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Natasha enters NASS on foot despite security blockade

By Damilola Olufemi

Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan has gained entry into the National Assembly complex in Abuja after initially being denied access.

The senator, currently under a six-month suspension imposed by the Senate, had vowed to return to legislative duties, citing a court ruling which, according to her, supported her reinstatement.

Her attempt to resume on Tuesday was initially blocked, as security operatives stopped her convoy from entering the premises. Senator Natasha, who was in a black vehicle, was turned back, along with another car ahead of hers that carried activist Aisha Yesufu.

Despite the setback, Natasha later stepped out of her vehicle and walked into the National Assembly on foot, accompanied by a group of supporters.

The Senate has issued a stern warning to suspended Kogi senator, Natasha, advising her not to attempt a return to the National Assembly ahead of the expiration of her suspension.

Senator Yemi Adaramodu, Chair of the Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, made this clear in a statement released on Sunday, saying there is no valid court ruling compelling the Senate to reinstate Akpoti-Uduaghan immediately.

“The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria wishes to reaffirm, for the third time, that there is no subsisting court order mandating the Senate to recall Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan before the expiration of her suspension,” Adaramodu stated.

His comments followed reports that Akpoti-Uduaghan planned to resume her legislative duties on Tuesday, allegedly citing a judgment by Justice Binta Nyako of the Federal High Court in Abuja.

However, Adaramodu explained that both the court ruling and the Certified True Copy of the Enrolled Order had already been reviewed by the Senate, with no binding instruction given regarding her recall.



“Rather, the Honourable Court gave a non-binding advisory urging the Senate to consider amending its Standing Orders and reviewing the suspension, which it opined might be excessive,” he said. “The Court, however, explicitly held that the Senate did not breach any law or constitutional provision in imposing the disciplinary measure based on the Senator’s misconduct during plenary.”

The Senate also recalled that the same court found Akpoti-Uduaghan in contempt, imposing a ₦5 million fine payable to the Federal Government and directing her to publish a formal apology in two national newspapers and on her Facebook page—an order she has reportedly yet to obey.

“It is therefore surprising and legally untenable that Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan, while on appeal and having filed a motion for stay against the valid and binding orders made against her, is attempting to act upon an imaginary order of recall that does not exist,” Adaramodu said.

He warned that any attempt by the senator to “storm the Senate next Tuesday under a false pretext” would be disruptive and in violation of legislative procedures.

Adaramodu concluded that the Senate would, in due course, consider the court’s advisory on potential amendments to its Standing Orders and her recall, and would formally communicate any decision to Akpoti-Uduaghan. Until then, he advised her to remain away from Senate proceedings and allow legal processes to take their course.

Natasha vows to be present

Meanwhile, Natasha insisted she will resume plenary at the Senate on Tuesday, 22nd of July 2025, in line with the judgement of the court, despite the appeal by the president of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio.

She confirmed she had written to the Senate to formally announce her intention to return.

“I have pretty much two months more before the six months expire. However, I have written to the Senate again telling them that I’m resuming on the 22nd, which is on Tuesday, by the special grace of God,” she said in her Ihima hometown of Kogi on Saturday.

“I will be there, because the court did make the decision on that. Now, they argue that it’s an order — it’s not an order, but it is a decision.”

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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
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5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
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8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
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6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
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Tinubu sets Q1 2026 deadline for National Single Window take-off

By Friday Omosola



President Bola Tinubu has set a first-quarter 2026 deadline for the full operational take-off of the National Single Window (NSW) platform, an ambitious digital trade initiative aimed at transforming Nigeria's import and export processes.

Speaking on behalf of the President during the fifth meeting of the NSW Steering Committee on Tuesday at the State House in Abuja, Chief of Staff Femi Gbajabiamila emphasised the administration's commitment to the timely implementation of the platform.

He noted that recent tax reforms signed into law in June underscored the urgency of fast-tracking reforms needed to realise Nigeria's \$1 trillion economy target.

"It's important that we continue to stay focused on this project so that we meet our timelines and achieve the results the President expects," Gbajabiamila said.

He stressed NSW's potential to simplify trade operations, boost investment, enhance transparency, and improve NSW's credibility on the global business stage.

He urged all participating agencies to refine their targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure that Phase 1 of the project goes live as scheduled.

Also, Finance Minister and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, described progress so far as encouraging but warned against complacency.

He called for a transition from planning to execution, saying the NSW was a complex but transformational initiative that demanded urgency and collaboration.

Furthermore, Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Jumoke Oduwole urged committee members to work diligently to meet the Q1 2026 deadline.

Dr Zacch Adedeji, Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), thanked Tinubu for his unwavering support and noted the project's legal backing following the enactment of relevant laws.

"The reward for hard work is more

work," Adedeji said, reminding members to remain focused on the mission ahead.

NSW Project Director Tola Fakolade reported that all key project milestones for the second quarter of 2025 had been successfully achieved, including the commencement of platform customisation.

He expressed confidence that the committee would meet the rollout deadline.

Launched in April 2024, the NSW is a Federal Government initiative to digitise and streamline trade processes through a centralised electronic platform.

It aims to consolidate all agencies involved in imports and exports, reduce trade costs, cut port delays, and improve efficiency and transparency in cross-border transactions.

The steering committee comprises representatives from the Ministries of Trade and Investment, Finance, FIRS, and the Nigeria Customs Service.

Oyedele: Delay in tax reforms cost Nigeria \$1trn economy status

By Friday Omosola

Nigeria could have attained a \$1 trillion economy if the nation had embraced its current fiscal and tax reform agenda a decade earlier, according to Taiwo Oyedele, Chairman of the Presidential Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms Committee.

Speaking yesterday at PwC's 'Executive Summit on Nigeria's Tax Reform' in Lagos, Oyedele stressed that past economic mismanagement, particularly concerning exchange rates, had severely hampered the country's progress.

Oyedele contended that without the bold reforms initiated by President Bola Tinubu's administration in the past two years, Nigeria was on a perilous trajectory towards economic collapse, resembling nations like Zimbabwe and Venezuela.

He illustrated this by stating that a continued fuel subsidy regime would have driven the price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) to N10,000 per litre, rendering it unaffordable.

"If some of these reforms done in the past two years ago were implemented, I tell you authoritatively that Nigeria's \$1 trillion economy is guaranteed and the price of PMS will be under N300 per litre because the foreign rate will be under N300 against the dollar," Oyedele said.

He presented an analysis comparing Nigeria's balance of payments with those of Kenya and South Africa over the last decade, revealing that the Naira had depreciated six and a half times more than the Kenyan Shilling and South African Rand.

"If only we had maintained that level of stability like those two other countries, Nigeria would be a \$1 trillion economy. What that means is that the size of the middle class will probably be 10 times what it is and every single investor will take us seriously," he emphasised.

Highlighting the nation's precarious fiscal position prior to the reforms, Oyedele disclosed that an alarming 97% of the federal government's revenue was



consumed by debt servicing, with a tax-to-GDP ratio standing below 10%.

He characterised Tinubu's tax reforms as the most significant and impactful since Nigeria's independence, noting that countries like South Africa and Rwanda had significantly outpaced Nigeria in revenue generation.

Despite past challenges, Oyedele expressed optimism, stating that Nigeria possesses the requisite human capacity, knowledge, and skills, having finally found the 'political will' necessary for progress.

He admitted the reforms have been 'painful' but are now beginning to yield positive macroeconomic results.

He cited a declining budget deficit, increased spending on infrastructure, a rise in the tax-to-GDP ratio to 13.5% within two years of Tinubu's tenure, and a reduction in debt service to under 50% from the previous 97 percent.

"We no longer print money to spend. Rather, we pay down half of the Ways & Means that the past administration printed," he added.

Oyedele clarified that the tax reform's primary objective extends beyond mere revenue generation, noting that improved tax collection is a natural consequence of

heightened economic activity.

He also challenged the long-held notion regarding higher exemption thresholds for small businesses, suggesting that in unequal societies like Nigeria, a disproportionately small percentage of the population accounts for the majority of tax contributions.

Looking ahead, Oyedele stated that the planned tax reforms, set to commence in January 2026, are designed to accelerate economic activity, benefiting businesses, households, individuals, and the government alike.

"We can build a prosperous Nigeria together. I can tell you, from what I have seen, that better days are ahead of us," he said.

Earlier at the summit, Sam Adu, Regional Senior Partner for PwC West Market Area, praised the 2025 Tax Act as a monumental overhaul of Nigeria's tax ecosystem, potentially the most ambitious globally in decades.

Adu stressed that the reforms aim to foster a fairer, more transparent, and growth-oriented tax system for both businesses and individuals, aligning with global trends towards 'smarter taxation' driven by technology, sustainability, cross-border cooperation, and geopolitics.

'Stop playing politics, Okpebholo meant well' – Wike to Obi

By Friday Omosola

FCT Minister Nyesom Wike has thrown his weight behind Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State over the controversy trailing the 2023 Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate Peter Obi's recent visit to Benin City.

Speaking at the commissioning of the new Edo Line transport terminal on Tuesday, Wike accused Obi of politicising a matter that should have been handled with discretion.

He urged the former Anambra governor to stop "playing to the gallery."

According to Wike, Obi failed to notify the state government of his visit on 7 July to the School of Nursing Sciences at St. Philomena's Hospital, where he donated ₦15 million.

The Minister said such high-profile visits require prior notification for security coordination, especially given the current climate of insecurity.

"When I was governor, Peter Obi informed me before visiting my state. I even provided logistics," Wike said.

"It's a matter of protocol and security. If anything had happened, the governor would be blamed. Okpebholo never said Obi shouldn't come—he only insisted on being notified. That's leadership."



Wike dismissed public backlash over Okpebholo's statement, describing it as a deliberate attempt to stir political tension.

He also advised the Edo governor to remain resolute.

"Stand firm in any decision you've taken," Wike added.

"The important thing is: do you have the support of your people? If yes, go ahead. If people are not talking about you, you're not yet a governor."

Okpebholo's demand for security clearance sparked outrage from several quarters.

LP senators Victor Umeh, Ireti Kingibe, Ezea Okey, and Tony Nwoye condemned the governor's stance as "executive rascality."

Prominent rights lawyer Femi Falana also urged Okpebholo to withdraw the statement and issue a public apology.

As of press time, Obi has yet to respond to the controversy.

2027: Osun PDP, Adeleke endorse Tinubu

By Friday Omosola

Governor Ademola Adeleke of Osun State has disclosed that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state has endorsed President Bola Tinubu's bid for a second term.

In a statement shared on his X page on Tuesday, Adeleke said the endorsement followed a meeting with the PDP Leadership Caucus in Osogbo.

He added that the decision came after weeks of consultations with various stakeholders across the state, including traditional rulers, civil servants, market leaders, and grassroots party



members.

The governor reaffirmed his loyalty to the PDP, describing it as the party that provided him with the platform to serve the people of the state.

He further revealed that he, too, had received unanimous endorsement from the state chapter of the party to contest for a second term in 2026.

"Our party in Osun has also endorsed President Bola Tinubu for re-election in 2027, recognising him as a proud son of our state. PDP remains the most popular and trusted party across Osun State.

"I will continue to deliver on our Five-Point Agenda with renewed focus and dedication. The love and support from the people of Osun continues to inspire me. Together, we move forward", he said.

FG targets major revenue boost, transparency through national single window

By Friday Omosola

The Federal Government (FG) is fast-tracking the implementation of the National Single Window (NSW), a key initiative under President Bola Tinubu's administration, to enhance transparency, curb revenue leaks, and streamline trade processes.

Wale Edun, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, confirmed this commitment yesterday during his appearance before the National Assembly Joint Committee on Customs and Tariffs.

He emphasised the government's resolve to digitise trade operations, increase customs revenue, and formalise informal economic transactions.

"We will soon implement one of His Excellency, Mr President's legacy projects, the National Single Window," Edun stated.

"It will tackle trade facilitation, port community systems, and prevent revenue leakages. This system will introduce speed and efficiency to international trade transactions and complement our other economic reforms."

The Minister explained that the National Single Window is a digital platform designed to integrate all government bodies involved in trade.

He said once fully operational, it is expected to drastically cut down the time required for cargo clearance, boost transparency, and significantly increase government income.

Edun highlighted that improving the efficiency of the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) is crucial for increasing non-oil revenue.

He noted that the NCS remains a vital contributor to the Federation Account.

He stressed that enhancing its performance is a national priority.

"Customs revenue is significant and remains a major contributor to federal and state governments. We are working towards achieving higher revenue through more efficient processes and by blocking loopholes and leakages," he added.



Concern was also raised by the Minister regarding Nigeria's trade settlement system, which he described as plagued by informal dealings and inefficiencies.

Edun hinted at impending reforms that might permit imports and even crude oil sales to be settled in naira, a strategic move intended to ease pressure on the nation's foreign exchange.

Lawmakers demand action on customs funding, approvals

During the session, Senator Issa Jibrin, chairman of the National Assembly Joint Committee on Customs and Tariffs, called for the immediate activation of a statutory 4% 'Free On Board' (FOB) charge to finance customs operations, as mandated by law.

Jibrin also demanded the swift release and deployment of available funds for crucial customs modernisation projects.

He voiced frustration over the prolonged delays in project approvals, citing over N50 billion worth of NCS projects awaiting Federal Executive Council (FEC) clearance, some of which have been pending since August 2023.

"We passed a resolution that the Nigerian Customs Service should stop collection of 1 per cent CISS and 7% cost of collection as these are not backed by the parliament," Jibrin asserted.

"We also want a monthly report of the

implementation of the 4% FOB." Lawmakers accused the Finance Ministry of holding up vital approvals and demanded immediate explanations.

Another pressing issue raised was the proliferation of youth-led digital payment systems operating outside the purview of financial regulators.

Edun expressed concern about the implications for national revenue and the broader economy.

"There is a growing segment of youth-led digital payments escaping the financial regulatory net. We must work towards integrating these into the formal system to ensure effective monitoring and proper taxation," he stated.

Meanwhile, NCS Comptroller-General, Adewale Adeniyi, clarified that while rice importation is restricted, it is not entirely banned.

He emphasised, "However, importation through the land borders is not allowed."

The National Assembly session ended by adopting a resolution urging the immediate implementation of the 4% FOB charge and improved reporting mechanisms.

Lawmakers also pressed the Ministry of Finance to expedite approvals for pending customs modernisation projects.

Adeleke dismisses defection rumours, reaffirms loyalty to PDP

By Gbenga Olaleye

Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, has firmly denied reports suggesting his defection from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), declaring that he remains committed to both the party and his mandate to serve the people of Osun.

Speaking at the flag-off ceremony for the dualisation of a 3.5km township road in Ila-Orangun, Adeleke dismissed the speculation, asserting, "I was elected on the platform of the PDP and so shall I remain in the party. I'm not going anywhere."

The governor praised the commencement of the Ila township road project, calling it a milestone achievement amidst national uncertainty. He reiterated his vow to serve Osun State faithfully and said he would not be distracted from that commitment.

Adeleke outlined key infrastructure achievements under his administration, including the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and renovation of over 175 kilometres of roads. He noted that several other road dualisation and flyover projects are currently underway.



Of particular importance, he said, is the 3.5km Osogbo-Ikirun-Inisha-Okuku-Ijabe-Ila Odo road, which connects Osun to neighbouring Kwara State. He pledged to complete the strategic route, which he described as crucial to the state's development agenda.

"The second phase, which we are flagging off today, is almost the same length as what was completed in 12 years. By the grace of God, we intend to deliver this project within 12 months," Adeleke stated

confidently.

The governor concluded by crediting divine providence for his political journey, saying, "We are all programmed by Almighty God to be what we have been, what we are, and what we will be in the future."

His remarks are seen as a clear message to critics and political rivals that he remains grounded in the PDP and focused on governance rather than political speculation.

Amaechi quits APC, slams party as symbol of failure

By Gbenga Olaleye

Former Governor of Rivers State and ex-Minister of Transportation, Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, has formally resigned from the All Progressives Congress (APC), describing the ruling party as a symbol of "failure, pain, and anguish" that has lost touch with the Nigerian people.

In a strongly worded resignation letter dated 1st July 2025 and addressed to the APC Chairman in his Ward 8, Ubima, Ikwerre Local Government Area, Amaechi accused the party of betraying the ideals upon which it was founded. He cited the need to align with other patriotic Nigerians in a renewed effort to "rescue" the country from what he called the APC's failing grip.

"After a wide range of consultations, I am convinced that this is the appropriate moment to call it quits," Amaechi wrote.

"The party has derailed from the lofty



ideals that birthed its formation and so can no longer inspire hopes in Nigeria for a greater future."

He further added: "I have therefore taken a decision to join forces with well-meaning compatriots to start a fresh journey for the liberation of Nigeria."

Amaechi's resignation confirms his recent statements declaring that he no longer identifies as a member of the APC, asserting that "the party no longer exists" in his view.

His departure marks a dramatic political shift, given his long-standing role in the APC as one of its founding figures and key strategists. Amaechi had served as Director-General of President Muhammadu Buhari's campaign organisations in 2015 and 2019 and later as Minister of Transportation.

His resignation comes as he emerges as a leading figure in a growing opposition coalition aiming to challenge the administration of President Bola Tinubu in the 2027 general election.

While Amaechi has not formally announced his next political platform, insiders suggest he may play a central role in the alternative alliance being forged by opposition leaders disillusioned with both the APC and the current state of national affairs.

PDP announces date for 101st NEC meeting

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has announced the convening of its 101st National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting, set to take place over three days from Wednesday, 23rd July to Friday, 25th July 2025 at the party's national secretariat in Abuja.

The announcement was made public through an official statement posted on the party's verified X (formerly Twitter) handle on Tuesday, signed by the National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba.

The statement served as a reminder to all distinguished members of the NEC to prepare for the meeting, emphasising the importance of full attendance to discuss pressing party matters ahead of the next election cycle.

The PDP's NEC, a key decision-making organ, is composed of a wide



range of senior party officials and influential political figures as stipulated under Section 31(1) of the PDP Constitution (amended in 2017).

This includes the party's national chairman; serving and former presidents and vice presidents of Nigeria who remain party members; the chairman and secretary of the Board of Trustees (BoT); all other BoT members; and principal officers of the Senate and House of Representatives affiliated with the party.

In addition, the NEC includes a maximum of 18 serving senators and 24 members of the House of Representatives, strategically spread across the country to represent the party's diverse interests.

All sitting state governors who are PDP members, members of the National Working Committee (NWC) including their deputies, and all state chairmen are also expected to participate.

Further expanding the NEC's

membership, the party recognises six ex-officio members; all former NWC members who remain within the party fold; all former principal officers of the National Assembly produced by the PDP who are still active members; as well as all former PDP state governors who maintain their membership status.

This triennial meeting offers an opportunity for the PDP's leadership to strategise on party policies, electoral strategies, governance issues, and internal organisational matters.

With general elections looming, the NEC meeting is seen as a critical platform for aligning the party's vision and mobilising its stakeholders toward reclaiming political ground at federal and state levels.

The party's leadership has encouraged full participation from all members to ensure robust discussions and collective decisions that will shape the PDP's trajectory in the coming years.

PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)
...POWER TO THE PEOPLE

101st NEC MEETING

D Integrated members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) are hereby reminded of the scheduled 101st NEC meeting on earlier announced to hold as follows:

DATE	VENUE	TIME
Wednesday, 23rd, Thursday, 24th and Friday, 25th July, 2025	PDP National Secretariat, Wodans Plaza, Plot 197D, Wickett Okpara Street, Wuse Zone 3, Abuja.	2:00 pm

Members of NEC as provided under Section 31(1) of the PDP Constitution (as amended in 2017) are as follows:

The National Chairman, Serving and former Presidents and Vice Presidents of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; 3 members of the Party; the Chairman and Secretary of the Board of Trustees (BoT); all other members of the Board of Trustees (BoT); Principal Officers of the Senate who are members of the Party and not more than 18 serving Senators spread across the country who are members of the Party; Principal Officers of the House of Representatives who are members of the Party and not more than 24 serving members of the House of Representatives spread across the country who are members of the Party; all State Governors who are members of the Party; all National Officers of the Party (NWC) Members and Deputies; all State Chairmen; Six ex-officio members; all former National Working Committee members who are all members of the Party; all former Principal Officers of the National Assembly produced by the Party who are all members of the Party and all former State Governors produced by the Party and who are all members of the Party.

PDP - Power to the People
Hon. Debo Ologunagba
National Publicity Secretary

Atiku: Threat to Obi signals danger for all opposition voices

By Friday Omosola

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has criticised the warning issued by Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, to Labour Party presidential candidate, Peter Obi.

The New Daily Prime earlier reported that Okpebholo insisted that Obi must obtain security clearance before entering the state.

Reacting to the development, Atiku, who recently announced his resignation from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), described the warning as unacceptable.

In a statement posted on his X page on Tuesday, he declared that any threat to the former governor of Anambra State represents a threat to all opposition voices.

“Let it be known that a threat against Peter Obi or any of us is a threat against all of us”, he said.

Okpebholo stirred controversy after linking a resurgence of violence in the state to a recent visit by Obi.

Speaking during the defection of federal lawmaker Marcus Onobun to the All Progressives Congress (APC), Okpebholo alleged that ‘death followed Obi’s visit’.

EFCC declares three wanted for cybercrime conspiracy

A 36-year-old Chinese national, Ji Zhou, along with two Nigerian citizens, Amino Mohammed, 34, and Abdussalam Akolawole, 38—both indigenes of Kogi State—has been declared wanted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for alleged involvement in cybercrime, impersonation, conspiracy, and obtaining money under false pretence.

This announcement was made known via their Facebook page on Tuesday, in various documents signed by the Head of Media and Publicity, Dele Oyewale.

The anti-graft agency beckoned on the public to report their whereabouts to the nearest security station.



The remark triggered widespread backlash from opposition figures and members of the public.

Obi visited Benin City, the Edo State capital, earlier in July, where he donated N15 million to support a development project at the St. Philomena Hospital School of Nursing Sciences.

However, Okpebholo controversially claimed that his visit coincided with renewed violence across the state.

“That man who says he has no ‘shishi’ came and dropped ₦15 million. Where

did he get it from? After he left, three people were killed. For this reason, Obi must not come to Edo without security clearance.

“His visit coincided with a resurgence of violence in the state and this will not be tolerated,” the governor claimed.

However, after many interpreted the statement as an attempt to intimidate or restrict opposition figures from freely engaging within the state, the governor clarified that he meant no harm.

He explained that his remarks were merely based on protocol.



According to Oyewale, Zhou’s last known address was Unguwan Mai Keke, Kafanchan, in Jama’a Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State.

As for Akolawole, who hails from Ijumu LGA of Kogi, his last known address was

By Helen Okechukwu

Rivers Park Estate, Cluster 1, Babatunde Folawiyo Plot 101, Lugbe, Abuja.

For Mohammed, who is also an indigene of Okene LGA of Kogi, his last location was Low-Cost Mining Gate Junction, Jos, Plateau State.

The agency appeals to anyone with useful information regarding their whereabouts to contact any of its offices located in Ibadan, Uyo, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Benin, Makurdi, Kaduna, Ilorin, Enugu, Kano, Lagos, Gombe, Port Harcourt, or Abuja, or contact the nearest security agency using the provided phone line: 08093322644.

Ortom dismisses ADC coalition, says He's staying in PDP

By Gbenga Olaleye

Former Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom, has declared that the coalition movement under the African Democratic Congress (ADC) is doomed to fail and will not survive Nigeria's political landscape.

Speaking in an interview with Channels Television, Ortom firmly stated that he has no intention of leaving the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which he claims to lead in Benue State. He also dismissed speculation about joining the newly formed coalition.

"People are free to join any coalition that they so wish, but for me and the people that I lead, we remain in PDP," Ortom said.

"I am not joining any coalition. We have no business with that. I don't see it surviving."

Ortom, a member of the PDP's Board of Trustees (BoT), was also unapologetic about his opposition to Atiku Abubakar's 2023 presidential bid. He was part of the



G5 group of PDP governors who rejected Atiku and instead backed Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

"I did not hide it. I have no regret," Ortom said.

"Politics is about interest. If I have somebody working against my interest and the interest of my people, I have to fight back."

He further predicted that even if the ADC coalition overcomes its ongoing legal battles, it would ultimately be defeated "hands down" at the polls.

Ortom's comments come amid ongoing shifts within Nigeria's opposition parties, with Atiku Abubakar's recent moves sparking renewed speculation about the future of the PDP.

EFCC arraigns Bishop Katung, witness testifies to defrauding investors of N178m

By Helen Okechukwu

A prosecution witness, Sulaiman Kwalla, on Tuesday, told the Federal High Court sitting in Jos, Plateau State, how Bishop Katung Jonas used his religious influence to lure thousands, including Kwalla and his wife, into a failed cooperative scheme.

Testifying before Justice Sharon T. Ishaya, Kwalla alleged that Jonas, alongside co-defendant Okewole Dayo, promoted the Covenant Fadama Multi-purpose Cooperative Society through televised sermons and adverts promising 10% monthly returns.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is prosecuting the duo on a 23-count charge bordering on obtaining N178.8 million under false pretence.

"He invested ₦200,000 (Two Hundred Thousand Naira) and additional ₦100,000 (One Hundred Thousand) on behalf of his wife, Halima Ibrahim Danyaro, after watching advertisements of the cooperative society on Plateau Radio Television Corporation (PRTV). I filled a form and was directed to pay into



Dadin Kowa Microfinance Bank. I was issued official receipts for both payments," EFCC report noted.

However, by the end of the first month, no returns were paid. On 4 June 2012, a crowd of angry investors stormed the cooperative's Jos office, prompting police intervention and the arrest of Dayo.

Kwalla said Bishop Jonas admitted to chairing the cooperative and proposed a repayment plan from July 2012, which



never materialised.

He later introduced dubious schemes like Lanre Global Concept and Global View, claiming funds were diverted to forex trading.

Despite several failed repayment attempts, Kwalla only recovered his N200,000, while his wife's N100,000 remains unpaid. He said over 44,000 investors were affected, with total losses alleged to exceed N8 billion.

Sowore accuses Police cameraman of stealing AI glasses during protest

By Gbenga Olaleye



Controversial Nigerian activist and former presidential candidate, Omoyele Sowore, has publicly identified the alleged individual responsible for stealing his AI smart glasses during a demonstration at the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters in Abuja on Monday.

According to reports by NEW DAILY PRIME, Sowore had led a protest comprising retired police officers agitating for improved pension benefits. The demonstration, which was held outside the Force Headquarters, drew attention to what the protesters described as years of neglect and inadequate compensation after service to the nation.

Shortly after the protest concluded, Sowore took to social media to raise an alarm regarding his missing Ray-Ban smart glasses, which reportedly feature integrated artificial intelligence technology. A video circulated online appears to show a man reaching out and removing the glasses from Sowore's face during the commotion.

On Tuesday morning, Sowore posted on his verified Facebook page, alleging that the suspect had been identified as one Aku Victor Chiemere, described as a staff cameraman working directly under the Force Public Relations Officer, Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP) Muyiwa Adejobi.

"Yesterday, during the historic #PoliceProtest at the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters in Abuja, Aku Victor Chiemere, a staff cameraman under the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Muiyiwa Adejobi, stole my Ray-Ban AI smart glasses," Sowore wrote.

He went on to accuse the police of complicity, stating: "This act is not only criminal, it is a reprehensible criminal behaviour orchestrated by a senior police officer. I am demanding the immediate return of my stolen property and the prosecution of both CSP Muiyiwa Adejobi and Aku Victor Chiemere for theft, conspiracy, and official misconduct."

As of the time of writing, the Nigeria

Police Force has not issued an official response to the allegations. Efforts to reach the Force Public Relations Office for comment have proved unsuccessful.

Sowore, known for his outspoken criticism of government institutions and law enforcement agencies, has frequently found himself at odds with the authorities. Monday's protest was part of his continued advocacy for transparency, justice, and improved welfare for disenfranchised groups, particularly within the security sector.

The alleged theft has sparked a flurry of reactions on social media, with many Nigerians calling for an independent investigation into the matter. Others have questioned the conduct of police personnel during public demonstrations, citing recurring concerns over professionalism and accountability.

The incident raises further scrutiny over the handling of citizen-led protests by law enforcement in Nigeria, particularly as Sowore has previously faced multiple arrests and legal battles linked to his activism.

Osun 2026: Omoworare declares for governorship race, vows to reclaim state for APC

By Gbenga Olaleye



Senator Babajide Omoworare, a former Senior Special Assistant to ex-President Muhammadu Buhari on National Assembly Matters, has officially declared his ambition to contest the 2026 governorship election in Osun State under the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Speaking during a meeting with APC State Chairman, Tajudeen Lawal, and other party stakeholders, Omoworare unveiled his manifesto and vowed to lead the party back to power. The former federal lawmaker expressed strong confidence in his political track record and readiness to “reset and rebuild” the state.

“I have contested five elections and have never been defeated,”

Omoworare said.

“Even when attempts were made to rig me out, I pursued justice through the courts and prevailed. By the grace of God, I am a five-star general in politics.”

He criticised the current state of governance and infrastructure in Osun, citing National Bureau of Statistics data that places the state at the bottom of the food inflation index in the South-West. Omoworare emphasised that the APC did not truly lose Osun but rather failed to retain it.

“I am a thoroughbred progressive. My great-grandfather was an ‘Afenifere’, and my maternal grandfather, the Ooni of Ife, served as the first governor of the Western

Region. Politics runs in my veins. The PDP didn’t win Osun; the APC lost it. But we won’t lose again,” he said.

APC State Chairman, Tajudeen Lawal, praised Omoworare’s political pedigree and commitment, describing him as “a seasoned politician and a dedicated progressive.” He added that the party is optimistic about reclaiming Osun in the next election cycle.

Omoworare’s declaration signals the beginning of what is expected to be a heated build-up to the 2026 elections in Osun, with the APC aiming to regain its footing in the state.

Internal crisis has shattered PDP, no longer real opposition party - Analysts

By Helen Okechukwu and Fatimah Idera

● Can PDP Survive ADC coalition? NEC set over mass defections

Ever since the emergence of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) to challenge President Bola Tinubu in the forthcoming 2027 general election, the political space has witnessed a series of mass defections from key political actors, particularly from members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Labour Party (LP).

The defection of prominent figures such as Atiku Abubakar, Dele Momodu of the PDP, and Senator Ireti Kingibe leaving the LP to join the ADC, raises concerns about the strength of the PDP.

In response to this, the PDP has scheduled its National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting for July 24 to address the party's interest.

According to findings by The New Daily Prime, the forthcoming NEC meeting will mark the 101st of such gatherings, but there is speculation of a low turnout as many members are reportedly engaged in cross-carpentering from one political party to another.

Speaking with this newspaper, political expert, Anjorin Robert, who resides in Ondo State while analysing the capacity and strength of the PDP, described the notion of the party being Nigeria's leading opposition as a "hypothetical statement," noting that although it once held that position, it no longer fits that description.

The socio-political commentator went further to explain that if the PDP still held that position, there probably would not be a need for a third force like the newly formed ADC coalition.

Regarding the upcoming NEC convention, Robert stated that his expectations are low and that he would not be surprised by the outcome of the meeting.

He highlighted that internal disintegration has thrown what was once a formidable party into a state of instability, making any meaningful result unlikely — though, if properly addressed, the PDP could still reclaim its status as Nigeria's leading opposition party.

Considering the current developments



within the party, the political expert expressed optimism for the future, suggesting that if the PDP addresses its internal issues, it could still salvage something valuable.

"Let's be realistic with ourselves. Right now, they are not — they are no longer — a formidable opposition. But I hope they can speak to themselves, rally themselves together, and do the right thing. I hope they can come to reasonable conclusions, because as it stands, the party is not stable.

"The party is not... It's not a formidable opposition. But if they can hold their hearts together and really focus on Nigeria — rather than helping themselves — because right now, as it stands, they are helping themselves. They're just fighting for their own interests," he said.

"Otherwise, why would we see PDP governors defecting to the APC? Several more are expected to cross over in the coming months."

"Looking ahead to 2037, anything is still possible; however, I hold little hope for the PDP in its current state. My expectations remain low. Frankly, I would not be surprised if the few remaining structures holding the party together eventually disintegrate."

"Whether that will still hold effectively or not, is another thing to think about."

In an interview with a political analyst and a resident of Ilorin, Kwara State,

Abdulateef Ahmed, explains that PDP's upcoming National Convention in a few days is coming at a critical juncture for the party.

He noted that after the party lost key members to the emerging ADC coalition, "Nigerians are keenly watching to see whether the PDP can reinvent itself as a credible opposition force or continue to weaken in the shadow of the ruling APC."

"I am not certain what the general public expects, but I would personally expect a clear policy direction. Citizens are eager for a vibrant, issue-focused agenda that tackles economic hardship, insecurity, unemployment, and governance deficits. The PDP must demonstrate that it has fresh, innovative ideas—not merely recycled, uninspiring rhetoric."

However, many watchers will expect the convention to signal a break from infighting, zoning controversies, and factionalism that have plagued the party. A united front is necessary if it aims to regain public trust.

Mr Ahmed added that with the ADC Coalition gaining momentum, Nigerians will be looking to see whether the PDP can build a strategic alliance or adapt its political strategy to avoid being overshadowed.

"If the PDP fails to use this convention to showcase credible leadership and a renewed vision, it risks further erosion of relevance ahead of 2027."

Kogi govt boosts fight against malnutrition with new treatment protocols, expanded health coverage

By Helen Okechukwu



The Kogi State Government has taken a decisive step in the fight against malnutrition, initiating treatment protocols for affected individuals and expanding healthcare coverage for children with co-morbidities.

Governor Ahmed Usman Ododo, speaking through his Chief of Staff, Alhaji Ali Bello, at the launch of a training programme on the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) in Lokoja, reiterated his administration's commitment to improving child nutrition across the state.

He revealed that the state's Health Insurance Agency has been directed to cover all expenses for malnourished children who present at referral centres with

additional medical complications.

He further called on community stakeholders to raise awareness and mobilise residents to access available health services, particularly for children aged six to fifty-nine months.

Also speaking at the event, the Kogi State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Abdulazeez Adams Adeiza, highlighted the importance of the training, noting that it is designed to improve the capacity of healthcare workers to manage acute malnutrition effectively.

He encouraged participants to put the knowledge gained into practice within their respective communities and healthcare facilities.

Dr. Olayemi Ayo, Chief Medical Director of the Kogi State Hospital Management Board, echoed the call for commitment and diligence from the trainees, stressing that their efforts would play a significant role in improving the nutritional outcomes for both children and women in the state.

Participants at the training, including Dr. Grace Afolabi, the Kogi State Reproductive Health Coordinator, and Dr. Abubakar Alhassan, Director of Medical Services and Training at the Hospital Management Board, expressed optimism about the initiative.

They described the training as a critical step in the state's effort to tackle malnutrition and improve public health outcomes.

Davido leads Spotify's top 30 Nigerian songs of H1 2025

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



Music streaming giant Spotify has released its list of the top 30 Nigerian songs with the highest global streams for the first half of 2025.

The data highlights songs by Nigerian artists and collaborations featuring them that gained the most traction outside Nigeria.

Leading the pack is Rema, whose hit single *Baby (Is It A Crime)* claimed the number one spot. The song, praised for its smooth vocals and catchy rhythm, has become a global sensation, dominating charts in countries like the U.S., the U.K., and South Africa.

In second place is Shallipopi's *Laho*, a street-hop anthem that has gone viral across platforms like TikTok and Instagram. The track's relatable lyrics and bouncy beat have made it a favourite among younger audiences.

Davido's 'With You' featuring Omah Lay makes list

Davido follows closely in third place with *With You*, a heartfelt collaboration featuring Omah Lay. The song is one of nine tracks from Davido's latest album *Sive*, that made it onto the top 30 list. This strong showing confirms Davido's continued dominance in the Afrobeats

scene and his growing international reach.

Rounding out the top five are *My Darling* by Chella at number four and *Tatata* by Burna Boy featuring American rapper Travis Scott at number five. These songs have received strong airplay and streaming numbers in both Africa and North America.

The rest of the top 10 includes *Zazaza* by Frenna and Shallipopi, *We Pray* by Coldplay featuring Burna Boy, Burna Boy's solo track *Update*, Shallipopi's *Laho II* featuring Burna Boy, and Davido's emotional ballad *Be There Still*.

Burna Boy appears five times on the list, making him the second most featured artist after Davido. His ability to cross genres and connect with diverse audiences continues to boost his global appeal.

Shallipopi also makes a notable impact with several entries, showing that his rise in 2025 is no fluke. His blend of street-inspired lyrics and modern Afrobeats sound has quickly won him fans at home and abroad.

The Spotify ranking also reflects the

increasing popularity of international collaborations. Songs like *We Pray* show how Nigerian artists are working with global stars to push Afrobeats to new heights.

Spotify reported a surge in streams of Nigerian music outside the continent, especially in the U.S., U.K., and France. With Nigerian artists now a regular presence on global playlists and charts, the country's music industry continues to expand its reach worldwide.

2025 GLOBAL IMPACT LIST	NIGERIA	
	1.	Rema - <i>Baby (Is It A Crime)</i>
	2.	Shallipopi - <i>Laho</i>
	3.	Davido, Omah Lay - <i>With You</i> (feat. Omah Lay)
	4.	Chella - <i>My Darling</i>
	5.	Burna Boy, Travis Scott - <i>Tatata</i> (feat. Travis Scott)
	6.	Frenna, Shallipopi - <i>ZAZAZA</i>
	7.	Coldplay, TWICE, Burna Boy, Bynna, TINI, Little Simz - <i>WE PRAY</i> - TWICE Version
	8.	Burna Boy - <i>Update</i>
	9.	Burna Boy, Shallipopi - <i>Laho II</i>
	10.	Davido - <i>Be There Still</i>
	11.	Ayra Starr, Wizkid - <i>Gimme Dat</i> (feat. Wizkid)
	12.	Davido, Victoria Monét - <i>Offa Me</i> (feat. Victoria Monét)
	13.	Davido, Chris Brown - <i>Titanium</i> (feat. Chris Brown)
	14.	Rema - <i>South U</i>
	15.	OCUMODUBLOCK, Victory - <i>PTY THIS BOY</i> (with Victory)
	16.	Ayra Starr - <i>All The Love</i>
	17.	Lawrence Oyor - <i>Favour</i>
	18.	Black Sherif, Finboy DML - <i>So It Goes</i>
	19.	Aaske - <i>WHY LOVE</i>
	20.	Bekele, ThisLondon - <i>simfonia me mero</i>
	21.	Adesunle Gold - <i>Olomo</i>
	22.	Davido, Tey, DaFu - <i>Lower Boy</i> (feat. Tey & DaFu)
	23.	Davido, Shensele, 450 - <i>B&B</i> (feat. Shensele & 450)
	24.	Burna Boy - <i>Sweet Love</i>
	25.	Tobias Rabin, Kobusa Oriental Choir - <i>Regret</i>
	26.	Toni - <i>Money</i>
	27.	Davido - <i>10 Kilo</i>
	28.	Henna, Mizz - <i>NUMBER ONE</i> (feat. Mizz)
	29.	Davido, Victory, Musa Keys - <i>Holy Water</i>
	30.	Davido - <i>Anything</i>

Adekunle Gold dismisses bone marrow transplant claims

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian music star, Adekunle Gold, better known by his stage name Adekunle Gold, has dismissed recent rumours suggesting he underwent a bone marrow transplant.

The rumour began spreading earlier this week after a post on X (formerly Twitter) claimed that the singer had received the medical procedure.

The post hinted that the alleged transplant was meant to manage a long-term health condition. The tweet read: "Yes, he has, but since he's had a bone marrow transplant, I don't think it affects him that much anymore."

The comment quickly gained attention, especially among fans familiar with Adekunle Gold's past revelation about living with sickle cell anaemia. The tweet sparked a wave of speculation online, with many questioning the singer's current health status.

However, the "5 Star" crooner was quick to respond. In a direct but light-hearted manner, he debunked the claim and called out the poster for spreading false information.

"It is how you people will just say things you don't even know with so much confidence," he wrote in a quote reply on X. "No, I haven't had a bone marrow transplant."

His response, while humorous, made it clear that the story was untrue and lacked any medical or personal basis. The artist's comment also highlighted a growing concern among public figures: how quickly unverified stories can spread across social media platforms.

Adekunle Gold's denial comes as no surprise to fans who closely follow his journey. In 2022, he opened up about his struggle with sickle cell anaemia in his hit song "5 Star." In the track, he shared details of his childhood health challenges and how the illness affected his early life.

In a deeply personal note posted on his social media in August 2022, he revealed that he was diagnosed with



sickle cell at birth. He described growing up with constant pain, frequent hospital visits, and many limitations. At several points in his life, he said he had lost hope, especially during a life-threatening health crisis when he was 20.

Despite the struggles, Adekunle Gold has grown to become one of Nigeria's most celebrated musicians. Known for his blend of Afropop and highlife, he has consistently used his platform to inspire others. His openness about his health condition earned him praise for breaking the silence around sickle cell anaemia, a topic often shrouded in fear and stigma.

This latest rumour, however, underscores the downside of public visibility. Social media, while powerful in connecting fans and celebrities, can also be a source of misinformation. Celebrities like Adekunle Gold often find themselves battling false narratives, especially regarding personal issues like health and family.

Fans reacts to Adekunle Gold words
Fans and fellow celebrities have rallied behind Adekunle Gold, applauding his

decision to address the rumour directly. Many urged users to fact-check information before sharing, particularly when it relates to sensitive issues like health.

"This is why people need to stop making careless assumptions," one fan commented. "Health matters are serious. You don't just guess or speculate."

Others used the moment to celebrate Adekunle Gold's courage and transparency. "He's been open about his sickle cell journey. That alone deserves respect. We should let him tell his story on his own terms," another user wrote.

As of now, Adekunle Gold has not issued any further statement on the matter. But his single tweet was enough to shut down the speculation.

With a growing international fanbase, a thriving music career, and a strong family life with his wife, Simi, and their daughter, Adekunle Gold continues to stay focused on his goals. He remains an example of strength, talent, and resilience.

'I prefer older women', fan tells Tems after she questioned his age mid-serenade

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian Grammy-winning singer Temilade Openiyi, popularly known as Tems, became the centre of attention at the Lollapalooza Festival in Paris after a lighthearted moment with a young male fan during her performance.

The 31-year-old singer, known for her soulful voice and reserved nature, was performing on stage when she walked toward the crowd to engage with fans. A trending clip from the event, now making waves across social media platforms, shows the exact moment the exchange occurred.

As Tems approached the front row, she stopped beside a young male fan and began singing directly to him. Midway into the interaction, she paused and asked for his age. The fan responded that he was 22 years old. Her reaction was immediate: Tems hesitated, smiled shyly, and briefly turned away.

The singer, seemingly taken aback by the age gap, jokingly expressed her reluctance to serenade someone much younger. However, the fan quickly reassured her. "It's okay, I like older women," he said, drawing loud cheers and laughter from the crowd. His confident response won over both Tems and the audience.

Tems, blushing and laughing, responded, "I'm shy," before mustering the courage to continue singing to the young man. The sweet moment was met with applause and excitement from concertgoers, many of whom recorded the scene on their phones.

The video clip has since gone viral, sparking lively conversation online. Many fans praised Tems for her authenticity and the humorous exchange, while others admired the young fan's boldness.

Reactions follow Tems' conversation with fan



Social media users flooded comment sections with playful reactions. Some described the moment as "wholesome" and "unforgettable," while others teased the fan for his charm and confidence. Memes and edits of the encounter quickly spread across Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram, further boosting Tems' growing popularity.

Despite being known as an introvert, Tems has recently adopted a more interactive style during live performances. This incident at Lollapalooza is not the first time she has serenaded a male fan this summer.

Several videos have surfaced from her ongoing tour, showing her singing directly to male fans at various music festivals. This shift marks a notable change in her performance approach, which in the past leaned more toward maintaining distance from the crowd.

Fans and music critics alike have taken notice of her evolving stage presence. Many believe Tems is becoming more comfortable in the spotlight and is learning to connect with her audience on a deeper, more personal level. Her recent

performances reflect a blend of vulnerability and confidence that continues to resonate with global audiences.

Tems has enjoyed a meteoric rise in the international music scene, winning accolades and collaborations with global stars like Drake, Future, and Beyoncé. Yet, moments like the one at Lollapalooza remind fans of her humble and relatable nature.

Her performance in Paris was one of the highlights of the Lollapalooza Festival, which drew thousands of music lovers from across the world. With hits like "Essence," "Free Mind," and her latest single "Love Me Jeje," Tems continues to solidify her status as one of Africa's most influential music exports.

As she continues her summer festival tour, fans are eager to see more of these intimate, unrehearsed moments that reveal the singer's playful side. For many, the brief exchange with the 22-year-old fan wasn't just entertaining, it humanised the superstar and gave audiences yet another reason to adore her.

Record label drags Ayo Maff to court over contract breach

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian record label, TunesBid Limited, has taken legal action against fast-rising singer Ayo Maff, accusing him of breaching the terms of their recording contract.

In a strongly worded statement posted on the label's official Instagram page, TunesBid claimed that Ayo Maff, whose real name is Ayodele Maff, and his management team have repeatedly violated the terms of an exclusive agreement signed in December 2023.

According to the label, the contract was entered into on December 3, 2023, after what it described as "a series of discussions" between both parties. The deal was facilitated by the artist's legal representatives Oyefeso Oluwamayowa Olumide, Okolie Amobi Chiedu, and Oyefeso Ayotunde, who acted on behalf of OceansTreasure Limited.

TunesBid stated that it invested significantly in Ayo Maff's music career, fully funding the production and release of his three singles: Street Anthem, Dealer, and 7 Days. The label also revealed that it secured a distribution deal with Empire Distribution, a notable international music distributor, as part of its commitment to promoting the artist's work.

Despite fulfilling its part of the agreement, the label claimed that the artist and his management team had begun entering into outside deals, ignoring the existing contract and attempting to cut TunesBid out of their plans.

"The contract clearly outlined the expectations and obligations from both sides, including the release of three singles within the first seven months," the statement read. "All costs associated with the recording, production, promotion, and distribution of these songs were covered by TunesBid."

Ayo Maff accused of conspiracy
TunesBid further accused Ayo Maff's camp of acting in bad faith and conspiring to defraud the label by secretly entering into another contract,



which violates the exclusivity clause of their agreement.

"This ongoing disregard for the contract amounts to a clear breach," the label stated. "We view this as a calculated attempt to cheat TunesBid out of the investment we made in the artist's career."

In response to the alleged breach, the label has issued a stern warning to event organizers, show promoters, and entertainment platforms, advising them to refrain from engaging with Ayo Maff without first obtaining proper clearance from TunesBid. Failure to do so, it warned, may result in legal consequences.

"We are actively pursuing legal remedies to protect our rights and investments," the statement continued. "Any person or organization that chooses to work with Ayo Maff while this matter is unresolved will be considered complicit in the ongoing breach and may be subject to legal action."

The label emphasised that as of the time of the statement, Ayo Maff

remains legally bound by the recording contract and any attempt to operate independently would be considered a violation.

The legal clash between the label and the singer comes at a time when Ayo Maff is gaining traction in the Nigerian music industry, with fans praising his street-style lyrics and catchy beats. His latest single, 7 Days, has been receiving airplay across multiple platforms.

However, with this legal cloud hanging over his career, industry watchers are now waiting to see how the situation unfolds.

Neither Ayo Maff nor his management team has publicly responded to the allegations as of the time of filing this report.

This dispute adds to the growing list of contract-related battles in the Nigerian music scene, highlighting the tension between artists seeking independence and the record labels that help launch their careers.

Charly Boy mocks Yul Edochie over Southeast presidency support

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran entertainer and activist, Charles Oputa, popularly known as Charly Boy or Area Fada, has weighed in on actor Yul Edochie's recent political declaration.

Edochie, who had previously expressed support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, sparked conversation across social media platforms after he released a video, calling for Nigeria's next President to emerge from the Southeast region.

In the viral video posted on X (formerly Twitter), Edochie made a strong case for equity and justice in Nigeria's political structure. According to him, the Southeast region has been marginalised for too long and deserves a chance at the presidency in 2027.

His words were clear and firm:

"The next President of Nigeria should come from the Southeast, in fairness and equity. That's just the truth. That's how it's supposed to be."

Edochie's comments mark a notable shift from his earlier political stance, where he publicly backed President Tinubu's government shortly after the 2023 general election. His new position has garnered attention, particularly among those advocating for the greater inclusion of the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria's national leadership.

Reacting to the actor's recent statement, Charly Boy took to his X account to applaud the change in perspective. He wrote:

"Yul Edochie finally sees the light. Thank God you don dey change lane."

The Area Fada, known for his bold political views and social commentary, did not mince words in acknowledging what he sees as a long-overdue awakening. Charly Boy has consistently championed justice,



fairness, and representation for marginalised regions in Nigeria's political landscape.

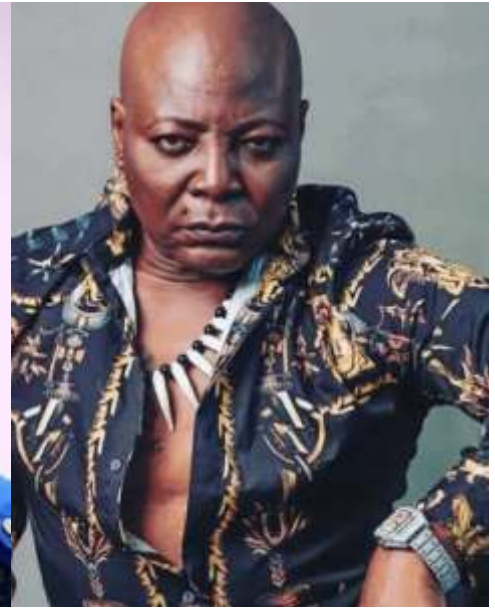
Edochie adds momentum to trendy topic

Yul Edochie's public call adds momentum to the ongoing conversation around power rotation, a controversial yet significant issue in Nigeria's democracy. Many political observers and stakeholders argue that the Southeast, one of the country's six geopolitical zones, has never produced a democratically elected President since Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999.

Currently, Labour Party's Peter Obi remains the most popular political figure from the Southeast. Obi made waves during the 2023 general election when he contested for the presidency under the Labour Party and gained significant support nationwide, especially among young voters.

Despite the enthusiasm and the wide grassroots support, Obi eventually came third, according to results announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). President Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC) was declared the winner, followed by Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Peter Obi, however, has not backed



down. He has openly declared interest in running again in 2027. Supporters of Obi and many in the Southeast region see his ambition as a symbol of hope and justice, believing that the region's time to lead the country is now.

Yul Edochie's latest message has added a new voice to that cause. Known for his bold roles in Nollywood and outspoken nature on social media, the actor's switch could signal a growing wave of support among public figures for the idea of a Southeast presidency.

His father, veteran actor and political figure Pete Edochie, has also previously expressed concern over the exclusion of the Southeast in Nigeria's leadership structure.

With more prominent voices joining the call, the 2027 elections may present another opportunity to address long-standing concerns about fairness and national unity. For now, public reactions continue to trail Edochie's statement and Charly Boy's endorsement, as Nigerians begin to shift their attention to the next political cycle.

As the build-up to 2027 begins, questions around zoning, equity, and national identity are likely to dominate conversations, and voices like Yul Edochie and Charly Boy will play a key role in shaping that dialogue.

Justin Bieber's 'Swag' breaks billboard records

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Canadian pop sensation Justin Bieber has broken several long-standing Billboard records following the release of his seventh studio album, *Swag*.

The 30-year-old singer, who recently became a father, made a powerful return to the spotlight, and his latest project is already making waves across the global music scene.

Bieber released *Swag* just months after he and his wife, Hailey, welcomed their first child, Jack Blues. The album, a celebration of fatherhood, features a personal touch; its cover art includes a heartwarming photo of Justin, Hailey, and baby Jack. The release quickly drew attention, and this week, the numbers have spoken.

Justin Bieber's 'Swag' makes history. According to Billboard, *Swag* made a historic debut, placing 16 songs on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. The lead single, *Daisies*, landed at number 2, earning Bieber his 27th career top 10 entry on the prestigious chart. This milestone ties him with Janet Jackson as the 10th artist with the most top 10 hits in Billboard Hot 100 history.

But the achievements didn't stop there.

With these new entries, Bieber has now surpassed Chris Brown to become the male artist with the most songs ever to appear on the Billboard Hot 100. He now holds a record 121 total entries on the chart, a feat that places him among the all-time greats in pop music.

In another impressive accomplishment, Bieber became the first artist ever to debut at number 2 on both the Billboard Hot 100 and Billboard 200 charts at the same time. His album *Swag* launched at number 2 on the Billboard 200, while its lead single *Daisies* premiered at number 2 on the Hot 100. No artist in history has achieved this



exact pairing before.

Music analysts say the strong debut of *Swag* reflects not just Bieber's consistent popularity but also his ability to evolve as an artist. The album explores themes of love, growth, and parenthood, marking a new chapter in Bieber's career and personal life.

Meanwhile, another artist is also making Billboard history.

Teddy Swims' emotional ballad *Lose Control* has now spent an unprecedented 100 weeks on the Billboard Hot 100. The track, which peaked at number 1, remains in the chart's top 10, a rare achievement in today's fast-moving music industry.

Swims' success highlights the lasting power of well-crafted songwriting and authentic emotional delivery. Industry watchers say the song's longevity is a sign that audiences are craving deeper, more heartfelt music in the current pop landscape.

As for Bieber, *Swag* has proven that even after more than a decade in the music industry, he remains a major force. From teenage heartthrob to devoted husband and father, his journey has captivated fans around the world. And with this record-breaking album, it's clear that his story is far from over.

In the coming weeks, *Swag* is expected to continue its strong performance, both on the charts and across streaming platforms. Early reviews from fans and critics have praised its honest lyrics, smooth production, and emotional depth.

For Bieber, the numbers may be historic, but the heart behind *Swag* is just as powerful. In a time when many pop stars are focused on trends, Bieber's album stands out for its authenticity and personal message.

As he once again rewrites chart history, it's clear: Justin Bieber isn't just back, he's stronger than ever.

Ellen DeGeneres moves to UK permanently over Trump election

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Ellen DeGeneres has officially confirmed she has relocated permanently to the United Kingdom and says Donald Trump's election was the deciding factor.

The 67 year old comedian and former talk show host made the revelation on Sunday during an event at the Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham, central England. Speaking candidly to the audience, DeGeneres said: "We got here the day before the election and woke up to lots of texts from our friends with crying emojis, and I was like, 'He got in.' And we're like, 'We're staying here.'"

The theatre later confirmed her comments were accurate.

DeGeneres, known globally for The Ellen DeGeneres Show, which ended in 2022 following allegations of a toxic work environment, now resides in the idyllic English countryside with her wife, Arrested Development actress Portia de Rossi, 52. The couple purchased a property in the picturesque Cotswolds, a region renowned for its honey-coloured stone cottages, rolling greenery and celebrity residents such as David and Victoria Beckham, Simon Cowell and Kate Moss.

What was originally intended as a temporary getaway has become a permanent escape from what DeGeneres describes as a troubling climate in the United States.

"Everything here is just better," she told the audience. "I wish we were at a place where it was not scary for people to be who they are. I wish that we lived in a society where everybody could accept other people and their differences. So until we're there, I think there's a hard place to say we have huge progress."

DeGeneres also expressed concern over recent moves in the United States targeting LGBTQ+ rights, particularly



efforts by the Southern Baptist Convention to reverse same-sex marriage protections.

"They're trying to literally stop it from happening in the future and possibly reverse it," she said. "Portia and I are already looking into it, and if they do that, we're going to get married here."

DeGeneres' statement yet to get response

The White House has not responded to DeGeneres' remarks.

In addition to political concerns, DeGeneres reflected on the end of her daytime talk show, which ran for 19 seasons and won over 60 Emmy Awards. Addressing the controversy that surrounded its final years, she said: "I'm a direct person, and I'm very blunt, and I guess sometimes that means that," she paused, "I'm mean?"

Mark Goucher, CEO of the Everyman Theatre, said in a statement: "It was a huge privilege to meet her and have her at The Everyman. Our door will always be open to our new neighbour."

DeGeneres joins a growing number of

Americans disillusioned by their country's increasingly polarised politics. Google searches for "how to move to X country" spiked following President Joe Biden's shaky debate performance in June last year, according to data analysed by CNBC.

A February poll by Talker Research found that 17% of 2,000 surveyed Americans wished to leave the country within five years. Canada was the most popular destination, with 69% citing dissatisfaction with the nation's direction and 65% decrying a toxic environment.

In response to similar sentiments in 2019, Trump said simply: "If you're not happy, you can leave."

Though the UK is often praised for its NHS, lower rates of gun violence, and efficient public transport, it ranks lower than the US on many quality-of-life indicators measured by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In the OECD's "Better Life Index", the United States ranks 10th, with the UK coming in at 14th.

U.S. withdraws from UNESCO, cites anti-Israel bias agenda

By Damilola Olufemi



The United States announced on Tuesday that it has officially withdrawn from UNESCO, the UN agency known for its work in culture and education, including the designation of World Heritage Sites.

The decision, according to the U.S. government, stems from concerns over the organization's alleged bias against Israel and its promotion of what it called "divisive" agendas.

"Continued involvement in UNESCO is not in the national interest of the United States," said State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce.

The move aligns with former President Donald Trump's long-standing position. Trump had

initially pulled the U.S. out of UNESCO in 2017 during his first term, while President Joe Biden later reversed the decision and restored American membership.

Bruce criticised the agency for promoting what she described as a "globalist, ideological agenda," particularly through its emphasis on UN sustainable development goals. She claimed UNESCO "works to advance divisive social and cultural causes."

She also pointed to the organisation's 2011 decision to admit Palestine as a full member, calling it "highly problematic, contrary to US policy, and [something that] contributed to the proliferation of anti-Israel rhetoric within the organization."

UNESCO describes its mission as fostering global cooperation in education, science, and culture. It is best known for maintaining a list of World Heritage Sites, which includes natural and historical landmarks like Australia's Great Barrier Reef, Tanzania's Serengeti, Egypt's Pyramids, and the Acropolis in Greece.

U.S. previously left UNESCO in 1980s

The Trump administration is not the first to cut ties with UNESCO. The U.S. previously left the organisation in the 1980s under President Ronald Reagan, who accused it of corruption and a pro-Soviet stance. It was President George W. Bush who restored U.S. membership in 2003.

UK junior doctors' strike confirmed as talks collapse

By **Fatimah Idera**



A five-day strike by junior doctors will begin at 7 am on Friday after negotiations between the British Medical Association (BMA) and the government broke down.

The walkout involving up to 30,000 medics marks the first nationwide healthcare strike under a Labour government since the 1979 Winter of Discontent.

The BMA is demanding a 29% pay rise, arguing it is necessary to reverse more than a decade of real-terms cuts. Although Health Secretary Wes Streeting initiated talks with the union last week, no agreement was reached. The government has refused to discuss pay, instead offering potential improvements in working conditions and career progression.

Speaking on Tuesday, Mr Streeting described the strike as completely unjustified and unprecedented, accusing the BMA of showing complete disdain for patients and the wider recovery of the NHS.

He claimed the union had walked away

from proposals that could have created new roles and helped ease bottlenecks in junior doctors' career progression. "The BMA would have lost nothing by postponing strike action to negotiate a package to improve doctors' working lives," he said. "Instead, they've chosen disruption over dialogue."

Streeting also noted that junior doctors have already received a 28.9% pay increase over the past three years and have had the highest public sector pay rise for two years running.

In response, BMA junior doctor committee co-chairs Dr Melissa Ryan and Dr Ross Nieuwoudt said that the government had failed to provide a credible offer. They stressed that although working conditions were discussed, ministers made clear that increasing pay was not on the table, a move the union said ignored the financial pressures facing medics.

"We did not receive an offer that matched the scale of the challenges our members face," the BMA said. "There has been no movement on pay, no progress on student loan forgiveness, and no serious proposals on easing the

cost of training and exams."

They added that while the union welcomed the talks and was open to continuing discussions, the failure to address pay left them with no option but to proceed with industrial action.

Tensions between NHS leaders and the BMA are also rising. Sir Jim Mackey, chief executive of NHS England, has instructed hospitals not to cancel large numbers of appointments in anticipation of the strike. Trusts have been told to prioritise cancer patients and urgent cases, with cancellations allowed only "in exceptional circumstances."

However, the BMA has warned that attempting to maintain routine services while junior doctors are off work could stretch senior doctors too thinly and risk patient safety. The union says trying to "paper over the gaps" created by striking medics may leave emergency care dangerously under-resourced.

The strike is set to run from 7am. on Friday to 7am. the following Wednesday.

Hunter Biden says exhaustion led to father's debate collapse

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Hunter Biden has claimed that his father, former U.S. President Joe Biden, was under the influence of the sleep aid Ambien and suffering extreme fatigue during the disastrous June 2024 presidential debate that ultimately ended his re-election campaign.

In an interview released on Monday with YouTube creator Andrew Callaghan, the younger Biden offered a frank assessment of what he says went wrong in the debate against Donald Trump, which saw the then-incumbent president visibly struggle to complete thoughts and maintain focus on stage.

"I know exactly what happened in that debate," Hunter Biden said. "He flew around the world, basically the mileage he could have flown around the world three times. He's 81 years old. He's tired as shit."

"They give him Ambien to be able to sleep. He gets up on the stage and he looks like he's a deer in the headlights,"

he added.

Ambien is a prescription medication commonly used for short-term treatment of insomnia. The former president's office did not immediately respond to requests for comment regarding the claims.

Joe Biden had prepared for the high-stakes debate at Camp David with close aides. However, his demanding schedule in the lead-up, including two overseas trips and a high-profile fundraiser on the U.S. West Coast, may have taken a toll. In the days following the debate, Biden publicly attributed his poor performance to jet lag.

The 27 June debate proved to be a turning point in the 2024 presidential election. Amid mounting pressure and a widening gap in polling against Trump, Biden formally withdrew from the race less than a month later. His vice president, Kamala Harris, was selected as the Democratic nominee but went on to lose to Trump in the November

election.

Biden slams Democratic Party members

Hunter Biden also criticised members of the Democratic Party who distanced themselves from his father following the debate. He expressed frustration with lawmakers, strategists and commentators who, in his view, were quick to abandon the president.

The interview marks one of the most candid public statements from a member of the Biden family regarding the former president's fitness and the internal challenges leading to his campaign's collapse.

The Biden campaign's handling of the debate fallout, and the lack of transparency over the president's health, remain subjects of intense political debate in the United States, as Democrats now face a period of reckoning following their loss in the 2024 race.

Japan's PM refuses to step down after election loss

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba has vowed to remain in office despite suffering a significant electoral setback that saw his ruling coalition lose its majority in the nation's upper house. The defeat has triggered political uncertainty and raised questions about the future direction of Japan's leadership amid economic woes, public dissatisfaction, and the growing influence of far-right movements.

On Sunday, Japanese voters went to the polls for a tightly contested election for half of the 248 seats in the upper chamber. Ishiba's ruling coalition, comprising the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior partner Komeito, managed to secure only 47 seats—three short of the 50 required to maintain a majority. The Constitutional Democratic Party, the main opposition force, won 22 seats, further reflecting the public's discontent with the current government.

Speaking to the press shortly after polls closed, Prime Minister Ishiba acknowledged the gravity of the results. "I solemnly accept this harsh result," he said, adding that he intends to focus on critical trade negotiations with the United States. Despite the loss, Ishiba maintained that stepping down was not an option at this juncture, suggesting that the government still had key responsibilities to address.

However, the electoral outcome is being seen as a major blow to Ishiba's authority. Having already lost its majority in the more powerful lower house last year, the coalition's reduced control in the upper house further erodes its legislative influence. Analysts believe this could significantly impact its ability to push through policy reforms and navigate ongoing economic challenges.

The election also underscored a broader shift in Japan's political landscape. According to Jeffrey Hall, a lecturer in Japanese Studies at Kanda University, support for more right-wing parties has begun to fragment the conservative base that traditionally supports the LDP. "Prime Minister Ishiba is considered not conservative enough by many supporters of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe," Hall noted. "They think he doesn't hold



strong nationalist views, particularly on issues like China and historical revisionism."

The Sanseito party, a small but rapidly rising far-right faction, capitalized on this conservative dissatisfaction. Known for its staunchly nationalist, anti-immigration platform and conspiracy-laden rhetoric, Sanseito surged from just one seat in the last election to 14 seats this year. The party gained popularity during the pandemic by promoting controversial views, including opposition to vaccines and mask mandates, and espousing theories involving the "deep state."

Sanseito's rise is being interpreted as a reflection of a growing nationalist sentiment in Japan, fueled by economic anxiety, an aging population, and concerns over immigration. While Japan has traditionally maintained strict immigration controls, a recent surge in both foreign residents and tourists has intensified public fears about cultural dilution, job competition, and rising living costs.

In response, Prime Minister Ishiba launched a new government task force last week aimed at addressing "crimes and nuisance behaviors" by foreign nationals, including issues related to land ownership and unpaid social insurance. Critics, however, argue that this move

may further inflame xenophobic sentiments and distract from deeper structural issues affecting the economy and public welfare.

Adding to Ishiba's political troubles is the historical precedent. The last three LDP prime ministers who lost their upper house majority resigned within two months of their electoral defeats. As a result, speculation is mounting over potential challengers within the party. Notable names include Sanae Takaichi, who placed second in last year's leadership race; Takayuki Kobayashi, a former economic security minister; and Shinjiro Koizumi, son of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

Despite the instability, financial markets remained relatively calm. The Tokyo Stock Exchange was closed for a public holiday on Monday, but the yen strengthened slightly against major currencies, suggesting that investors had anticipated the election results.

As Japan faces mounting domestic and geopolitical challenges, including its evolving relationship with the United States and China, the political future of Shigeru Ishiba remains uncertain. While he has vowed to stay the course, the pressure from within his party and the electorate may ultimately force a reckoning sooner than expected.

25 western nations urge Israel to end Gaza war

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



A coalition of 25 Western nations, including the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, has issued a strongly worded statement calling on Israel to immediately end its war in Gaza and condemning what they described as the “inhumane killing” of Palestinian civilians.

In a joint declaration released on Monday, the countries criticised Israel’s handling of humanitarian aid in Gaza, particularly the “drip feeding” of assistance and the recent deaths of more than 800 civilians near food distribution points. Many of these fatalities reportedly occurred near facilities run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), an organisation that has recently replaced the United Nations-led aid network under the backing of the United States and Israel.

“The Israeli government’s aid delivery model is dangerous, fuels instability and deprives Gazans of human dignity,” the foreign ministers stated. “The suffering of civilians in Gaza has reached new depths.”

The signatories include the majority of the European Union, as well as four out of five members of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance, all traditionally close allies of Israel and the United States. Their unified call for an end to hostilities marks a significant shift in tone amid growing international concern over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Israel swiftly rebuffed the statement, with its foreign ministry labelling it “disconnected from reality” and warning it sends “the wrong message to Hamas.” In a separate remark, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said he had spoken with UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy about Gaza, reiterating that “Hamas bears full responsibility for the suffering of the population and the continuation of the war.”

The United States also responded forcefully. Its ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, described the joint statement as “disgusting,” asserting that the blame on Israel was “irrational” and that Hamas has consistently rejected

proposals to end the war.

The United Nations has previously criticised the GHF-led model as unsafe and in breach of humanitarian neutrality standards, claims which GHF denies.

The Western nations behind the joint statement accused Israel of deliberately obstructing the delivery of essential aid and urged it to lift restrictions immediately. They also called for safe access for humanitarian agencies and the UN to operate without interference.

“We are prepared to take further action to support an immediate ceasefire and a political pathway to security and peace for both Israelis and Palestinians,” the statement concluded.

UK announces humanitarian aid for Gaza

In a related move, the UK government announced a new humanitarian aid package worth £60 million for Gaza, aimed at alleviating the worsening crisis and supporting relief efforts on the ground.

Rubio moves to deport U.S. green card holders linked to Haitian gangs

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has announced a new measure that could see the deportation of certain lawful permanent residents from the United States, citing alleged support for Haitian gang leaders linked to a U.S.-designated terrorist organisation.

In a statement released on Monday, Rubio said Washington had determined that some green-card holders had collaborated with gang figures connected to Viv Ansanm, an armed alliance that now controls large portions of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. The Trump administration classified Viv Ansanm as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation in May.

Rubio noted that this determination enables the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to pursue the deportation of those involved. However, he did not specify how many individuals may be affected, nor did he name any suspects beyond a single case.

Later on Monday, the Department of Homeland Security confirmed that

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents had arrested Pierre Reginald Boulos, a U.S. green-card holder and Haitian national, for allegedly contributing to violence and instability in Haiti. According to the Miami Herald, Boulos, 69, is an American-born physician, entrepreneur, and a politically influential figure in Haiti.

The announcement reflects the Trump administration's broader strategy to ramp up deportations and fulfil its hardline immigration agenda. Secretary Rubio has been particularly assertive in wielding his authority to revoke the visas and residency of individuals seen as threats to U.S. national security or public order. This includes his recent controversial move against pro-Palestinian student protesters.

"The United States will not allow individuals to enjoy the benefits of legal status in our country while they are facilitating the actions of violent organisations or supporting criminal terrorist organisations," Rubio stated.

Stephen Yale-Loehr, a retired professor of immigration law at Cornell University, described the move as highly unusual, noting that such actions were rare before this administration. He questioned the long-term impact of the policy, especially in terms of legal proof and enforcement.

"Three years from now, how many people from Haiti will be deported under this ground? I think very few," Yale-Loehr remarked.

Haiti's transitional government has yet to respond to the development. The announcement comes amid escalating gang violence in the country, with nearly 5,000 people killed between October 2024 and June 2025, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The situation continues to raise international alarm, as the humanitarian crisis in Haiti deepens and questions swirl about how deportations could affect both U.S. immigration policy and Haitian stability.

Ukrainians arrested over attempt to smuggle migrants into UK by yacht

By Fatimah Idera



Two Ukrainian nationals have been arrested for attempting to smuggle five migrants into the UK aboard a yacht intercepted by Border Force off the Isle of Wight.

The vessel was stopped on Sunday afternoon. Onboard were four Albanian nationals and one Vietnamese national. The yacht's crew of two Ukrainian men, aged 43 and 37, were taken into custody and later charged with facilitating illegal immigration. The five migrants were detained under immigration laws.

Authorities say this case is part of a wider investigation by the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA), in collaboration with French judicial authorities and the Gendarmerie Nationale. "Tackling people smuggling gangs remains a priority for both France and the United Kingdom," said Julian Harriman,

the NCA's senior investigating officer.

Yachts are increasingly being used for smuggling attempts because they can bypass Border Force detection systems typically focused on small boats. Unlike dinghies that usually land on beaches, yachts can dock discreetly at marinas or small ports.

The incident comes amid growing concerns over such smuggling tactics. In a separate case, Albanian national Bleda Bega, 44, was sentenced to seven years and 10 months in prison after using a hired yacht to try and bring 21 Albanian migrants into the UK.

Border Force intercepted that vessel on April 13.

"This sentence shows the results of our ongoing efforts to disrupt criminal smuggling networks," said

Border Security Minister Dame Angela Eagle. "We're using advanced technology and enforcement powers to stop illegal crossings and hold offenders accountable."

Despite increased enforcement, smuggling by yacht remains a challenge. A former soldier-turned-smuggler, identified as "Nick," claimed earlier this year that yachts are still commonly used due to the limited security at many UK marinas. He said the routes remain easy and low-risk and that others continue to use them with little interference.

While Border Force is responsible for monitoring the UK's 11,000-mile coastline, private operators oversee security at harbours and marinas. "We patrol 24/7 and carry out both proactive and reactive operations," said Charlie Eastaugh, director of Border Force Maritime.

NHS bosses who silence whistleblowers face ban from senior roles

By Fatimah Idera

NHS managers found guilty of silencing whistleblowers or engaging in serious misconduct will be permanently banned from holding senior positions within the health service the government has announced.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) confirmed plans to introduce a statutory barring system as part of a wider crackdown on unfit leadership in the NHS. Legislation to regulate NHS managers and enforce professional standards is expected to be introduced in Parliament next year.

Unlike doctors and nurses, NHS managers of which there are tens of thousands in both clinical and non-clinical roles currently operate without a dedicated regulatory framework. The new proposals aim to change that by ensuring individuals who have been dismissed for misconduct can not return to senior posts through internal reshuffling.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting said the move would slam the door in the face of unsuitable managers and help foster a culture of accountability and transparency. "I'm determined to create a culture of honesty and openness in the NHS where whistleblowers are protected," he said. "If you silence whistleblowers, you will never work in the NHS again."

He added that patient safety must always take priority over institutional reputation: "We've got to create conditions where staff are free to come forward and sound the alarm when things go wrong."

The upcoming statutory ban will apply to board-level directors and their direct reports within NHS bodies. In parallel, the Health and Care Professions Council will be given new powers to disqualify senior leaders who commit serious breaches



of conduct. Meanwhile, NHS England is set to introduce a national framework of professional standards to ensure consistent expectations across management and leadership roles.

The reforms followed a public consultation launched in November 2023, which drew more than 4,900 responses from NHS staff, patients, and experts.

Legal expert Tom Kark KC, who authored a 2019 review into the NHS's fit and proper person test, welcomed the announcement. "This is a positive move to strengthen management in the NHS by weeding out poor leadership," he said. "It's good news for whistleblowers and for those seeking accountability in a system where it has long been lacking."

Patient advocacy groups also voiced strong support. Rachel Power, chief executive of the Patients Association,

said patients rightly expect NHS managers to be held to the same standards as clinical professionals. "A clear, fair process to prevent those who commit serious misconduct from returning to senior roles will be an important step forward," she said, adding that patient voices must continue to shape future regulatory reforms.

Sam Allen, NHS England's national director for leadership and management, said managers across the service would welcome the changes. "This new regulatory framework is part of a broader strategy to attract, develop, and retain the best possible leaders for the NHS of today and tomorrow," she said.

The reforms are expected to mark a significant shift in how senior NHS leadership is held to account and aim to prevent reputational protection from overriding patient care and safety.

Ajibade, Alozie fire Super Falcons into WAFCON final

By Oluwatosin Ologun



In a dramatic encounter, the Super Falcons of Nigeria edged arch-rivals Bayana Bayana of South Africa with a 2-1 win at the ongoing Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON).

With the semi-final on Tuesday evening, Nigeria booked their place in the final and keeping alive hopes of a record-extending 10th continental title.

In a match billed as a "final before the final," Rasheedat Ajibade and Michelle Alozie delivered when it mattered most, scoring either side of a Linda Motlhalo penalty to help the Super Falcons avenge their 2022 loss to Banyana Banyana and underline their dominance on African soil.

Ajibade broke the deadlock just before the break with a composed finish from the penalty spot after a

handball by Bambanani Mbane in the South African box.

The goal crowned Nigeria's first-half superiority, as they dictated the tempo with a disciplined defence and sharp transitions, with Alozie and Ihezuo probing constantly.

South Africa, the defending champions, came out fighting in the second half and were rewarded in the 60th minute when Hildah Magaia was brought down by Osinachi Ohale, leading to a penalty.

Motlhalo made no mistake from the spot to level the scores and swing the momentum temporarily Banyana's way.

But just as extra time loomed, Michelle Alozie struck a sensational long-range winner deep into stoppage time.

Her 35-yard effort swerved past goalkeeper Andile Dlamini and sparked wild celebrations among the Nigerian players and fans inside Stade Larbi Zaouli.

The final minutes saw tempers flare and injuries mount, with Chinwendu Ihezuo stretchered off and yellow cards flying.

But Nigeria held firm through nine minutes of stoppage time to seal the win and set up a mouthwatering final in Rabat.

The Super Falcons remain unbeaten in the tournament and will head into the final with renewed confidence.

For South Africa, their title defence ends in heartbreak, but they will regroup for the third-place playoff.