connection with a violent attack on the Sole Administrator of Ahoada-East Local Government Area (LGA), Hon. Goodluck Iheanachor.

The attack was said to have occurred on 20 June 2025 at the Council Secretariat in Ahoada East.

Among those named are two key government officials — the Chief Security Officer (CSO) of the LGA, Mr Hector Ekakita, and the Chief of Staff (COS), Mr Aloni Oloidi.

The duo, along with a group of about 30 others, are accused of conspiring to physically assault the council boss, inflicting serious injuries, coercing him into signing documents under duress, and stealing his mobile phones, confidential files, and both personal and official property from his office.



According to Force spokesperson, Grace Iringe-Koko, the individuals had been previously invited to appear at the State headquarters on Moscow Road, Port Harcourt, for questioning but have failed to do so.

Their continued refusal to cooperate has led to the issuance of a formal declaration of "wanted" status by the Commissioner of Police (CP) Olugbenga Adepoju.

The police revealed that the attack left the Sole Administrator hospitalised and receiving medical treatment for the injuries sustained during the incident.

In the statement released by Iringe-Koko, the Commissioner has warned that anyone found providing shelter, support, or assistance to the wanted suspects in evading arrest will face the full consequences of the law.

The Rivers State Police Command reaffirmed its commitment to upholding justice and maintaining law and order.

Members of the public who may have any useful information regarding the whereabouts of the suspects are encouraged to contact the Command Control Room or the Complaint Response Unit via the provided numbers: 08120822987, 07057605209, 08098880134, 09014273818, and 08098880134.

Oyebanji to inaugurate Adekanye Ogunmoye as CJ on Monday

By Friday Omosola

Governor Biodun Oyebanji of Ekiti State will, on Monday, swear in Justice Adekanye Ogunmoye as the substantive Chief Judge of the state.

This was announced in a statement signed by Olayinka Oyebode, Special Adviser on Media to the governor.

On Thursday, the state House of Assembly confirmed Mr Ogunmoye as the substantive Chief Judge.

Mr Ogunmoye had been acting as the Chief Judge of the state since November 2024.

Mr Oyebanji will preside over the inauguration ceremony, scheduled to take place at the Conference Hall,



Governor's Office, Ado-Ekiti, by 2:00 pm.

Guests and government officials invited to the event are expected to be seated by 1:30 pm.

Seven presidential hopefuls emerge in ADC coalition

By Gbenga Olaleye

Former National Chairman of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Ralph Nwosu, has revealed that at least seven prominent figures within the opposition coalition are being urged by their supporters to contest the 2027 presidential election against incumbent President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Speaking, Nwosu disclosed that the movement, which recently adopted the ADC as its political platform, is attracting significant interest from key political heavyweights, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and 2023 Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate Peter Obi.

The coalition is gaining momentum as discontent grows within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC), with notable defections reported.

According to Nwosu, the presidential hopefuls include Obi, Atiku, former Minister of Transportation Rotimi Amaechi, ex-governors Nasir El-Rufai and Rauf Aregbesola, former Jigawa State governor Sule Lamido, and



Bamidele Ajadi, the ADC's 2023 governorship candidate in Oyo State.

"There are some people who want Aregbesola to run. There are also people rooting for Ajadi, Amaechi, Atiku, and El-Rufai. Even Sule Lamido is also in the mix," Nwosu said.

"This tells you it is free, and that is democracy. But the selection process will be open and transparent."

He stressed that the movement would not impose a candidate but rather adopt an

inclusive, democratic approach to choosing its flagbearer. He also dismissed speculations suggesting northern blocs were pushing for a one-term deal for Obi, asserting that internal discussions are ongoing and open to all.

"The coalition is beyond politics and power. It is about rescuing Nigeria from ICU to global reckoning," he said, adding that the coalition's strength lies in its collective vision for national rebirth.

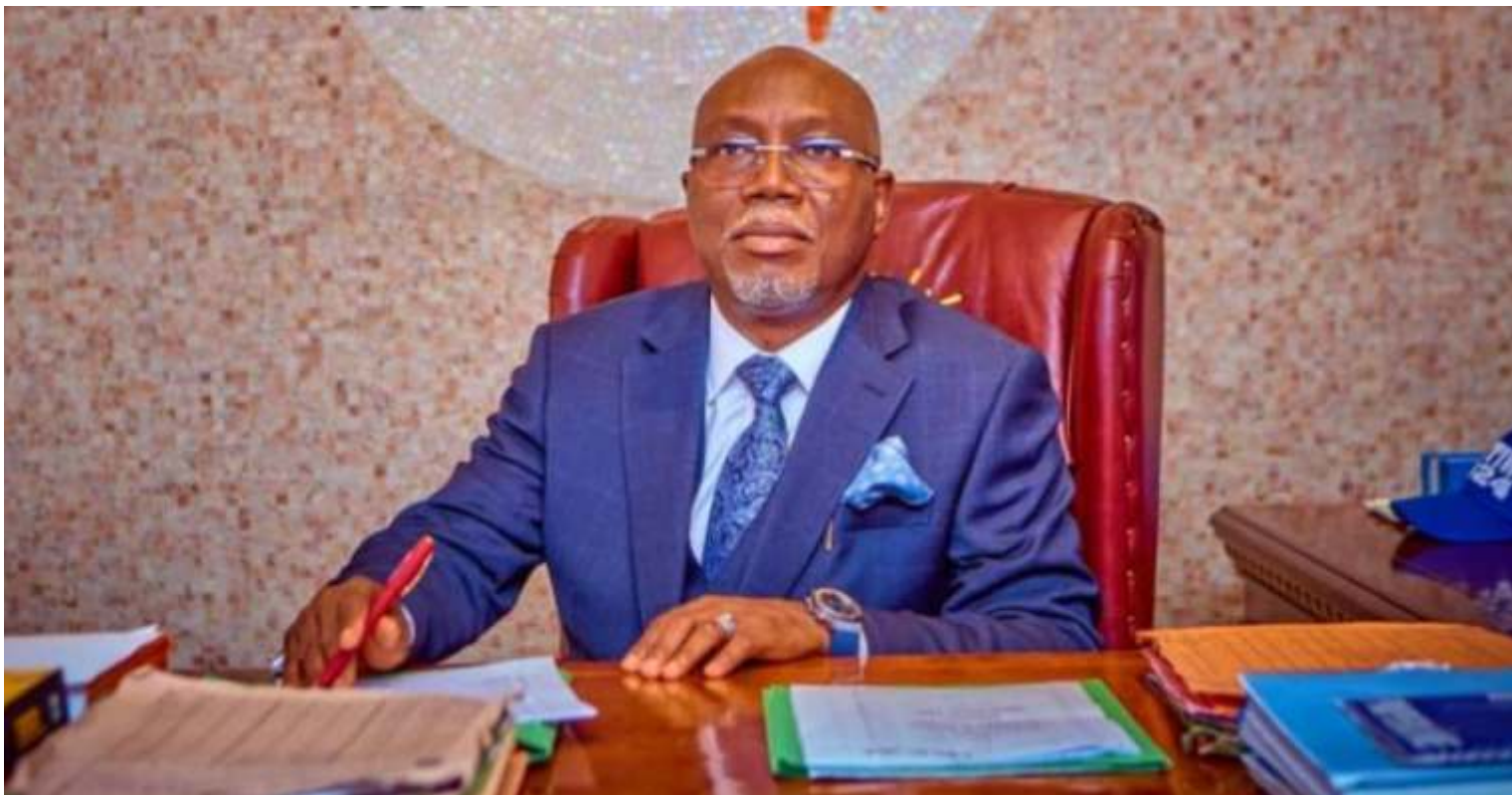
Nwosu also claimed that the coalition has drawn significant defection from major parties, alleging that 95% of PDP members and 35% of APC members have joined the ADC-led coalition. He further claimed that 80% of the Labour Party's structure is now aligning with the movement.

"This is a big coalition. What we've built in a short time is bigger than any political party in Nigeria," he declared.

With the ADC now adopted as the opposition's official platform, the race to determine who will lead the coalition into the 2027 general election is likely to intensify in the months ahead.

Ondo gov calls for more NDDC support

By Gbenga Olaleye



Ondo State Governor, Mr Lucky Aiyedatiwa, has urged stakeholders to unite and provide greater support to the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to effectively address the ongoing challenges facing the Niger Delta region.

Governor Aiyedatiwa praised President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration for its commitment to the development of the Niger Delta, highlighting the government's efforts to ensure the NDDC receives the necessary backing to fulfil its mandate.

He made these remarks on Sunday at a Thanksgiving service commemorating the 25th anniversary of the NDDC's establishment, held at St. Thomas Anglican Church in Akure, the Ondo State capital.

"The NDDC has made significant impacts in the development of the region, but much remains to be done. It is crucial that we continue to collaborate to address the challenges faced by the Niger Delta,"

Aiyedatiwa said.

He expressed gratitude to President Tinubu for his unwavering support and leadership, stating, "His interest in the NDDC and its activities has been more than passing, and we appreciate his leadership in ensuring that the commission receives the support it needs to deliver on its mandate."

The governor emphasised the need for the NDDC to tailor projects to the specific needs of communities, urging continued progress to unlock the region's potential, promote economic growth, and improve the lives of its people.

He also commended the NDDC board and management for their dedication, particularly praising Ondo State representatives on the commission for their commitment and pledging to sustain collaboration moving forward.

In his remarks, the Managing Director of the NDDC, Dr Samuel Ogbuku, highlighted key projects undertaken by

the commission, including major road construction and rehabilitation to improve connectivity across the Niger Delta.

Dr Ogbuku also noted the commission's focus on youth empowerment through training programmes, educational scholarships, and capacity-building workshops aimed at equipping the local workforce with vital skills.

"Ondo State was chosen for this anniversary because of its principle that 'Work is the Antidote for Poverty'. We are here to spread the dividends of renewed hope. We have been accountable, and we will continue to be accountable at the end of our tenure," he stated.

The event marked a significant milestone for the NDDC, reflecting on its achievements while recognising the ongoing need for collaborative efforts to address the socio-economic challenges of the Niger Delta region.

Eight killed, eight injured in fatal Lagos crash – LASTMA

By Friday Omosola

The Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) has confirmed that eight people lost their lives and another eight sustained injuries in a fatal road accident on Sunday at Atura Bus Stop, along the route towards Badagry in Lagos.

In a statement, LASTMA explained that the crash occurred when a 16-seater commercial Mazda bus, registered as KJA 811 YF, collided with a DAF truck bearing number T1 4636 LA.

According to the agency's preliminary findings, the bus driver had been moving at an unsafe speed when he lost control, causing the vehicle to veer into the truck's path and resulting in a devastating collision.

"The tragic accident instantly claimed the lives of eight passengers, including the driver of the ill-fated bus and his conductor, casting a somber pall over the Badagry axis and leaving the community in profound mourning and collective grief," the statement signed by Adebayo Taofiq, LASTMA's Director of Public Affairs and Enlightenment read.

The agency reported that officials from LASTMA, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), the Nigeria Police (Morogbo Division), and the Nigerian Army's 244 Battalion at Ibereko Barracks quickly mobilised to the crash scene for a joint rescue operation.

Their prompt response ensured the immediate rescue of eight injured passengers, who were later taken to the General Hospital in Badagry by an FRSC emergency vehicle for urgent medical treatment.

LASTMA General Manager, Olalekan Bakare-Oki, who visited the crash site for an on-the-ground assessment, expressed his condolences to the families of the deceased and prayed for their strength in this time of grief.

"This heart-wrenching incident is a painful reminder of the fragility of life and the urgent need for all road users to embrace caution. No journey should end



in such tragedy. May the Almighty grant the deceased eternal rest and console those left behind," Mr Bakare-Oki said.

He also wished the injured passengers a quick and full recovery.

The LASTMA boss urged drivers of commercial and heavy-duty vehicles to avoid speeding, follow road safety guidelines, and ensure their vehicles are properly maintained to prevent further loss of life.

"This regrettable loss of lives could have been avoided if the basic tenets of defensive driving and vehicular safety had been upheld. Speed remains a silent killer on our highways," he added.

Mr Bakare-Oki further explained that LASTMA had moved beyond just managing traffic to adopting a more comprehensive approach that prioritises rapid emergency response and proactive safety management.

He noted that this strategy aligns with Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's THEMES Plus Agenda, which focuses on preventive road safety, timely emergency interventions, and improving transport infrastructure.

"We are no longer merely controlling

traffic; we are managing emergencies, mitigating disasters, and saving lives. This is the ethos of contemporary traffic administration," he emphasised.

He pointed out that the state government had begun installing speed-control devices at critical accident-prone areas across the city to curb road mishaps and promote safe driving habits.

LASTMA also praised its officers for their swift action at the accident scene and appealed to motorists to remain vigilant, practise defensive driving, and prioritise safety, especially on major highways where speeding, fatigue, and lack of attention often lead to tragic outcomes.

This accident happened just hours after another road crash in Ogun State, where 10 people died and three others were injured in a collision on Ome Bridge, inbound Awa, Ijebu Ode, along the Obada Expressway in Ijebu North Local Government Area on Saturday.

NDLEA foils UK, Saudi drug smuggling plots, seizes \$17.7m fake cheques

By Helen Okechukwu



In a sweeping nationwide crackdown, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has intercepted multiple drug shipments destined for the United Kingdom (UK) and Saudi Arabia, arresting high-profile traffickers and dismantling criminal networks.

Femi Babafemi, the anti-drug agency spokesperson noted that a passel confirmed to be cocaine was cleverly concealed in 84 lipsticks (420g) and inside a property title document (280g) was seized from a Lagos courier facility on 3rd July. The consignments were bound for the UK and Saudi Arabia.

In a related operation, NDLEA operatives arrested notorious drug baron Ajetsibo Emami, alias 'Warri

Kinsman', in Ikeja on 28th June. His network was busted with 681 pouches of Canadian Loud cannabis weighing 414.2kg, intended for distribution across Lagos and beyond.

A major family-run drug ring was uncovered in Lagos involving businessman Ajah Johnson Uchenna, his wife Rosemary, two daughters, and a family friend. The group was caught with over 500kg of cannabis, including 231kg recovered during a raid while the couple was in custody.

At Murtala Muhammed International Airport, trafficker Aburemi Hysent was caught on 2nd July with 7,660 tramadol pills concealed in food items, en route to Italy. A day later, NDLEA intercepted fake travellers' cheques worth AUD 17.7 million hidden in children's books, heading to Malaysia via Istanbul. Suspect

Bolarinwa Saheed is in custody.

Further seizures include 359kg of skunk at Seme border, 13,901 opioid pills in Osun, 452kg of cannabis in Kano, and 312kg of drugs in Kebbi. Multiple suspects, including a 78-year-old man in Cross River and others in Edo, Borno, and Taraba, were apprehended.

The NDLEA also intensified its War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) campaign, reaching schools and communities in Enugu, Lagos, Katsina, and Borno.

NDLEA Chairman, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Marwa (Rtd), commended the agency's operatives nationwide for maintaining momentum in both drug supply suppression and demand reduction.

‘Why I chose acting over law’, Femi Adebayo reveals

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Renowned Nigerian actor and producer, Femi Adebayo, has opened up about a major turning point in his life, when he chose acting over a career in law.

Adebayo, who holds a master’s degree in law from the University of Ibadan, initially worked as a practicing lawyer. He described his early days in the legal profession as a time when he earned a modest salary of ₦20,000 monthly. At the time, acting was nothing more than a hobby. He never imagined it would eventually become his full-time career.

“I was already practicing law,” he recalled during an interview with Pulse. “My salary then was just ₦20,000 a month. Acting, at that point, was just something I did on the side.”

The life-hanging offer

Everything changed the moment Adebayo received an unexpected offer for a film role. According to him, the producers were willing to pay him ₦50,000 for just three days of work. That one offer forced him to rethink his career path.

“When I got that offer, I paused,” he said. “Here I was, working an entire month as a lawyer to earn ₦20,000. Yet, I was being offered ₦50,000 for only three days on set. That was the moment I said to myself, ‘Femi, acting is your calling.’”

That opportunity became a turning point. It was no longer just about passion or family influence; it made financial sense, too. Without hesitation, Adebayo made the bold decision to quit legal practice and commit fully to entertainment.

Choosing passion over profession

For many, leaving a stable career like law might seem risky. But for Adebayo, the choice was clear. Acting was not just a means to an end; it was something he enjoyed deeply and excelled at naturally. He realised he could earn more, express himself better, and reach more people through film than through courtrooms.



That decision has since paid off. Today, Femi Adebayo is not only one of Nigeria’s most respected actors but also a successful producer and director. He has featured in numerous Yoruba and English-language films and has built a reputation for excellence in the Nigerian movie industry.

A legacy of talent

Adebayo’s decision to enter the entertainment industry was also influenced by his family background. He is the son of veteran Nollywood actor Adebayo Salami, popularly known as Oga Bello. Growing up, Femi was surrounded by creativity and drama, and he absorbed the values and discipline of the profession from an early age.

“My father played a big role in shaping my career,” he once said in a separate interview. “He never forced me into acting, but he led by example. Watching him perform made me fall in love with the craft.”

Femi Adebayo balancing education and creativity

Even though he left the legal field, Adebayo doesn’t consider his education a waste. He believes his academic background helps him navigate

contracts, business decisions, and the legal aspects of filmmaking.

“Studying law taught me structure and discipline,” he noted. “It also helps me understand the business side of entertainment, which is just as important as talent.”

Inspiring the next generation

Femi Adebayo’s story is a lesson in trusting one’s instincts and embracing opportunities when they come. His journey shows that with passion, courage, and hard work, it’s possible to change paths and still succeed.

Today, he continues to inspire young Nigerians, especially those torn between professional careers and creative passions.

“There’s nothing wrong in pursuing your passion,” Adebayo said. “But make sure you do it with commitment and integrity. That’s the only way to succeed.”

Through his work, Adebayo has become a household name, and his decision to leave law for acting continues to shape the Nigerian film industry for the better.

‘I can’t stay with just one woman,’ Don Jazzy claims

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian music mogul Don Jazzy has made a bold confession about his stance on romantic relationships. The Mavin Records boss revealed that he does not believe he can remain sexually committed to just one woman, no matter how much he cares for her.

He made this admission during a recent appearance on The Nancy Isime Show, where he spoke openly about his struggles with monogamy and why he chooses to be honest about it upfront.

Not wired for monogamy

“I don’t believe I’m strong enough to be with only one person,” Don Jazzy admitted. “I think people will run away from me because I’m being truthful. But I would rather be honest than lie to someone about my intentions.”

He emphasised that he doesn’t want to mislead anyone he’s in a relationship with. For him, his partners must know exactly what to expect. According to him, while some people have the discipline to be with just one person, he simply doesn’t.

Attraction doesn’t stop at one – Don Jazzy

Don Jazzy explained that even if he’s deeply attracted to one woman, it doesn’t mean he won’t find others attractive as well. “Some people are able to remain faithful once they feel drawn to someone. But for me, just because you’re beautiful doesn’t mean I’ll stop admiring other beautiful women,” he said.

This view, he acknowledged, might not sit well with many women. He said his honesty often causes women to avoid him, but he prefers that to pretending or lying to keep them around.

Discipline is the challenge

The award-winning producer said his struggle with sexual commitment doesn’t come from a lack of love, but rather from a lack of discipline in that



area of his life.

“It’s about discipline. Some men have it; I don’t think I do. That’s just me being real,” he explained. “It’s not like I go into relationships with bad intentions. I just know myself, and I’d rather not give false hope.”

Why honesty matters

For Don Jazzy, being transparent about his limits is a way of protecting both himself and his potential partners. He believes it’s more respectful to be upfront rather than make promises he can’t keep.

“I’ve seen people promise commitment and then break hearts because they weren’t honest with themselves or with their partners. I don’t want to be that guy,” he said.

Mixed reactions expected

Don Jazzy’s statement is sure to spark conversations, especially among his large fan base and followers of celebrity culture. In a society where monogamy is widely expected, his views challenge conventional norms.

However, his blunt honesty might also

resonate with people who struggle with the same issues but are afraid to speak up.

A pattern of transparency

This isn’t the first time Don Jazzy has spoken candidly about his personal life. Over the years, he has built a reputation for being open and humorous about topics many shy away from, whether it’s his past marriage, love life, or insecurities.

His willingness to speak freely has earned him praise for being authentic, though it has also invited criticism at times.

Final words

In a world where many public figures strive to present a perfect image, Don Jazzy’s unfiltered approach stands out. His latest comments add another layer to his public persona, one of a man who knows his limits and refuses to pretend otherwise.

Whether people agree with his views or not, one thing is clear: Don Jazzy would rather be alone than be in a relationship.

‘I regret leaving Nigeria for U.S.,’ singer Dotman

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian singer and rapper Oladotun Alade, popularly known as Dotman, has opened up about the emotional toll of relocating from Nigeria to the United States.

In a heartfelt post shared on his Instagram page, the “Star Life” crooner confessed that the decision to move abroad has left him feeling overwhelmed and filled with regret.

‘I wish I never left’ – Dotman

Dotman revealed that life in the U.S. has not been what he expected. He admitted that he has been silently battling personal struggles since relocating, and most painfully, he has not seen his children in nearly two years.

“Today, I regret ever deciding to leave Nigeria and move to the U.S. I have been struggling so much in silence. I haven’t seen my kids for about two years now,” Dotman wrote.

The statement struck a chord with many of his followers, with several fans expressing sympathy and offering words of encouragement in the comment section.

Behind the glamour of relocation

Although many view relocating abroad as a pathway to a better life, Dotman’s experience paints a different picture. The artist’s candid admission highlights the emotional challenges that can come with starting over in a new country, especially when separated from loved ones.

For Dotman, the dream of greener pastures has come at a high personal cost. While he didn’t share full details of his struggles, his message suggests that the distance from family, especially his children, has taken a heavy toll on his mental and emotional well-being.

The rising trend of celebrity relocation

Dotman’s experience adds to a growing conversation around Nigerian celebrities choosing to leave the country. In recent years, several prominent entertainers have made the move abroad, citing reasons ranging from better opportunities to concerns



about security and quality of life in Nigeria.

Among those who have relocated are music stars like Asake, Eldee, and Dr. Sid. Nollywood actors and actresses, including Genevieve Nnaji, Omotola Jalade Ekeinde, Rita Dominic, and Uche Jombo, have also moved overseas. Reality TV stars like Tacha, as well as veteran actor Emeka Ike, have joined the trend.

While some of these celebrities appear to be thriving in their new environments, others, like Dotman, are revealing the not-so-glamorous side of life abroad.

Fans react with sympathy

Shortly after Dotman made the post, fans flooded his comment section with support. Many praised him for being honest about his feelings and for shedding light on the pressures that public figures often face in silence.

One fan wrote, “Your honesty is appreciated. May you find peace and be reunited with your kids soon.” Another commented, “People think life abroad is easy. Thank you for speaking your truth.”

A call for emotional honesty

Dotman’s revelation serves as a reminder that fame and international exposure do not guarantee happiness. The reality of being far from home, family, and familiar surroundings can be difficult, no matter how successful one appears to be.

In an industry where appearances are carefully managed and personal struggles are often hidden, his post has sparked much-needed conversations about mental health, loneliness, and the hidden costs of relocation.

Moving forward

It remains unclear whether Dotman plans to return to Nigeria permanently or work out a way to reunite with his children. However, his message has already made an impact, encouraging both fans and fellow celebrities to be more open about the emotional challenges they face.

For now, the singer’s words stand as a sobering reminder that even stars struggle, and that home, for many, still holds an irreplaceable place in the heart.

EU in last-ditch talks to avert Trump's 50% tariff threat

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Brussels is entering a critical week as EU leaders scramble to secure a last-minute trade agreement with Washington in a bid to stave off punitive US tariffs that could reach as high as 50%. With only two days of negotiations remaining before President Donald Trump's 9 July deadline, tensions are mounting on both sides of the Atlantic.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent confirmed on Friday that talks, which continued through the weekend, are centred around 15 to 18 key agreements with strategic partners. However, Trump has made it clear that countries failing to reach a deal could face tariffs of up to 70%, stoking fears of a global trade war.

The uncertainty from Washington has sent tremors through the global economy. Businesses have frozen investment decisions, and the US dollar suffered its worst performance in half a century during the first half of the year. With €1.6 trillion in EU-US trade hanging in the balance, the stakes could not be higher.

A senior EU diplomat described the

bloc's internal dilemma: "Among member states, the big question will be whether we should reach a deal at all costs to avoid a trade war, or show muscle if the deal is not good enough."

Divisions are emerging among European leaders. The German chancellor has called for a swift UK-style agreement to prevent a major trade conflict, while French President Emmanuel Macron has warned against rushing into an "imbalanced" deal, urging the EU to hold firm for better terms.

EU, U.S. officials threatened to impose 17% tariff on food imports

Trump's hostility towards Brussels has not gone unnoticed. In a meeting last week with EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič, US officials threatened to impose a 17% tariff on food imports. The move is part of a wider campaign of "liberation day" tariffs Trump announced on 2 April, which he temporarily paused a week later for 90 days.

With that pause set to expire on Wednesday, the US is poised to begin its trade offensive against dozens of

countries. So far, only the UK and Vietnam have secured agreements, fuelling doubts over whether the EU can achieve more than a political "framework deal" in the time remaining.

Such a framework would resemble the bare-bones UK deal agreed in May, which was once criticised by officials as legally dubious under World Trade Organisation rules. Despite initial hopes that the economic heft would secure a stronger agreement than the UK's €363 billion in annual trade with the US, many now accept that a minimal agreement may be the best achievable outcome.

Industries across the EU are bracing for disruption. Even under the most optimistic scenario, European exporters expect to face a baseline 10% tariff, five times the average rate before Trump's election last year.

After months of escalating threats, retaliatory rhetoric, and mounting pressure, the hopes for a comprehensive trade deal have all but faded. Instead, leaders are now scrambling to secure whatever terms they can before time runs out.

Global leaders greet Dalai Lama on 90th birthday

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

World leaders from India, the United States and Taiwan paid tribute on Sunday to the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, as he marked his 90th birthday, a milestone that casts a renewed spotlight on the future of Tibet and rising tensions with China.

The revered figure, who calls himself a “simple Buddhist monk”, celebrated the occasion in India, where he has lived since 1959 after fleeing Tibet during a failed uprising against Chinese rule. Thousands of Tibetans followed him into exile, and today he remains the symbolic heart of the Tibetan struggle for cultural and religious autonomy.

Tibetans around the world fear that Beijing will attempt to install a rival successor to the Dalai Lama once he passes, in a bid to tighten its grip on the Himalayan region it seized in 1950. The Dalai Lama has insisted that only his office in India has the legitimate authority to identify his eventual successor, a stance that directly challenges China’s claim of control over the reincarnation process.

In a statement read at the celebrations in McLeod Ganj, the hill town in Himachal Pradesh where the Dalai Lama resides, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his “warmest wishes” to His Holiness.

“He has been an enduring symbol of love, compassion, patience and moral discipline,” Modi said, a gesture seen as particularly significant given India’s often fraught relationship with China. Though both nations have tried to mend ties after a deadly border clash in 2020, they remain strategic rivals across South Asia.



China responded swiftly on Wednesday, asserting that it alone would determine the Dalai Lama’s successor, reaffirming its stance that religious affairs in Tibet fall under its jurisdiction.

The United States also reaffirmed its support for Tibet. In a statement read at the ceremony, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington remained “committed to promoting respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Tibetans”.

“We support efforts to preserve Tibetans’ distinct linguistic, cultural and religious heritage, including their ability to freely choose and venerate religious leaders without interference,” the statement read.

Taiwan’s president, Lai Ching-te, echoed these sentiments, calling the Dalai Lama’s life “an example that resonates with all who cherish freedom, democracy and respect for human rights.” Taiwan, like Tibet, remains a geopolitical flashpoint, with China claiming sovereignty over the self-governed island.

The event also featured pre-recorded

tributes from three former US presidents. Bill Clinton praised the Dalai Lama’s continued work in “building a better, kinder, more compassionate world” at a time when “the forces of division” are on the rise.

World leaders greet Dalai Lama
George W. Bush said, “The world is a troubled place, and we need your spirit of kindness and compassion and love more than ever.”

Barack Obama offered a warm personal message, calling the Dalai Lama “the youngest 90 year old I know”. Reflecting on their friendship, he added: “It is humbling to realise that you’ve been a leader on the world stage for longer than I’ve been alive. You’ve shown generations what it means to practise compassion, and speak up for freedom and dignity. Not bad for someone who describes himself as a simple Buddhist monk.”

As Tibetans and supporters worldwide mark this milestone, questions remain about what lies ahead after the Dalai Lama, both for the spiritual leadership of Tibetan Buddhism and for the region’s turbulent political landscape.

UK backs UN proposal for higher global taxes

By Fatimah Idera



The Labour government has signed Britain up to a new United Nations agreement that advocates higher taxes on the wealthy, fossil fuels, alcohol, and other unhealthy products. Known as the Sevilla Commitment, the non-binding pact was agreed by 192 countries at a five-day summit in Seville, Spain, and aims to help developing nations raise revenue for sustainable development.

The agreement, while focused on funding support for poorer nations, contains 42 references to taxation. These include calls for increased levies on high net-worth individuals, natural resources, pollution, alcohol, and tobacco. It also encourages gender-responsive taxation and broader tax bases, such as clamping down on informal cash-in-hand sectors.

Britain also signed side declarations, including the World Health Organisation's 3 by 35 Initiative, which seeks to raise taxes on alcohol, tobacco, and sugary drinks to both generate revenue and improve public health.

Another declaration targets tax relief reform, encouraging the removal of what it calls ineffective or harmful tax breaks.

A government spokesperson stressed that the commitments are not legally binding and do not affect UK sovereignty over tax policy:

"UK tax-setting powers remain solely with the Chancellor. This agreement is intended to support developing countries in becoming self-sufficient."

However, the move has drawn criticism from the Conservative Party. Shadow Treasury Minister Gareth Davies accused Labour of aligning with international organisations that do not reflect British priorities:

"People want simpler, lower taxes not complex, ideological schemes driven by global elites. This will make reversing Labour's tax hikes even harder."

The signing comes shortly after Chancellor Rachel Reeves warned that

further tax increases may be necessary in the autumn to cover a funding gap exacerbated by Labour's internal rebellion over welfare reforms. Labour MPs are also reported to be pushing for new wealth taxes and expanded sin taxes on items like gambling, sugary foods, and alcohol.

Critics warn that, despite the agreement's non-binding status, signing up signals a long-term shift toward higher taxation. Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the pact last month, citing concerns over tax, climate, and gender equality clauses that he said violated U.S. red lines.

The UN says the Sevilla Commitment aims to shape global financial systems by promoting progressive taxation, addressing tax avoidance, and linking fiscal policy to environmental and social goals. A senior UN official described it as a roadmap for how countries should manage every kind of money national, international, public, and private.

UK Tribunal blocks deportation over child's mental health concerns

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



A UK tribunal has blocked the deportation of a Pakistani national with a criminal record after hearing compelling psychological evidence that removal would severely harm the mental health of his eldest son.

The Upper Tribunal was informed by expert witnesses that the child—already suffering from heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and stress—would experience significant psychological deterioration if forced to relocate to Pakistan with his family.

According to a psychologist's testimony, the boy's mental health would likely suffer "profoundly" if he were removed from his established life in the UK. The child reportedly speaks limited Urdu, has no close family support in Pakistan, and would struggle to adapt to unfamiliar educational and cultural conditions—potentially leading to "increased feelings of isolation" and

even self-harming behaviours.

Another UK-based psychiatrist reinforced these concerns, stating that the child's condition would likely worsen if he were required to live in a country he does not want to reside in. The expert admitted unfamiliarity with Pakistan's mental healthcare system but emphasised the serious risk to the boy's well-being if uprooted from his current environment.

Home Office Objection Overruled

The Home Office had contested the appeal, arguing that it would be "extraordinary" to expect any deportation case not to cause emotional distress for a child. However, the tribunal disagreed.

In a landmark ruling, Judge Sarah Pinder of the Upper Tribunal said that the child's best interests must remain a primary consideration, in accordance with UK immigration law and human rights obligations.

"I am satisfied that [AA] has demonstrated, through the submission of medical, expert, and country background evidence, that the health and needs of his eldest son in particular will be exacerbated upon any return to Pakistan," Judge Pinder stated.

She added that expecting the child to accompany his father back to Pakistan would have a "profoundly detrimental impact" on his mental health. The disruption would not be merely "inconvenient or difficult," but rather "unjustifiably severe," meeting the legal threshold of being "unduly harsh."

The case has sparked fresh debate around how immigration decisions should weigh the mental health and emotional needs of children involved in deportation proceedings. Human rights advocates have welcomed the ruling as a reminder that legal decisions must prioritise child welfare above administrative convenience.

Democrats: Hegseth falsely cited shortages to halt Ukraine aid

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Pete Hegseth, the United States defence secretary, has reportedly halted a crucial shipment of military aid to Ukraine, citing unsubstantiated fears that America's weapons stockpiles have become dangerously depleted.

The aid package, which included air defence missiles and precision munitions, had been pledged during Joe Biden's presidency to support Ukraine's resistance against Russia's full-scale invasion, launched in 2022. The Pentagon's sudden reversal, however, has sparked widespread concern and confusion among US allies and members of Congress.

According to a report by NBC, the decision to suspend the shipment was made unilaterally by Hegseth, a former Fox News weekend host and a close ally of President Donald Trump. Hegseth has previously faced scrutiny for reportedly leaking details of a planned military strike in private Signal group chats, one of which inadvertently included a journalist.

Hegseth intervened to halt aid to Ukraine for third time

This marks the third time Hegseth has intervened to halt aid to Ukraine, with the latest action justified by his claim that the US must prioritise its defence readiness. President Trump backed the move during a press briefing last Thursday, saying: "Biden emptied our whole country, giving them weapons, and we have to make sure we have enough for ourselves."

The White House echoed this sentiment, with a spokesperson saying the suspension was part of a wider Department of Defence review to ensure American interests are placed first. "The strength of the United States armed forces remains unquestioned, just ask Iran," the spokesperson added.



Defence Department representative Sean Parnell described the review as a "commonsense, pragmatic step" to ensure that all aid decisions align with US military priorities. Despite the justification, Parnell appeared to contradict Hegseth's rationale by stating: "Our military has everything that it needs to conduct any mission, anywhere, anytime, all around the world."

The announcement came as a shock to members of Congress and Ukraine's European allies. Democratic lawmakers have insisted that there is no evidence of depleted US stockpiles. Adam Smith, the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, said his team had reviewed the figures. "We are not at any lower point, stockpile-wise than we've been in the three-and-a-half years of the Ukraine conflict," he told NBC. "There's no justification for this pause."

Among the delayed weapons are dozens of Patriot interceptor missiles,

crucial for defending Ukrainian cities from escalating Russian missile and drone assaults, as well as howitzers and other missile systems.

The delay comes at a perilous moment for Ukraine, which is facing a renewed wave of Russian bombardments. "This decision is certainly very unpleasant for us," said Fedir Venislavskyi, a member of Ukraine's parliamentary defence committee, speaking to Reuters. "It's painful, and against the background of the terrorist attacks which Russia commits against Ukraine."

The US Department of Defence has yet to respond to multiple requests for comment.

As Ukraine continues to fend off increasingly deadly attacks from Russian forces, the aid delay has raised serious questions about the Trump administration's commitment to supporting Kyiv and about the influence of partisan politics on global security decisions.

UK restores diplomatic ties with Syria after 14 years

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



The United Kingdom has re-established diplomatic relations with Syria for the first time in over a decade, Foreign Secretary David Lammy confirmed on Sunday during a landmark visit to the Syrian capital, Damascus.

Marking the first visit by a British minister to Syria in 14 years, Mr Lammy described the development as a “renewed hope for the Syrian people” and pledged Britain’s support for rebuilding the war-torn country.

“It is in our interests to support the new government to deliver their commitment to build a stable, more secure and prosperous future for all Syrians,” Mr Lammy said in an official statement.

The visit comes in the wake of major political upheaval in Syria, following the ousting of long-time president Bashar al-Assad in December by insurgent forces led by the Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. Assad’s removal ended over 13 years of civil war that devastated the nation and displaced millions.

As part of Britain’s renewed diplomatic engagement, Mr Lammy announced a £94.5 million aid package aimed at addressing urgent humanitarian needs, aiding Syria’s long-term recovery, and supporting neighbouring countries hosting Syrian refugees.

What led to the UK’s move

The UK’s move follows a broader shift in Western policy towards Syria. Just days prior, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order terminating a longstanding sanctions programme against Syria, effectively re-opening the country to the global financial system and laying the groundwork for reconstruction efforts.

In April, the UK eased its own sanctions, unfreezing assets of Syria’s central bank and 23 other institutions, including major banks and oil companies, to incentivise foreign investment. However, targeted sanctions on individuals linked to the former Assad regime remain in place.

Following high-level meetings with his Syrian counterpart, Foreign Minister

Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani, and newly-installed President Ahmed al-Sharaa, Mr Lammy stressed the UK’s continued commitment to supporting an “inclusive and representative political transition” in Syria.

He also highlighted the potential regional and global benefits of a stable Syria, including reduced irregular migration, the dismantling of chemical weapons stockpiles, and stronger efforts to combat terrorism.

Mr Lammy is set to continue his regional tour with a visit to Kuwait, where discussions will centre on enhancing regional security and deepening bilateral ties. While there, he is expected to unveil a new partnership with the Gulf state focused on addressing the escalating humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

The Foreign Office has yet to confirm whether a full reopening of the British Embassy in Damascus is forthcoming, but officials have hinted at a gradual expansion of diplomatic operations in the region.

Conservative party calls for ban on foreigners claiming disability benefits

By Fatimah Idera

The Conservative Party in the United Kingdom is urging the government to restrict access to key disability benefits for foreign nationals in a bid to reduce Britain's growing welfare bill. Under new proposals, Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and health-related Universal Credit top-ups would be limited to British citizens only, with an exception for EU nationals with settled status.

The plan comes as the cost of welfare claims by households with at least one foreign national has reportedly doubled to nearly £1 billion per month. PIP, which can be worth up to £750 per month, is intended to support people with additional living costs due to disability or long-term health issues. In some cases, total monthly support can reach £1,200.

Conservative party leader Kemi Badenoch is expected to use a speech this week to position welfare reform as a dividing line between the Tories, Labour, and Reform UK. She will argue that only the Conservatives are willing to make tough decisions to control public spending.

Restricting PIP and health top-ups to British citizens, excluding foreign nationals except EU nationals with settled status

Mandating face-to-face assessments for all PIP claims, replacing remote evaluations that are viewed as more susceptible to abuse.

Reclassifying mental health conditions like anxiety, mild depression, and ADHD so they are no longer treated as severe under the benefits system.

These measures follow new figures showing a sharp rise in mental health-related claims. In 2023, a record 531 people per day were granted PIP for mental health conditions. Media reports have highlighted cases where PIP was awarded for conditions such as acne and writer's cramp.

Government data also shows that more than 75% of sickness benefit claimants in 2023–24 were placed in the highest



payment bracket, and those not expected to seek work receiving an extra £423 per month.

The Tory proposals follow a Labour U-turn on welfare reforms after a major rebellion from its own MPs, leaving a £5 billion gap in public finances. Chancellor Rachel Reeves has indicated that this shortfall may need to be covered through tax increases in the autumn.

Helen Whately, the Conservative shadow work and pensions secretary criticised Labour's handling of welfare policy:

"Instead of saving money, the welfare bill we're voting on next week costs money. We've told them how to fix it: stop signing people off sick for anxiety, bring back face-to-face assessments, and limit benefits to British citizens."

However, spending on PIP and its predecessor, Disability Living Allowance, is projected to reach £28 billion annually by 2028–29. Overall, disability-related welfare spending, including Universal Credit health top-ups, is forecast to rise from £39 billion in 2023–24 to £58 billion over the same period, according to the Office for

Budget Responsibility.

Badenoch is also expected to criticise Labour for potentially scrapping the two-child benefit cap, a policy introduced by the Conservatives. Repealing it would cost an estimated £3.4 billion per year.

"The Conservatives are now the only party committed to serious welfare reform. We are the only party prepared to take the tough decisions to get spending under control," Badenoch said.

Labour dismissed the Conservative proposals as politically motivated and lacking credibility. A party spokesperson said:

"These uncosted and unserious proposals from Kemi Badenoch are nothing but a desperate attempt to stay relevant. The Conservatives had 14 years to reform welfare but left a broken system."

Labour claims it is already increasing face-to-face assessments and reducing disincentives in the Universal Credit system by adjusting health top-ups and boosting the standard allowance in real terms.

Reform MP quits party whip amid allegations over pandemic-era business dealings

By Fatimah Idera



The Reform UK MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock, James McMurdock, has voluntarily stepped down from the party whip while allegations concerning his pandemic-era business dealings are investigated.

The move follows a report which claims Mr McMurdock received a total of £70,000 in Bounce Back loans through two of his companies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a statement posted to X (formerly Twitter), Mr McMurdock said:

“All my business dealings have always been conducted fully within the law and in compliance with all regulations.”

He described his decision to suspend the whip as a “precautionary measure” taken “for the protection of Reform UK.”

Lee Anderson, the party’s chief whip, confirmed Mr McMurdock’s action in a statement issued Saturday:

“James McMurdock has informed me

that he has removed the party whip from himself pending the outcome of an investigation into allegations likely to be published by a national newspaper. These relate to business propriety during the pandemic, and prior to his election as an MP.”

Anderson added that Reform UK takes such matters very seriously and that Mr McMurdock had agreed to fully cooperate with any investigation. The party declined to comment further.

Media reported that Mr McMurdock’s firm, JAM Financial Limited, allegedly received a £50,000 Bounce Back Loan in 2020. A second business, Gym Live Health and Fitness Limited, reportedly obtained £20,000 the same year. Both loans would have required the companies to have annual turnovers exceeding £200,000 and £100,000, respectively.

According to the report, JAM Financial had no employees and minimal assets before the pandemic, while Gym Live had been dormant until January 2020.

Jon Pearce, Labour MP for High Peak, called for a parliamentary investigation, saying Mr McMurdock may have breached the MPs’ Code of Conduct.

Mr McMurdock’s departure from the whip leaves Reform UK with four sitting MPs, following its surprise gains at the last general election.

Mr McMurdock won his Essex seat by a narrow margin of just 98 votes over Labour in 2024. Shortly after his election, reports surfaced about a historic conviction for assaulting a former partner. Since then, he has largely stayed out of the public eye.

He is the second Reform MP to leave the party since the election. Earlier this year, Rupert Lowe was expelled following allegations of workplace bullying and threats against party chairman Zia Yusuf claims he denies. The CPS later confirmed no charges would be brought.

Reform UK has since gained one new MP, Sarah Pochin, who won the Runcorn by-election in May.

Labour allocates £60m to support immigrants in asylum appeals

By Fatimah Idera



The Labour government is increasing legal aid fees for asylum and immigration cases by 30%, raising the total cost to taxpayers from £47 million to £61 million per year. The move comes as the number of small boat arrivals reached 20,000 the earliest this milestone has ever been hit in a calendar year.

Announced by the Ministry of Justice, the immigrants policy is intended to speed up the processing of asylum claims and reduce reliance on hotels for migrant accommodation. Ministers say the investment will help clear the current backlog of 90,000 cases and improve the functioning of the immigration legal system.

This is the first increase in legal aid rates since 2006, based on hourly rates set in 1996. The Ministry noted that many legal aid firms have withdrawn from immigration work due to uncompetitive fees, putting further pressure on an already strained system.

Labour showing true colours on illegal immigrants

The move has sparked sharp criticism from the Conservative Party. Chris Philp, the shadow home secretary, accused

Labour of prioritising the needs of migrants over those of British citizens:

“Labour is showing its true colours on the side of illegal immigrants, not the British people. By raising legal aid for asylum seekers, they’re making Britain even more of a magnet for illegal migration.”

Philp also criticised immigration lawyers, calling them parasitic and accusing them of helping clients submit bogus claims under asylum, human rights, and modern slavery laws.

“This will only encourage more Channel crossings, and it sends entirely the wrong message at a time when crossings are already at a record high.”

According to Philp, 2025 is on track to become the worst year on record for illegal small boat arrivals.

The new justice minister, Sarah Sackman, defended the policy, describing it as a necessary investment to restore efficiency and accountability in the asylum system:

“We are serious about ending the use of hotels and increasing the rate of returns. That requires a functioning legal aid sector capable of supporting that goal.”

Sackman also highlighted that the additional funding is targeted at professionalising and expanding legal services for complex immigration cases, including detention challenges, deportation appeals, and cases involving victims of modern slavery and domestic abuse.

The decision to boost legal aid comes amid public concern over high-profile immigration rulings. Recent media reports have highlighted cases in which asylum seekers have avoided deportation by citing human rights grounds. In one instance, a Pakistani man was allowed to stay in the UK after a judge ruled that deportation would harm his son’s mental health. Another applicant from Tajikistan successfully argued that deportation would infringe on his religious rights by requiring him to shave his beard.

Legal aid for migrants is primarily limited to asylum seekers and individuals facing detention or removal. It can also be used in cases involving vulnerable migrants, such as victims of trafficking or abuse.

While critics view the legal aid rise as a pull factor encouraging illegal migration, supporters argue that it is a long-overdue adjustment to ensure fair access to justice and to help resolve cases more efficiently.

Ex-Border force chief urges migrants to repay housing costs

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Tony Smith, the former director-general of the UK Border Force, has called for a radical overhaul of the asylum system that would require migrants granted refugee status to repay the costs of their accommodation and processing once they are permitted to work.

Speaking amid record Channel crossings and spiralling asylum-related expenditure, Mr Smith said the government could recover up to £2.7 billion annually, nearly half of the current £5.4 billion spent each year on supporting asylum seekers.

He suggested that migrants who eventually gain the right to work could be required to repay their state-funded housing and support costs over time, similar to the UK's student loan system. Under his proposal, asylum claimants would not be granted indefinite leave to remain or full citizenship until their debts are cleared.

"If they got the message that it's not a free ride and any money that they cost the state would have to be repaid, it would act as a deterrent," Mr Smith said.

"We could also serve them notice on arrival of the costs they would incur if placed in hotels or state-run accommodation and give them the option to stay with friends or relatives instead."

Shadow Home Secretary Backs Proposal

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp voiced support for the proposal, saying it would restore fairness to a system that he argues has long burdened British taxpayers.

"Illegal immigrants who come from a safe country like France and claim asylum should not have a free ride," said Mr Philp.

"Where they are housed at taxpayers' expense, it is only reasonable that they should have to pay these costs back."

"British taxpayers have been fleeced



for too long by illegal immigrants abusing our system. This nonsense has to end."

Legal Hurdles and Rising Pressure

Under international law, the UK is obligated to provide housing and subsistence to asylum seekers who declare themselves destitute. Currently, this includes accommodation, food, and a weekly stipend of £49.18. Migrants may only apply to work after one year if their claim remains undecided.

The proposal comes at a time of rising political and public pressure over the cost and management of the UK's asylum system. Government figures revealed on Wednesday that over 20,000 migrants have crossed the Channel so far in 2025—a new record for the first half of a calendar year.

Mr Smith argued that his plan offers a technologically feasible solution that could be implemented using existing biometric tracking systems already in place upon arrival.

"When they arrive, we already fingerprint, photograph, and log them. The thousands of pounds in costs can

be tracked by the Home Office just like student loans," he said.

"Once granted the right to work, deductions could begin. And until those debts are paid, there would be no indefinite leave to remain. That would also incentivise integration and employment."

"We do this for British students. Why not for those who arrive and cost the state thousands?"

Soaring Asylum Costs

Official figures show that the UK's asylum bill has nearly doubled in two years, rising from £3 billion to £5.4 billion. Over 30,000 asylum seekers are currently being housed in hotels, costing more than £5 million per day. There are more than 100,000 individuals still awaiting a first decision on their asylum claim.

With the government's controversial "one-in, one-out" migration policy yet to curb arrivals, voices like Mr Smith's are likely to fuel further debate as both the Conservative Party and Labour face mounting pressure to demonstrate fiscal responsibility and border control.

Israel continues Gaza strikes as Hamas agrees to ceasefire talks

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Israel has continued its air assault on Gaza, launching fresh waves of strikes just hours after Hamas announced it was ready to enter immediate talks on a US-backed 60-day ceasefire proposal, raising cautious hopes of a pause in hostilities that have now stretched into a 21-month war.

The militant Islamist group's announcement on Saturday fuelled optimism that a temporary truce, and perhaps the foundation for a permanent settlement, could be achieved in the coming days. In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed that a delegation would travel to Qatar on Sunday for further negotiations. However, his office also said that changes requested by Hamas to the proposed terms were "not acceptable."

Despite a relative calm reported by Gaza residents and aid workers on Saturday, at least 24 Palestinians were killed, including 10 civilians seeking humanitarian aid. One of the deadliest strikes hit a cluster of tents in the Mawasi coastal area in southern Gaza, killing seven people, including a Palestinian doctor and his three children. Other fatalities were reported in Bani Suheila and Khan Younis, according to hospital officials.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) did not immediately comment on the strikes.

Separately, two American contractors working for the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) were injured after unidentified attackers threw grenades at a food distribution site in southern Gaza. The GHF, a US-backed private relief organisation, has faced mounting controversy over its operations in Gaza. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres recently criticised the foundation, calling it "inherently unsafe" and accusing it of "killing people", an allegation the GHF strongly denies, saying it has safely delivered tens of millions of meals.

U.S. State department spokesperson blames Hamas

Responding to the grenade attack, US State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce blamed "Hamas terrorists", writing on X (formerly Twitter): "This act of violence against the people bringing relief to Gazans lays bare the depravity of



Hamas."

Hundreds of Palestinians have died in recent weeks while attempting to access aid, many shot or shelled by Israeli forces while travelling to GHF sites or gathering around UN aid convoys, which are frequently looted or blocked.

Aid organisations are once again warning of a total collapse of humanitarian efforts across Gaza. Fuel supplies for generators, which power hospitals, communications networks, and aid distribution systems, are nearly exhausted. "We are pretty much down to about half a day's worth. When that is gone, everything has to shut down," one aid worker in Deir al-Balah said.

Since the collapse of the last ceasefire in March, Israel has imposed a near-total blockade on the territory. Though limited food and medical supplies have been allowed through, no fuel has been permitted entry. The remaining stockpiles are largely inaccessible, located in combat zones or areas under Israeli control.

Prime Minister Netanyahu is set to travel to Washington on Sunday for discussions with US President Donald Trump, who has publicly expressed a desire to see the war in Gaza come to an end. Drafts of the proposed ceasefire deal, seen by The Guardian, reportedly include a provision

that Trump himself would announce the agreement, potentially during Netanyahu's visit.

However, sources close to Hamas say the group is seeking more concrete assurances that any temporary truce would lead to a permanent cessation of hostilities and a full withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza. There is also contention over aid distribution mechanisms: Hamas insists the GHF must be shut down, while Israel wants to maintain an aid delivery system independent of the UN and foreign governments.

Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, is expected to travel to the region to finalise the agreement, although analysts warn that the involvement of multiple negotiating teams flying between Qatar and Egypt could delay any final accord.

The conflict began in October 2023, when Hamas launched a surprise cross-border attack into Israel, killing 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251. Of those kidnapped, 50 remain in Gaza; fewer than half are believed to be alive.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 57,000 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry, a toll that includes a large majority of civilians and is deemed credible by the United Nations and several Western governments.

Super Falcons begin WAFCON with 3-0 Win over Tunisia

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Nigeria's Super Falcons began their campaign at the 2024 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) with an emphatic 3-0 victory over Tunisia on Sunday, delivering a commanding performance that underlined their status as tournament favourites.

The Group B opener, played at the Stade Moulay Hassan in Rabat, saw the nine-time champions stamp their authority early and maintain control throughout. Goals from Asisat Oshoala, Rinsola Babajide, and Chiwendu Ihezuo secured all three points and a comfortable lead in the group.

It was a statement win for Nigeria, who had never beaten Tunisia at WAFCON, with their only previous meeting ending in a goalless draw at the 2008 edition.

The Super Falcons wasted no time getting on the scoresheet. In the fourth minute, Barcelona star Asisat Oshoala powered in a header from a brilliantly delivered low in-swinging free-kick by Rinsola Babajide. The early goal settled nerves and set the tone for a dominant first half.

Nigeria doubled their lead in first-half stoppage time. Babajide, who had tormented the Tunisian defence throughout the half, cut in from the left and fired a low shot past the goalkeeper. It

was her first goal in a senior international tournament, and a reward for her energetic performance.

Ashleigh Plumptre thought she had made it 3-0 minutes later when she headed home a corner, but the goal was disallowed for a foul on the Tunisian goalkeeper.

The Falcons resumed the second half with the same intensity. They created numerous chances, though their finishing let them down. Plumptre nearly scored with a lobbed effort from distance, but it was acrobatically tipped over the bar. Veteran defender Osinachi Ohale missed a sitter, blasting over the bar from close range with the goal at her mercy.

Substitute Esther Okoronkwo came close to adding a third when her well-placed shot hit the post after she expertly beat her marker inside the area.

Tunisia, largely pinned in their own half, had a rare moment of hope in the 75th minute. They appealed for a penalty following a clash in the box, but after a VAR review, the referee waved play on.

Nigeria eventually put the game to bed in the 84th minute. Esther Okoronkwo turned provider, nodding a cross from Plumptre into the path of Chiwendu Ihezuo, who smashed home a volley from

close range to make it 3-0.

With that goal, the Super Falcons sealed their dominance and secured their first three points of the tournament, putting them top of Group B ahead of the clash between Algeria and Botswana.

Former Kwara United coach Samson Unuanel was among those who praised the team's performance. Speaking to Completesports.com, he said: "The Super Falcons showed real determination and quality today. They played like a team that came to Morocco for business. Starting a tournament with a win is crucial, and they did it in style."

Unuanel also urged the team to stay focused ahead of their next matches. "This is just the first step. They must keep their eyes on the prize and approach every game with the same hunger."

The Super Falcons' next game is on Thursday against Botswana at the Stade Larbi Zaouli. Tunisia, meanwhile, will aim to bounce back against Algeria in what will now be a must-win fixture.

Nigeria's dream of clinching a record-extending 10th WAFCON title is off to the perfect start — one marked by flair, control, and a clear intent to reclaim their crown.

Okoronkwo shines in Falcons' WAFCON win over Tunisia

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Super Falcons forward Esther Okoronkwo was named Player of the Match following her outstanding performance in Nigeria's 3-0 victory over Tunisia in their 2024 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) Group B opener on Sunday.

Despite starting the game on the bench, Okoronkwo made an immediate impact after being introduced in the second half, helping to seal the victory and impressing fans and analysts alike with her skill, vision, and attacking presence.

Nigeria, who are chasing a record-extending 10th WAFCON title, were already in control when Okoronkwo entered the game. First-half goals from Asisat Oshoala and Rinsola Babajide had given the Falcons a comfortable 2-0 lead. Yet it was Okoronkwo's display in the final third that added flair, energy, and an extra attacking threat that Tunisia struggled to contain.

Shortly after coming on, Okoronkwo nearly added her name to the scoresheet. She beat her marker with a clever feint inside the penalty area and unleashed a low shot that beat the goalkeeper but struck the post — an agonizingly close moment that showcased her attacking instincts.

Undeterred, she continued to press and

move intelligently, eventually playing a decisive role in Nigeria's third goal. In the 84th minute, Okoronkwo rose to meet Ashleigh Plumptre's cross from the left wing, directing a smart header across the box. Fellow substitute Chiwendu Ihezuo timed her run perfectly and volleyed home from close range with her left foot to make it 3-0.

It was a moment of quality that highlighted Okoronkwo's awareness and creativity, and it capped off an excellent all-round performance that earned her the Player of the Match award.

Reacting to the recognition, Okoronkwo expressed her gratitude and emphasized the importance of the team's performance above all.

"I'm honoured to receive this award, but more importantly, I'm proud of the team's performance," she said. "It's always a great feeling to contribute to a win, especially in such a big tournament. We've started well, and now it's about staying focused and continuing to improve."

Head coach Randy Waldrum also praised the striker's impact, highlighting her professionalism and readiness to deliver when called upon.

"Esther has always been a player who

brings something special to the team," Waldrum said. "She came on with a strong mindset, added intensity, and showed real quality. That's the kind of depth we need if we're going to go all the way."

Okoronkwo's performance has also been widely praised by fans and pundits on social media, with many calling for her to start in Nigeria's next game against Botswana. Her ability to stretch defences, link play, and deliver in key moments has only increased the selection headache for Waldrum as the tournament progresses.

The 26-year-old forward, who plays her club football in France, has steadily grown into one of Nigeria's most reliable attacking options. Her performance against Tunisia only further solidified her importance to the team's ambitions in Morocco.

The Super Falcons will return to action on Thursday, July 10, against Botswana at the Stade Larbi Zaouli, Casablanca. A win in that match could see them secure early qualification to the quarter-finals.

With Okoronkwo in this kind of form, Nigeria's attacking depth looks more dangerous than ever — a promising sign for a team aiming to reclaim the continental crown.