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Trump's nobel peace prize nominations withdrawn amid global criticism



NNPCL boss risks sanctions over unresolved N200trn discrepancies

By Friday Omosola



The Senate Committee on Public Accounts has given the Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), Bayo Ojulari, a strict 10-day deadline to address 11 major financial concerns linked to discrepancies in the company's audited accounts.

The committee cautioned that failure to respond within the specified timeframe could lead to serious constitutional actions.

Senator Aliyu Wadada, who chairs the committee, expressed strong disapproval over what he described as shocking financial irregularities in NNPCL's records.

Among the issues flagged were over M200 trillion in unexplained

receivables, along with unrecorded legal and audit expenses covering the period from 2017 to 2023.

The deadline, which expires on July 10, was set after NNPCL requested an additional two months to provide explanations—a request the committee firmly rejected.

“This is unacceptable,” Mr Wadada said.

“We have given them 10 working days to comply. This committee will not entertain any attempts to delay matters that involve public resources.”

He warned that if the NNPCL leadership fails to comply, the Senate would be left with no choice but to exercise its constitutional authority.

“Disregarding this committee's directive will be seen as contempt of the Senate. Our duty is to safeguard public funds, and we will not be distracted,” he stated.

Mr Wadada also criticised the absence of NNPCL's external auditors at the hearing, stressing the importance of openness and accountability.

The session was witnessed by officials from key anti-corruption and intelligence agencies, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), the Department of State Services (DSS), and other significant stakeholders.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

EFFECTIVE FROM DECEMBER 1, 2024

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	372,500.00
HALF PAGE	213,000.00
QUARTER PAGE	106,500.00
14X2	118,000.00
10X6	261,585.50
10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	8,600.00
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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	329,868.50
HALF PAGE	192,500.00
QUARTER PAGE	100,000.00
14X2	109,500.00
10X6	242,500.00
10X5	237,500.00
10X4	192,500.00
10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
5X3	57,819.00
5X2	40,379.50
4X4	55,000.00
4X3	31,000.00
4X2	22,003.50
3X2	17,260.00
2X2	12,945.00
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POLITICAL COLOUR

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POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

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QUARTER PAGE	80,706.50
14X2	78,222.50
10X6	217,830.00
10X5	192,305.50
10X4	142,787.50
10X3	121,355.50
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4X2	22,350.00
3X2	16,763.00
2X2	10,877.00
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DOUBLE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	432,881.00
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CENTRE SPREAD HALF PAGE B & W	550,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD B & W	725,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF B & W	425,000.00
FULL WRAP AROUND	15,000,000.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	8,500,000.00
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PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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

PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

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

ALLURE RATE

SIZE	RATE	TOTAL
CENTRESPREAD		967,500.00
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(IFC) Inside Front Cover		430,000.00
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10X5		295,625.00
Half Page		225,000.00
EVENT		250,000.00

PICTURE & CAPTION

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PHOTO NEWS PAGE 2	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
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PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
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EVENT COVERAGE	100,000.00	7,500.00	107,500.00
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Tinubu signs four tax reform bills into law

By Gbenga Olaleye



President Bola Tinubu has signed into law four major tax reform bills aimed at modernising Nigeria's fiscal framework and boosting revenue generation.

The signing ceremony took place at the Presidential Villa in Aso Rock at approximately 3:20pm local time on Wednesday. The four bills—each a significant component of Nigeria's tax reform agenda—are:

The Nigeria Tax Bill (Ease of Doing Business)

The Nigeria Tax Administration Bill

The Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Bill

The Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Bill

The bills, passed by the National Assembly after months of consultation with stakeholders, are expected to harmonise and streamline the nation's tax processes, reduce duplication, and enhance the ease of doing business.

Speaking on the implications of the

new laws, Presidential Adviser Bayo Onanuga said:

"When the new tax laws become operational, they are expected to significantly transform tax administration in the country, leading to increased revenue generation, improved business environment, and a boost in domestic and foreign investments."

The signing ceremony was attended by top government officials, including Senate President Godswill Akpabio, Speaker of the House of Representatives Tajudeen Abbas, Senate and House Majority Leaders, and finance committee chairpersons from both chambers.

Also present were Kwara State Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq (Chairman, Nigeria Governors Forum), Imo State Governor Hope Uzodinma (Chairman, Progressives Governors Forum), Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy Wale Edun, and Attorney General Lateef Fagbemi.

Overview of the Bills

Nigeria Tax Bill: Aims to consolidate Nigeria's fragmented tax statutes into a harmonised legal structure, reduce

compliance burdens, and create a predictable fiscal environment.

Nigeria Tax Administration Bill: Establishes a uniform framework for tax administration across federal, state, and local governments, promoting consistency and fairness.

Nigeria Revenue Service Bill: Replaces the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) with the new Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), a more autonomous and performance-driven national tax agency with an expanded mandate that includes non-tax revenue collection.

Joint Revenue Board Bill: Creates a formal structure to improve coordination among revenue authorities at all levels. It introduces accountability mechanisms including a Tax Appeal Tribunal and an Office of the Tax Ombudsman.

The reforms are part of President Tinubu's broader agenda to strengthen fiscal policy, improve investor confidence, and ensure more transparent and efficient revenue collection.

Senate confirms Nwuche as chair, South-South Commission

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Nigerian Senate on Thursday confirmed the appointment of former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chibudom Nwuche, as Chairman of the newly established South-South Development Commission (SSDC).

Also confirmed was Usoro Offiong Akpabio from Akwa Ibom State, who will serve as the Managing Director of the Commission. Thirteen additional board members and five executive directors were cleared for appointment.

However, the confirmation process was not without controversy. Tijani Kaura, the nominee representing the North-West, was dropped after failing to submit vital documentation and refusing to appear before the Senate screening committee. The committee noted that Kaura could still present himself for screening at a later date.

READ ALSO: Akpabio: Senate passed tax reform bills for Nigeria's progress

The confirmation followed the presentation and adoption of a report by the Senate Committee on South-South Development Commission, chaired by

Senator Benson Konbowei (PDP, Bayelsa Central).

"The Senate do receive and consider the report of the Committee on South-South Development Commission on the confirmation of the nomination for appointment as Chairman, Managing Director, and Members of the Board," Senator Konbowei stated.

Confirmed Board Members:
Larry Odey (Cross River)

Charles Zuofa (Bayelsa)

Dr Nkereuwem Ebong (Akwa Ibom)

Chika Chinedu (Rivers)

Femi Oise (Edo)

Dr Charles Sylvester Enuhowhate (Delta)

Tabitha Iliya Sallah (North-East)

Yusuf Rasaan Amai (North-Central)

Joseph Mmamal (South-East)

Bukonola Braimoh (South-West)

Executive Directors:
Marcus Nie Eji – Projects (Rivers)

Aganaba Preye Steven – Social and Human Capital Development (Bayelsa)

Dr Timi Alari Ayibatonye – Corporate Services (Delta)

Joseph Ugheoke – Commercial and Environmental Development (Edo)

Sony Abang – Finance (Cross River)

President Bola Tinubu had submitted the list of nominees to the Senate in May, with Senate President Godswill Akpabio referring the request to the relevant committee with a one-week deadline for review.

The South-South Development Commission is tasked with leading infrastructure and socio-economic development across the oil-rich South-South region. It is expected to address deep-rooted challenges in host communities, including environmental degradation, economic disparity, and inadequate public services.

INEC to hold by-elections on 16 August

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced that it will conduct by-elections across affected constituencies on Saturday, 16 August 2025.

These elections aim to fill vacant seats in both the National and State Assemblies. The vacancies have arisen as a result of resignations, deaths, and court annulments affecting various legislative positions.

The INEC Chairman, Professor Mahmood Yakubu, made the announcement on Thursday during a consultative meeting with political party representatives held in Abuja.

“These elections will take place in 16 constituencies involving two Senatorial Districts, five Federal Constituencies, and nine State Assembly seats,” Yakubu said.

The affected constituencies include Anambra South and Edo Central Senatorial Districts; Ovia South West/Ovia South East (Edo), Babura/Garki (Jigawa), Chikun/Kajuru (Kaduna), Ikenne/Shagamu/Remo North (Ogun), and Ibadan North (Oyo) Federal Constituencies. The nine State Assembly seats are Ganye (Adamawa), Onitsha North I (Anambra), Dekina/Okura (Kogi), Zaria Kewaye and Basawa (Kaduna), Bagwai/Shanono (Kano), Mariga (Niger), Karim Lamido I (Taraba), and Kauran Namoda South (Zamfara).

Yakubu said the Commission would deploy 30,451 officials to conduct the polls, which will cover 3,553,659 registered voters across 32 Local Government Areas, 356 Wards, and 6,987 Polling Units.

However, INEC confirmed that by-elections will not be conducted in two State Constituencies: Khana II in Rivers State, due to a state of emergency, and Talata Mafara South in Zamfara State, which is subject to ongoing legal proceedings.



“The commission has fixed Saturday 16th August 2025 for by-elections in 16 constituencies across 12 States of the country involving a total of 3,553,659 registered voters spread across 32 Local Government Areas, 356 Wards and 6,987 Polling Units. The commission will deploy 30,451 officials.

“However, in spite of the declaration of vacancies, by-elections will not hold in two State constituencies for the time being. These are Khana II State Constituency in Rivers State as a result of the current state of emergency and Talata Mafara South State Constituency in Zamfara State following a legal challenge to the declaration of the seat vacant by the State Assembly,” he added.

Political parties are expected to conduct their primaries between July 17 and 21. Submission of nomination forms will be done online from July 22 to 26, while campaign activities will begin on August 2 and end on August 14.

In addition to the by-elections, Yakubu announced that two court-ordered re-run elections—Enugu South I (Enugu) and Ghari/Tsanyawa (Kano)—will also be held on August 16. The re-runs were previously disrupted by violence.

Yakubu also disclosed that the Continuous Voter Registration exercise would resume nationwide. Online pre-registration will commence on August 18, followed by physical registration on August 25.

“For the nationwide CVR, the commission has approved the resumption of the online and in-person registration of voters in all the States of the Federation.

“The online pre-registration will start on 18th August 2025 while the in-person registration will follow on 25th August 2025. The exercise will be held simultaneously in all our 37 State and FCT offices as well as our 774 Local Government offices nationwide. Detailed schedule of activities will be released shortly,” he added.

Ahead of the Anambra State governorship election, a separate voter registration exercise will be held in all 326 wards of the state from July 8 to 17.

Yakubu encouraged eligible voters, including those seeking transfers or replacement of lost or damaged Permanent Voter Cards, to participate.

Why Tinubu rejected NDLEA bill

By Damilola Olufemi

President Bola Tinubu has withheld his assent from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Bill, 2025, citing contradictions with established financial procedures.

The president's decision was conveyed in a letter read by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, during Thursday's plenary session.

The bill had proposed allowing the NDLEA to retain a share of proceeds from drug-related crimes, a provision Tinubu described as inconsistent with current legal frameworks.

According to the president, "All proceeds of crime are paid into the government's Confiscated and Forfeited Properties Account. Disbursements to any recovery agency, including the NDLEA, can only be made by presidential approval, subject to the consent of the Federal Executive Council and the National Assembly."

He maintained that the current system ensures accountability and transparency and should not be altered.

This marks the second time in the same week that President Tinubu has declined to sign a bill into law. On Tuesday, he rejected the National Assembly Library Trust Fund (Establishment) Amendment



Bill, 2025, also citing inconsistencies with federal policies regarding funding, taxation, and salary structures.

However, the president is expected to endorse four significant tax reform bills aimed at reshaping Nigeria's fiscal framework. These include the Nigeria Tax Bill, the Nigeria Tax Administration Bill, the Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Bill, and the Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Bill — all of which were passed by the National Assembly following broad stakeholder engagement.

More Lawmakers defect to Tinubu's APC

Meanwhile, political

realignments continue in the House of Representatives. On Thursday, Chimaobi Atu, representing an Enugu constituency, announced his defection from the Labour Party to the All Progressives Congress (APC). He blamed internal leadership disputes within the Labour Party for his decision.

His switch comes shortly after two other lawmakers — Peter Akpanke (Cross River) and Paul Nnamchi (Enugu) — also left the PDP and Labour Party, respectively, to join the APC.

Speaker Tajudeen Abbas formally announced all three defections during plenary.

Nigeria ranked 12th poorest country globally by GDP per capita in 2025

By Damilola Olufemi



Nigeria has been listed as the 12th poorest country in the world by gross domestic product (GDP) per capita for the year 2025, according to new figures released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and visualised by Visual Capitalist.

In the report published on Tuesday, Nigeria's GDP per capita stands at \$807, placing it among the bottom 15 out of 50 countries analysed.

South Sudan ranks as the poorest nation globally, with a GDP per capita of just \$251. It is followed by Yemen, Burundi, the Central African Republic, and Malawi.

Nigeria's low per capita ranking highlights the widespread economic struggles

While Nigeria remains one of Africa's biggest economies in terms of total GDP, the low per capita ranking highlights the widespread economic struggles endured by millions of its citizens.

"Chronic conflict, fragile institutions, and limited industrial bases continue to suppress income growth in many of them, even as the global economy rebounds after the pandemic," Visual Capitalist stated in its commentary on the findings.

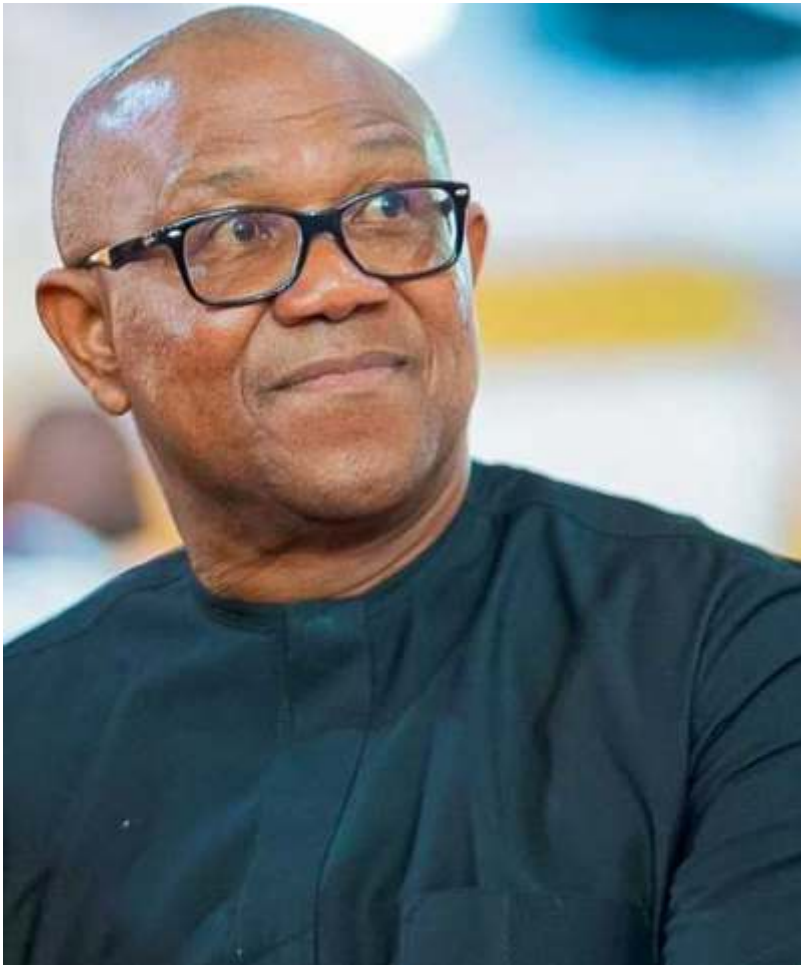
The report also pointed to Africa's limited representation in global economic output despite its large population. "Africa, in particular, is heavily underrepresented on the world stage. It accounts for 19% of the global population and only 3% of the \$113 trillion world economy," it noted.

India, despite being the world's fourth-largest economy by total GDP, appears at the very bottom of the list in 50th place, with a GDP per capita of \$2,878.

Other African nations listed among the poorest include Madagascar, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, and Niger.

Lagos govt responds to Obi over brother's property demolition

By Friday Omosola



The Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA) has dissociated itself from the alleged demolition of a property said to belong to the brother of the former Labour Party's presidential candidate, Peter Obi, in the state.

The New Daily Prime reported that Mr Obi, in a statement on his X page on Wednesday, recounted how his younger brother's company property in Ikeja, Lagos, was invaded and demolished by unidentified individuals without a valid court order or demolition permit.

He raised alarm over what he described as the worsening state of lawlessness and disregard for citizens' rights in Nigeria.

Addressing the former governor of Anambra State's claims, LASBCA's spokesperson, Adu Ademuyiwa, insisted the agency was not connected to the incident.

"It's not my agency (LASBCA) that is responsible for that."

In a separate reaction, Wale Ajetonmobi, Special Assistant on Media to Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, advised Mr Obi to formally lodge his complaint with the police.

"Peter Obi should report the matter to the police. They'll help him find the people who ordered the building's demolition," Mr Ajetonmobi said.

He further urged Nigerians not to drag the Commissioner for the Environment and Water Resources, Tokunbo Wahab, into the issue.

He stressed that Mr Wahab has no authority to issue court orders, which Mr Obi had alleged were referenced by those who carried out the demolition.

"Whatever game Peter Obi wants to play, first things first— who is responsible for the demolition has to be well stated. If he can't reach them, he should go to the police station and report. A commissioner who doesn't issue court orders shouldn't be questioned," Mr Ajetonmobi added.

Court postpones Yahaya Bello's money laundering case to October

By Friday Omosola

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court has postponed the trial of former Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello, and two others in the ongoing money laundering case.

The matter has been rescheduled to continue on October 8 and 9, as well as November 12 and 13.

Justice Maryanne Anenih adjourned the proceedings after the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) presented multiple documents through its third witness in an effort to support the allegations against Mr Bello and his co-defendants, Umar Shuaib Oricha and Abdulsalam Hudu.

During Wednesday's hearing, Segun Adeleke, who appeared as the second prosecution witness (Pw2), told the court that he had no personal dealings with any of the defendants concerning the property under investigation.

Responding to questions from defence lawyers, Mr Adeleke confirmed that none of the defendants' names appeared in any transaction records linked to the property.

Mr Adeleke, a manager at Efab Property Limited, added that he was meeting Mr Bello for the first time in court.

"This is the first time I am seeing His Excellency (Yahaya Bello) in person. I have only seen him before on television and in newspapers, but never in relation to this transaction," he said.

Earlier, the first prosecution witness (Pw1), Fabian Nwora, who is the Chief Executive Officer of Efab Property Limited, also testified that none of the defendants had made payments into his company's account.

Nwora, who acknowledged knowing Mr Bello personally, insisted the former governor's name did not appear in the disputed property transaction.

Nwora explained that although he began negotiations for the property, it was his colleague, Mr Adeleke, who later concluded the deal.

At a previous hearing, Nwora told the



court he had been invited to the EFCC on February 8, 2023, regarding a transaction between Shehu Bello and Efab Property for a property located at No. 1 Ikogosi Street, Maitama.

According to him, Shehu Bello was the individual who initiated the purchase.

While being led in evidence by EFCC counsel Kemi Pinheiro, Mr Adeleke confirmed that in 2020, Nwora assigned him to handle the property transaction after Shehu Bello expressed interest.

Mr Adeleke said the deal was finalised and the sum of N500 million was paid.

When asked what happened subsequently, Mr Adeleke said Shehu Bello later returned to inform Nwora that he no longer wished to continue with the purchase due to the EFCC's investigation.

"My chairman said he would get back to him after consulting our Company Secretary," Mr Adeleke recalled.

The prosecution further inquired about documents issued to one Nuhu Muhammed concerning a separate property in Gwarinpa.

Mr Adeleke confirmed that the documents were provided to Nuhu after he bought a unit in the estate.

Defence counsel Joseph Daudu, raised objections, arguing that there was no clear link between the documents the prosecution sought to tender and the testimony already provided by the witness.

However, the judge overruled the objection.

Under cross-examination, Mr Adeleke admitted that he was brought into the Gwarinpa transaction after it had already begun and was not involved from the outset.

Daudu challenged him on discrepancies between his current evidence and his previous testimony before Justice Emeka Nwite at the Federal High Court, where Adeleke had earlier claimed the payment for the property was made in a single transfer.

In response, Mr Adeleke maintained that the payment was actually made in two instalments and that he had receipts to support this, though he conceded that he did not personally know Nuhu Muhammed.

Makinde renames Ibadan Polytechnic after late gov Olunloyo

By Gbenga Olaleye



As former Oyo State Governor, Dr Victor Omololu Olunloyo, was laid to rest, Governor Seyi Makinde has announced the renaming of The Polytechnic, Ibadan, in his honour. The institution will henceforth be known as Omololu Olunloyo Polytechnic, Ibadan.

The announcement was made on Thursday during the interdenominational state funeral service held at the Obafemi Awolowo Stadium, Liberty Road, Ibadan. The late Olunloyo passed away on 6 April 2025 at the age of 89.

Olunloyo, a distinguished scholar and the pioneer Principal of The Polytechnic, Ibadan, served as Governor of Oyo State from 1 October to 31 December 1983. His tenure, though brief, remains significant in the state's political history.

Speaking at the event, Governor Makinde said:

"I spoke yesterday about preserving and digitising Baba Olunloyo's vast library as a mark of honour. Today, we are taking a further step to immortalise him by renaming The Polytechnic, Ibadan,

which he helped establish, as Omololu Olunloyo Polytechnic, Ibadan."

Makinde described Olunloyo as a man of enduring legacy and multifaceted brilliance:

"He was a scholar, a statesman, a technocrat, a cultural enthusiast, and, above all, a man of deep conviction. Baba left an enduring footprint on the sands of Oyo State and Nigeria as a whole."

Citing his 1983 election victory over a popular incumbent, Makinde remarked that Olunloyo's brief time in office was "a powerful testament to the trust people placed in him".

In his sermon, retired Methodist Archbishop of Ilesa and Ibadan, Most Reverend Ayo Ladigbolu, described Olunloyo as a role model whose intellectual contributions and impeccable integrity stood him apart.

"He demonstrated a style of leadership that was of the most superior quality," Ladigbolu said.

Dignitaries in Attendance

The service was attended by a host of dignitaries including: Deputy Governor of Oyo State, Abdulraheem Bayo Lawal, Mrs Dupe Jemibewon, wife of a former Military Governor of old Oyo State, Mrs Mutiat Ladoja, wife of a former Governor of Oyo State, Taofeek Arapaja, PDP Deputy National Chairman (South) and former Deputy Governor, Hazeem Gbolarami, former Deputy Governor, Abass Agboworin, Member representing Ibadan North-East/South-East Federal Constituency, Segun Ogunwuyi, Chief of Staff to the Governor, Members of the Oyo State Executive Council, Saka Balogun, Chairman, Oyo State Elders' Council, Sikiru Sanda, ALGON Chairman, Oyo State, Adeniyi Ajewole, President-General, Central Council of Ibadan Indigenes (CCII), Religious leaders, traditional chiefs, and family members

The interdenominational service marked the culmination of a week-long celebration of the life and contributions of one of Oyo State's most revered intellectuals and public servants.

Sanwo-Olu calls for stakeholder collaboration to advance water transportation in Nigeria

By Friday Omosola

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State has urged stakeholders to invest in the state's waterways and collaborate in promoting safer, more efficient, and sustainable water transportation systems across Nigeria.

Speaking at the 2025 Regional Ferry Safety Conference held at the Lagos Continental Hotel, Victoria Island, Mr Sanwo-Olu, represented by his Deputy, Obafemi Hamzat, highlighted Lagos as a viable market with over 20 functional water terminals and several more jetties under development.

The conference, themed 'Charity Safer Waters: Advancing Ferry Safety through Innovation, Collaboration, and Integrated Transport Solutions,' brought together key players in the water transport sector to discuss safety, innovation, and growth opportunities.

Mr Sanwo-Olu emphasised that his administration is committed to building a future where water transportation in Lagos is not only safe but also globally recognised for efficiency and sustainability.

He noted that the state's collaboration with organisations like WaterAid Nigeria and the UK's Blue Planet Fund, under the Coastal Resilience Initiative, showcases the power of public-private partnerships in addressing coastal risks and enhancing water transport.

At the heart of Lagos' strategy, the governor said, is a drive for innovation.

He revealed that the state is exploring modern initiatives such as the Omi-Eko project and plans to introduce electric ferries in the coming years to reduce carbon emissions and align with global environmental standards.

Mr Sanwo-Olu also highlighted significant progress in ferry safety since the establishment of the Lagos State Waterways Authority (LASWA) in 2008.

He noted that LASWA has been pivotal in



regulating the sector, enforcing safety compliance, and providing an enabling environment for operators.

Measures such as compulsory life jacket usage, regular vessel inspections, and comprehensive training for captains and deckhands—delivered in partnership with organisations like Yamaha—have been prioritised.

He further mentioned the deployment of a high-tech control room that delivers real-time data to support safety decisions and the strengthening of collaborations with federal agencies, including the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA).

However, the Lagos State Commissioner for Transportation, Oluwaseun Osiyemi, also addressed participants, stressing that maritime safety must be a continuous journey, not a destination.

He emphasised the need for shared knowledge, harmonised standards, and unified action across the region to ensure ferry passengers' safety from Lagos to other African cities like Lomé, Accra, and Dakar.

Mr Osiyemi noted that, with the rapid population growth in Africa's coastal cities, ferry services have become an essential part of urban transport.

He said Lagos, under Mr Sanwo-Olu's leadership, has witnessed a transformation in water transportation through significant investments in terminals and jetties.

More so, the Secretary-General of the Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA), Paul Adalikwu, commended the state government and LASWA for hosting the conference and setting a practical example for other coastal cities in the region.

He noted that Lagos' model aligns with emerging global best practices and offers opportunities for further improvements in ferry safety and attractiveness.

Earlier, the Managing Director of LASWA, Damilola Emmanuel, said the conference aimed to harmonise regional policies and create robust frameworks for safer, more efficient cross-border ferry operations.

He reaffirmed the state government's commitment to elevating safety, technical, and design standards while positioning ferry services as an integral part of urban mobility.

Mr Emmanuel called on all stakeholders to join forces in building a safer, more resilient future for ferry transport across Africa's waterways and coastal regions.

PDP's Bode George: NEC will act on disloyal members

By Gbenga Olaleye

A prominent chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Bode George, has stated that the party's forthcoming National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting will address, in firm terms, all individuals found to be working against the interests of the party.

Speaking on Arise Television's Morning Show on Thursday, George dismissed any notion that the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, holds undue sway over the PDP, asserting that Wike does not "own" the party.

"Nyesom Wike does not own the PDP; he joined the party just like everybody else did," George said.

"If you think it's only because of his money that he remains a member of the party, wait until the NEC meeting where decisive actions will be taken on all those who have committed a 'hara-kiri'."

George emphasised that, unlike the All Progressives Congress (APC), which he



claimed is "owned by one individual," the PDP remains a collective platform built on democratic principles.

His comments come amid mounting uncertainty surrounding the party's upcoming 100th NEC meeting, scheduled for Monday, 30 June 2025.

Rumours of postponement had been circulating, but the PDP's National Working Committee (NWC) has firmly denied any such change to the meeting date.

Additionally, the NWC dismissed claims that Senator Samuel Anyanwu had been reinstated as the party's National Secretary, following comments made by the Acting National Chairman, Ambassador Umar Damagum, during a press briefing on Wednesday.

George, a vocal critic of disunity within the PDP, appeared unfazed by Wike's perceived influence in the ongoing internal disputes, hinting that the NEC would take a hard line against disloyalty and internal sabotage.

The political climate within the PDP remains tense, as party faithful await the outcome of the high-stakes NEC meeting, which is expected to set the tone for future cohesion or further division within the party ranks.

Nasarawa court sentences gospel singer to death for murder of NYSC member

By Damilola Olufemi

A High Court sitting in Lafia, Nasarawa State, has sentenced gospel artist Timileyin Ajayi to death by hanging for the murder of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) member, Salome Adaidu.

Presiding over the case, Justice Simon Aboki ruled that Ajayi was guilty of culpable homicide, which carries a mandatory death sentence under Section 221 of the Penal Code applicable in northern Nigeria.

The ruling follows Ajayi's confession in January, during which he admitted to killing Adaidu in a moment of rage. According to him, he acted out of anger after discovering she had allegedly been



unfaithful.

"I didn't plan to kill her. She is always cheating; she hides most things from me. I discovered she was cheating when I saw her phone, so I got angry seeing her chat with other guys, and that's why I killed

her," Ajayi had told investigators.

Despite his confession, Ajayi pleaded not guilty to the charge during the trial.

Ajayi arrested in Nasarawa

The shocking case gained public attention earlier in the year when Ajayi was apprehended in the Agwan Sarki area of Orozo, a border community between Nasarawa and the Federal Capital Territory. He was found carrying the severed head of the victim in a polythene bag.

Ajayi claimed he had been in a romantic relationship with Adaidu for a year. However, her family denied this, insisting she was never involved with him.

Ekiti 2026: INEC officially flags off governorship election process

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Wednesday formally issued the statutory notice for the 2026 governorship election in Ekiti State, marking the official commencement of the electoral process.

The announcement was made during a stakeholders' meeting held in Ado-Ekiti, attended by political party representatives and other key actors. The Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) for Ekiti State, Dr Bunmi Omosoyindemi, reaffirmed the Commission's dedication to ensuring transparency, integrity, and credibility throughout the electoral process before, during, and after the polls.

Dr Omosoyindemi explained that the issuance of the election notice is in accordance with the Electoral Act, which mandates INEC to publish such notices no later than 360 days before the scheduled date of the election. INEC had previously declared 20 July 2026 as the date for the Ekiti governorship election.

"This meeting is both symbolic and strategic," the REC stated.

"It signals the official start of the election process, while also serving as a platform for collaboration among political parties, the media, and other stakeholders, to collectively safeguard the integrity, inclusiveness, and peaceful conduct of the election."

He urged political parties to adhere strictly to legal and procedural frameworks in conducting their primaries, nominating candidates,



and running campaigns. He stressed that full compliance with the Electoral Act and INEC's guidelines would be crucial to ensuring a credible and seamless process.

The REC further revealed that the election notice would be displayed at INEC's state headquarters and in all local government area offices across Ekiti State.

This, he said, would formally activate the election timetable and schedule of activities, to be made public immediately following the stakeholders' engagement.

Omosoyindemi also referred to the INEC Chairman, Professor Mahmood Yakubu's earlier announcement on 30 May 2025, in which the Commission approved the detailed timetable and schedule of activities for the forthcoming governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun States. The tenures of the current governors in both states are set to expire in 2026.

In his remarks, Dr Omosoyindemi called on the media to maintain

professionalism and neutrality in their coverage of the electoral process, assuring them that INEC remains committed to delivering a free, fair, and credible election.

Also speaking at the event, Chairman of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) in Ekiti State, Mr Daramola Owoola, lauded INEC for initiating early engagement with political stakeholders.

"INEC is demonstrating its readiness to be transparent in the conduct of the election," Owoola remarked.

"As political parties, we are committed to maintaining peaceful and coordinated activities as we approach the election, to ensure the process is fair and free of tension for everyone involved."

With the election notice now issued, all eyes are on the political players in Ekiti State as the journey to the 2026 governorship election officially begins.

Hearing on PDP secretaryship case postponed to September

By Friday Omosola



The Federal High Court in Abuja has rescheduled the hearing on the dispute concerning the rightful National Secretary of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to 22 September.

Justice Mohammed Umar fixed the new date for a definite hearing after parties involved in the case agreed to the postponement.

The matter appeared before Justice Umar for the first time, although it had previously been handled by Justice Inyang Ekwo, who was set to deliver judgment before the plaintiff, Samuel Anyanwu, applied to amend his initial filing.

Mr Anyanwu, the embattled PDP National Secretary, originally filed the suit against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the PDP's Acting National Chairman, Umar Damagun, listed as the first and second defendants.

Through his lawyer, Ken Njemanze, Mr Anyanwu had requested an interim order restraining INEC from recognising any PDP documents not signed by him until a

decision was reached on his motion for an interlocutory injunction.

He also sought to prevent Mr Damagun from submitting any correspondence to INEC not co-signed by him.

Justice Ekwo initially set 25 March for judgment, but on that day, Anyanwu submitted a fresh application to amend the originating process to clarify the issues under contention.

Following this, the court scheduled a hearing for 19 May, which was subsequently contested by other parties.

Additional parties later joined the suit, including the PDP as the third defendant, Udeh-Okoye as the fourth, Ali Odela, the PDP National Vice Chairman (South-East), as the fifth, and the party's Deputy National Secretary, Setonji Koshedo, as the sixth defendant.

The case was eventually reassigned to Justice Umar for continuation.

During Thursday's proceedings, Mr Anyanwu's counsel, U. C. Njemanze-

Aku, informed the court that the matter was initially set for mention, but a letter had been received from the fifth defendant requesting that the hearing be moved to September.

Although Mr Anyanwu's legal team preferred an earlier date, they did not object to the adjournment.

Lawyers representing the other parties also agreed with the request.

Paul Erokoro, counsel for Udeh-Okoye, informed the court that the issue had already been addressed by the Supreme Court, which ruled that such matters were strictly internal to political parties.

He said he planned to file an application to formally present the Supreme Court's decision as part of the proceedings.

In response, Justice Umar instructed all parties to file their responses to Mr Anyanwu's application for amendment, noting that the application and all objections would be heard together on 22 September.

Portable challenges Bobrisky to fight, demands N100m, Ferrari

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Controversial Nigerian street-hop singer, Habeeb Olalomi Badmus, popularly known as Portable, has fired back at cross-dresser Idris Okuneye, now known as Afolashade Amope Okuneye, popularly called Bobrisky.

Portable, in a fiery video posted on Instagram, openly mocked the social media personality and challenged him to a one-on-one physical fight.

In the viral clip, Portable appeared visibly irritated by Bobrisky's recent announcement of a new identity. He questioned the credibility of the name change and mocked the idea that financial wealth could alter one's physical appearance.

"He used money to change what is on his chest," Portable said, laughing scornfully in the video.

"Come back to Nigeria. Let's fight. I will disfigure your face with just one blow."

The outspoken singer then demanded that Bobrisky provide a Ferrari and a sum of ₦100 million before he would agree to engage in a public fight. He said he would only show up under those conditions, stressing his readiness for confrontation.

'Tell your mama to warn you,' Portable warns Bobrisky

In the same outburst, Portable didn't hold back. He took a personal dig at Bobrisky's family, urging his mother to intervene and warn her child. He described Bobrisky as someone trying to mislead the youth and vowed to physically teach him a lesson if he dared to face him.

"Tell your mama make she warn you. I no dey joke. If I see you, na fight straight. I go spoil your face," he added.

The callout has sparked widespread reaction online, with fans divided over



Portable's aggressive tone and the rising tension between the two internet personalities.

Bobrisky officially embraces female identity

This drama follows Bobrisky's recent announcement that he is now fully identifying as a woman. On his verified Instagram page, he declared that he has completed his transition and now prefers to be called Afolashade Amope Okuneye.

He wrote:

"It's time y'all accept Bob is now a woman. I've done everything. Congratulations to me. I can now collect gbola like all women do. I'm proud of myself. Not even one billion trolls can stop me from achieving my dreams."

In the same post, Bobrisky explained that he doesn't need a womb to live happily as a woman. He further added that married men now spend generously on him, claiming that he helps keep their homes intact by avoiding unplanned pregnancies.

"Before you open your dirty mouth to ask if I have a womb, I don't need it," he said.

"I love how married men spend heavily on me. I don't keep unwanted children who could destroy their homes. I'm



here to keep marriages intact."

Public reactions between Portable and Bobrisky

The online community has been buzzing with reactions, with some supporting Bobrisky's right to identify as he pleases, while others, like Portable, believe the transformation is misleading and should not be encouraged.

Portable's challenge has added fuel to the fire, stirring debates around gender identity, freedom of expression, and celebrity influence in Nigerian society. His demand for a Ferrari and ₦100 million has also been viewed by some as a publicity stunt aimed at gaining attention.

Meanwhile, Bobrisky has yet to directly respond to Portable's threats, but his recent posts indicate he remains unfazed by criticism.

Conclusion

The feud between Portable and Bobrisky reflects the clash of values within the Nigerian entertainment space, between traditional views and new expressions of identity. As the back-and-forth continues, fans and critics alike are watching closely to see whether the fight challenge materialises or if it fizzles out as just another social media squabble.

Carter Efe loses TikTok, IG accounts after slamming Wizkid

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular Nigerian skit maker and content creator, Carter Efe, has lost access to his Instagram and TikTok accounts.

This incident occurred just days after he criticised Afrobeats superstar, Wizkid during a live session on TikTok.

The social media takedown appears to be a direct consequence of a controversial comment Carter Efe made about the singer.

The comedian, known for his viral comedy skits and public commentary, openly called Wizkid “an idiot” during a livestream, accusing the singer of having too much pride.

“Wizkid too get pride”, Carter Efe

During a TikTok live session on Tuesday, Carter Efe sparked online outrage with his blunt criticism of Wizkid. In a mix of English and Nigerian Pidgin, he said:

“If Wizkid calls me ‘my G,’ that means lion don get belle. E no fit happen. That boy, too get pride, idiot.”

The statement quickly circulated across social media platforms, drawing sharp reactions from fans of Wizkid, widely known as Wizkid FC. The fan base is famous for its loyalty and swift online retaliation against any perceived attack on the singer.

Backlash from Wizkid FC

Following Carter Efe’s comment, Wizkid FC members took to various social media platforms, calling for the mass reporting of his online accounts. They urged fellow fans to report his TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube pages for allegedly violating platform guidelines.

By Wednesday evening, the results of this campaign began to surface. In a series of posts on X (formerly Twitter), Carter Efe revealed that his Instagram



account, which had 1.8 million followers, had been removed.

“FC una collect my Instagram account of 1.8 million followers,” he wrote, referring to the fan group. “This is getting too much.”

Shortly after this post, Carter Efe uploaded a video where he appeared visibly distressed and claimed that his TikTok account had also been taken down.

Pleads for forgiveness

In the apology video, Carter Efe, visibly emotional, appealed to Wizkid and his fanbase for forgiveness. He expressed regret for his earlier remarks and asked the singer to intervene on his behalf.

“TikTok account gone. FC una betrayed me. Abeg make una forgive me, Wizkid FC,” he said. “Wizkid, abeeeeeg no vex. Help me beg FC. I’m in severe pain.”

The comedian also begged his fans to help appeal to Wizkid and his followers, saying the loss of his platforms had deeply affected him.



Growing pattern of celebrity fan wars

This latest episode adds to the growing trend of intense fan-driven conflicts on Nigerian social media. In recent months, several online figures and celebrities have come under fire from fan groups for statements made against popular musicians.

Carter Efe’s experience sheds light on how powerful fanbases have become in the digital space. A single negative remark can now lead to coordinated efforts to deplatform a content creator.

What’s next for Carter Efe?

As of Thursday morning, both Carter Efe’s Instagram and TikTok accounts remain inaccessible. It’s unclear if he plans to appeal the takedowns or launch new pages.

Supporters of the comedian have started urging platforms to review the situation, calling the mass reporting an unfair use of community guidelines.

Carter Efe has yet to make another public statement since his apology video. For now, the entertainer seems focused on regaining control of his online presence, and possibly, mending his relationship with Wizkid FC.

'Impossible to discuss cultural impact in Nigerian music without me,' Terry G boasts

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian singer and producer Gabriel Oche Amanyi, popularly known as Terry G, has declared that his influence on the country's music scene remains unmatched.

According to him, no conversation about the cultural evolution of Nigerian music is complete without acknowledging his contributions.

The self-styled "Akpako Master" made this bold statement on Wednesday through a post on his official X (formerly Twitter) account. His remarks followed ongoing social media debates about legacies and cultural impact in the Nigerian music industry. These conversations were triggered by a recent rap feud between hip-hop stars Odumodublvck and Blaqbonez.

"I am the culture," says Terry G

In a confident post, Terry G wrote, "You can't talk about cultural impact in Nigeria without talking about Terry G. I am the culture!"

This statement quickly caught the attention of fans and industry observers. Many agreed with his point, recalling the significant role he played in shaping the sound of the streets during the late 2000s and early 2010s. Others praised him for daring to speak boldly about his contributions, in an era where recognition often goes to the newer wave of artists.

Pioneer of street-hop

Terry G was a leading figure in the rise of "Street-hop," a subgenre of Afrobeats deeply rooted in street culture. With high-energy beats, eccentric lyrics, and unpredictable performances, he brought something new and raw to mainstream music.

He shot to fame with hits like "Free Madness," "Akpako," "Run Mad," and "Ginjah Ur Swaggah." His style was loud, energetic, and sometimes controversial, but it resonated with fans from the grassroots to the top of the charts.

Unlike more polished acts of the time, Terry G leaned into his ghetto roots. His



use of bell sounds, chaotic instrumentals, and street lingo created a unique musical identity. This style inspired many upcoming artists and producers to embrace their backgrounds and push creative boundaries.

Not just a performer, but a producer

Beyond performing, Terry G also made his mark as a music producer. He was behind several popular tracks for himself and other artists. His studio, TGP Entertainment, served as a launchpad for several underground talents.

During his peak years, Terry G's influence was undeniable. Clubs, street corners, and radio stations constantly played his music. He dominated parties and became a household name across Nigeria.

A legacy often overlooked

However, as the Nigerian music industry evolved and became more structured and international, Terry G's presence in the mainstream began to fade. New artists with more refined sounds began to dominate the scene. Despite this, his die-hard fans and some musicians still credit him as one of the most fearless and creative entertainers of his time.

His recent comments come as a reminder

that while he may no longer top charts, his influence still lingers. According to Terry G, the conversations about impact and legacy are incomplete without his name.

Response from fans and industry peers

Reactions to his statement have been mixed but largely supportive. Some fans praised him for speaking out and demanded more recognition for the pioneers of Nigerian street music. Others used the opportunity to revisit his discography, sharing nostalgic clips and throwback videos of his past performances.

A few critics, however, questioned whether Terry G's wild style truly amounted to lasting cultural influence. But even they admitted that his sound once ruled the airwaves and nightclubs.

Conclusion

Terry G may not be as visible in the current Afrobeats wave, but his bold claim has reignited interest in his legacy. As debates about cultural impact continue, one thing is clear: Terry G's chapter in Nigeria's musical story cannot be erased. He may no longer be the loudest voice in the room, but his bell still rings in the history of Nigerian music.

‘My family has done enough for Nigeria, I will not fight,’ says Made Kuti

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Grammy-nominated Afrobeats musician, Made Kuti, has opened up about why he chooses to stay away from political activism despite coming from a family known for its tireless fight for justice and good governance in Nigeria.

Speaking during a recent appearance on the ‘Breakdown’ podcast, Kuti revealed his doubts about the effectiveness of activism in Nigeria. He explained that the long history of his family’s involvement in the struggle for better governance has not produced the desired change, and he does not want to continue that battle at the expense of his family’s safety and well-being.

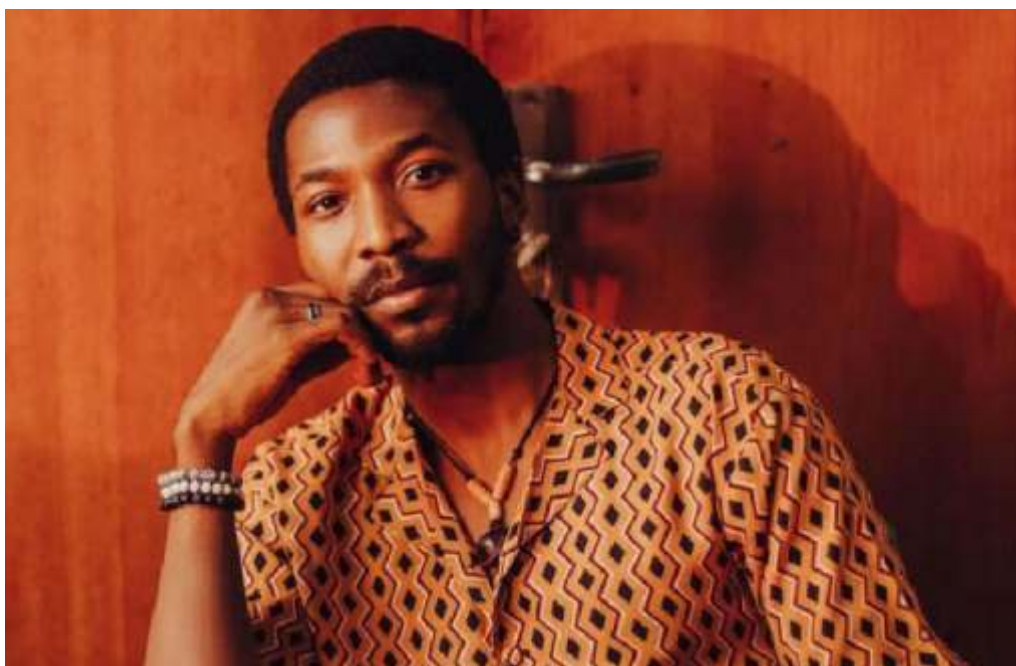
Family’s legacy of activism

Made Kuti comes from a lineage of strong activists and musicians. His great-grandmother, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, was a fearless advocate for women’s rights and Nigeria’s independence. His grandfather, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, used his music to challenge corrupt governments and oppressive systems. Made’s father, Femi Kuti, and his uncle, Seun Kuti, have also continued the fight through music and advocacy.

During the podcast, Made reflected on this legacy. He said, “When you look at Nigeria and see how many years Fela fought, how my dad fought, how my uncle Seun is still speaking out, then you think about my great-grandmother Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti. They threw her from a building. She was a selfless person who gave everything for Africa’s growth. She paid the ultimate price.”

He added that her death made him question the value of sacrifice without real change. “You start to wonder, what’s the point if all these people couldn’t bring lasting change? What are the chances that my music or performance will do what they couldn’t?” he asked.

Belief in collective effort over individual struggle



Despite his reluctance to take a leading activist role, Made stressed that he still wants to contribute to positive change in Nigeria. However, he believes that meaningful progress will only come through collective action, not the efforts of a few individuals.

“It’s not really about the power of one person,” he said. “It’s about the power of the people. I believe that when enough people come together at the right time and do the right thing, then we can create the spark for change. But whether that happens in my lifetime or not, I can’t say.”

He made it clear that he is not an idealist. “I don’t believe one man can change this country. But I do believe everyone must play a role. We can’t keep expecting results when we don’t make the effort. I want to live knowing that I played my part.”

Choosing peace over pain

Kuti explained that his decision to focus on his personal peace and family life is intentional. While he wants to be remembered as someone who stood on the right side of history, he does not believe that he must risk everything, especially the well-being of his loved

ones, to do so.

“Selflessness is a tricky thing,” he noted. “Giving everything and getting nothing in return, it can drain you. I feel my family has already done more than enough for this country.”

He said he respects what his ancestors did, but has no interest in following the same difficult path. “I’m happy to stand for what’s right, but not if it means hurting those I care about,” he stated firmly.

A different kind of impact

Instead of taking to the streets or making bold political statements in his music, Made Kuti wants to focus on building a life of purpose, honesty, and responsibility. He hopes his future children can be proud of the choices he makes today.

“I want to be able to look my children in the eyes and say, ‘I did my best,’” he said.

For Kuti, activism is no longer just about loud voices or big risks. It’s about doing the right thing in everyday life, supporting a better Nigeria without sacrificing everything that matters most.

Reminisce: Hip-hop respects skills, not money

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nigerian hip-hop artist, Remilekun Abdulkalid Safaru, popularly known as Reminisce, has made a bold statement about what truly earns a rapper respect in the hip-hop community.

According to him, wealth and streaming numbers don't determine a rapper's worth; pure lyrical skill does.

Reminisce made this declaration during a recent appearance on the On The Record podcast, where he was featured alongside fellow rapper, Vector. The conversation touched on the ongoing rivalry between Nigerian rappers Odumodublvck and Blaqbonez, and the larger issue of how rap artists are judged both locally and internationally.

"You can't buy respect in hip-hop" – Reminisce

Speaking passionately about the culture of hip-hop, Reminisce stressed that the genre has always placed talent above numbers. Unlike other genres where commercial success often overshadows artistry, he argued that hip-hop remains one of the few spaces where skill speaks louder than streams.

"Hip-hop is the only genre that doesn't respect numbers or money," he said. "No matter how much money you make as a rapper, you can't buy respect. That's one thing I love about hip-hop, you have to earn it."

Reminisce added that for a rapper to be respected, it must come from peers and fans who recognise the artist's lyrical strength and authenticity. "People have to say, 'Vector is a good rapper, he's a legend.' That kind of respect can't be forced or bought."

Stream counts don't prove skill

He went further to criticise the obsession with streaming numbers and online metrics. In his words, a rapper could gather "five trillion streams" or claim to have the best-selling album, but it wouldn't matter if the skills



weren't there.

"If you like, name your album the greatest. Nobody cares. Rap respects pure skills. That's the currency here," he said.

His words appeared to indirectly address the recent tension between Odumodublvck and Blaqbonez, two fast-rising rappers known for their confidence and strong online presence. While both artists enjoy growing fan bases and impressive numbers, Reminisce suggested that it's lyrical quality, not popularity, that will ultimately determine their legacy in the genre.

Kendrick vs Drake: A case study in skill

To drive home his point, Reminisce pointed to the ongoing lyrical feud between American rappers Kendrick Lamar and Drake. He acknowledged that Drake is far ahead commercially but argued that Kendrick won the battle because of his superior skill.

"Kendrick Lamar is widely adjudged the winner of his hip-hop battle with Canadian superstar Drake," he said. "If you look at the margin between Drake and Lamar in terms of commercial success, it's extensive. But because it's about skill set, which is the primary thing in hip-hop, Lamar won."

Reminisce used this example to illustrate that, within the culture of hip-hop, sharp lyricism, strong storytelling, and originality are the true measures of greatness, not wealth or media attention.

A reminder to young rappers

His comments serve as a timely reminder for younger artists in the Nigerian music scene. In an industry increasingly driven by social media trends, digital plays, and brand endorsements, Reminisce is urging rappers to return to the roots of the genre.

He concluded by affirming that hip-hop is not for the faint-hearted or those chasing only fame. "If you want to be respected, put in the work. Polish your craft. Let your lyrics speak. That's how legends are made," he said.

Final thoughts

Reminisce's words reflect a broader truth about the hip-hop culture, one that values authenticity, resilience, and raw skill over glamour. In a time when music metrics often overshadow message, his statement is a powerful call to artists: in hip-hop, you don't count unless you can rap.

‘Why Afrobeats became global,’ Joeboy reveals

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Afrobeats singer Joseph Akinwale Akinfenwa-Donus, popularly known as Joeboy, has shared his thoughts on why the Afrobeats genre has captured the attention of audiences across the globe.

According to the rising star, a mix of factors, including Nigeria’s vibrant culture, the power of social media, and the talent within the country, pushed the genre onto the world stage.

In a recent interview with Zwart, Joeboy emphasised that the popularity of Afrobeats did not happen overnight. Instead, he described it as a result of years of creativity, persistence, and the unique character of Nigerians both at home and abroad.

The role of Nigerian culture

Joeboy pointed to the outgoing and expressive nature of Nigerians as a key factor in Afrobeats’ global rise. He explained that Nigerians naturally like to stand out and be heard, and that cultural confidence has helped spread the music far and wide.

“Afrobeats is here now because it has been a long time coming,” Joeboy said. “There’s so much talent, it’s only right that we just spread it to the world.”

He continued, “Naturally, we are very loud. That’s what they say. We are very out there. And, wherever we are in the world, we like to represent our culture. That played a huge role in Afrobeats gaining global attention.”

This proud representation of Nigerian identity, Joeboy believes, has made the music not just popular but personal for millions of fans around the world.

Nigeria’s population and the diaspora

Joeboy also noted that Nigeria’s large population, both within the country and in the diaspora, played a major role in giving Afrobeats international exposure.



“With over 200 million people in Nigeria and many more Nigerians living across the world, the numbers matter,” he said. “Our people support our music. They push it on social media, stream it, and share it with others. That’s how we went global.”

From cities like London and New York to Lagos and Accra, Afrobeats now moves crowds in clubs, concerts, and radio stations in part because Nigerians abroad have stayed closely connected to their roots and introduced the genre to new audiences.

The power of social media

Joeboy also credited digital platforms for helping Afrobeats break into the mainstream. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Spotify, he said, have removed the traditional barriers that once made it hard for African artists to reach global audiences.

“Social media gave us a voice,” he said. “It allowed people to hear our sound directly, without needing permission from the usual gatekeepers. You can drop a song today, and someone in Brazil or France can vibe to it tomorrow.”

He added that these tools helped fans from other parts of the world connect with Afrobeats in real-time, especially

during the rise of viral dance challenges and cross-cultural collaborations.

High-quality music from Nigeria Finally, Joeboy emphasised the importance of consistently putting out good music. He praised Nigerian artists for their creativity and hard work in producing songs that compete globally in terms of quality.

“The quality of music coming out from Nigeria is top-notch,” he said. “We’re not just making noise; we’re making music that people everywhere can enjoy. That’s why it keeps spreading.”

He highlighted the strong production values, catchy rhythms, and emotional depth that have come to define modern Afrobeats.

Conclusion

Joeboy’s insights echo what many industry watchers have noted in recent years, that Afrobeats is not just a passing trend, but a musical movement with deep cultural roots and global appeal.

With stars like Burna Boy, Wizkid, Tiwa Savage, and Joeboy leading the charge, the genre has become one of Africa’s most powerful exports. And, if Joeboy’s predictions hold, Afrobeats is only just getting started.

'My troubles stole my youth', Victory opens up

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian Afrobeats singer Anthony Ebuka Victor, widely known as Victory, has spoken about how the personal struggles he faced in recent years affected his early life.

According to him, the painful experiences he endured took away what should have been the best years of his youth.

The singer made this emotional revelation in a recent post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter). He simply wrote, "My troubles stole my youth," a statement that quickly drew reactions from fans and well-wishers.

Near-death experience changed his life

Victory's rise to fame has not been without pain. In 2021, the artist was involved in a tragic car accident that changed his life forever. The crash claimed the life of one person and left three others injured, including Victory.

He survived but suffered serious injuries that confined him to a wheelchair for almost a year. It was a difficult period for the young musician, who was still trying to find his footing in the competitive music industry.

Despite the setback, Victory refused to give up. He continued to push forward with his music, using the pain and trauma as motivation. It was during this time that he released Holy Father with Mayorkun, a track that went on to become a hit and introduced him to a wider audience.

Music as therapy and a breakthrough

The success of Holy Father marked a major turning point in Victory's career. While recovering physically, he poured his emotions into his songs, allowing fans to connect with his story through his lyrics.

The public embraced his raw honesty and vulnerability. For Victory, music



became more than a career; it was therapy, a way to heal from the pain of the past and express the emotions he once kept inside.

"Three months sober": A new chapter

In a more recent update, Victory shared another personal milestone. The singer revealed that he has been sober for the past three months. He wrote on X, "3 months sober. Glory."

The simple post was powerful, especially coming from an artist who had earlier admitted to relying on alcohol before performances. According to him, he had never performed on stage without taking alcohol. However, he said he is now working hard to change that as part of his growth process.

Committed to sobriety on tour

Victory is currently on his Stubborn Tour and has made it a goal to stay sober throughout the performances. He wants to experience the energy of his fans and the stage with a clear mind and a clean system.

By doing this, the singer hopes to form a more genuine connection with his audience. He believes that performing without alcohol will give him a more real, raw experience, one that matches

the honesty and emotion he now brings to his music.

Fans praise his strength

Fans have praised Victory for his courage, resilience, and commitment to healing. Many took to social media to express support and share their own stories of recovery and personal battles.

The singer's openness has made him a voice for many young people facing similar challenges. His journey from a tragic accident to sobriety and success has inspired others to keep going, no matter how difficult the road may seem.

A message of hope

Victory's story is one of pain, survival, and personal growth. While he admits that his troubles took away his youth, he is now focused on building a stronger future one marked by purpose, clarity, and passion.

In an industry where image often overshadows truth, Victory stands out for being real. His journey is a reminder that even in the face of hardship, healing is possible and that sharing your truth can be a powerful step toward recovery.

Nigeria police force to probe armed escort seen with actress Angela Okorie

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The Nigeria Police Force has launched an internal investigation into a viral video that shows actress Angela Okorie jogging in public while flanked by armed police officers.

The footage, which spread quickly across social media platforms, has triggered widespread reactions and raised concerns about the conduct of the officers involved.

Viral video sparks controversy

The video, which surfaced earlier this week, shows Okorie jogging outdoors with several uniformed and armed police officers closely following her. While the video initially caught attention for featuring the popular actress, the focus soon shifted to the presence of armed security personnel casually accompanying her on what appeared to be a routine jog.

Critics quickly questioned why public officers, whose services are meant to ensure public safety, were assigned to escort a celebrity in what seems to be a private activity.

Police react with official statement

On Wednesday, the Nigeria Police Force issued an official response through its verified X (formerly Twitter) account. Force Public Relations Officer, ACP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, described the officers' actions as inappropriate and inconsistent with the standards expected of Nigerian law enforcement personnel.

"The Nigeria Police Force strongly frowns at the conduct of armed police officers seen in a viral video trailing actress Angela Okorie while she jogged, an act considered inconsistent with the professional standards and decorum expected of personnel of the Force," the statement read.

Investigation underway

Adejobi confirmed that the police had commenced internal reviews to identify the officers involved. The goal, he said, is to determine the circumstances under which the video was filmed and to assess whether the officers acted within the scope of their duties.

He also indicated that appropriate disciplinary actions would be taken once



the investigation is complete.

"The incident, which appears to have occurred on or around a movie set, has sparked widespread public concern and criticism," the statement continued. "While it remains unclear whether the scene was part of a scripted production, the conduct of the officers seen in the video falls short of the standards expected of members of the Nigeria Police Force."

Linked to film project?

Though Okorie has not released an official statement regarding the video, there is speculation that the clip might have been recorded during the shooting of her new project, Queens of Guns. She has been promoting the movie heavily in recent weeks.

If the scene is indeed part of a film set, the question remains whether the officers were formally assigned to the production or participated without proper authorisation.

Mixed public reactions

The video has sparked a flurry of reactions online, with many Nigerians expressing disappointment and anger. While some questioned the use of public resources for private purposes, others defended the actress, insisting no laws were broken.

Below are a few of the comments from social media:

@issyluv: "They are private citizens; they should be able to hire private security. In a sane country, that's what would be done. Police officers are attached to just anyone as long as they can cough up money."

@barrysone: "Good to read this from the official handle of the police. Glad your team is paying attention. Commendable."

@wf_iscobossy: "Focus on Benue killings first."

@basbeegram: "Go and find your officers robbing people and molesting them on the highways."

Conclusion

The Nigeria Police Force appears determined to uphold its professional standards and has promised a full review of the incident. While the investigation unfolds, questions continue to swirl about how public officers are deployed and whether celebrities receive privileges at the expense of public security.

Angela Okorie, for now, has remained silent amid the growing debate.

Iran declares 'victory' over Israel, vows to retaliate If U.S strikes again

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



In a defiant televised broadcast, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei declared what he called a "victory" over Israel following a tense 12-day conflict, while issuing a stern warning to the United States: "If the U.S. attacks again, Iran will strike back—hard."

The 86-year-old leader broke his public silence for the first time since the outbreak of hostilities on June 13, appearing in a pre-recorded message aired nationwide by Iranian state television. Khamenei's statement marked a pivotal moment in the region's rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape and was delivered with unmistakable confidence, despite international skepticism and the heavy toll of war.

"We have delivered a slap to America's face," Khamenei declared, referencing Iran's missile strike on the U.S. Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar earlier this week—a move he said

symbolized Iran's readiness and reach. "If they strike again, we will target all U.S. bases in the region. This is not a threat. It's a promise."

Khamenei Celebrates What He Calls a "Total Victory" Over Israel

Throughout the broadcast, Khamenei framed the outcome of the recent Iran-Israel confrontation as a "total victory" for the Islamic Republic. He argued that the United States' direct military involvement was a desperate effort to prevent Israel from collapse.

"America entered this war to save Israel from complete destruction," he said. "And even then, the Islamic Republic emerged victorious."

This interpretation, clearly tailored for domestic audiences, coincided with pro-government rallies across major Iranian cities, where citizens waved flags, chanted slogans, and carried portraits of national leaders

and martyrs. Demonstrators in Tehran were seen shouting, "Death to America" and "Death to Israel," reinforcing the regime's messaging of triumph and resistance.

Downplaying U.S.-Israeli Nuclear Strikes

Khamenei also attempted to dismiss the impact of the June 21 U.S.-led aerial assault on Iranian nuclear sites. While the White House called it a critical success that disrupted Iran's nuclear weapons infrastructure, Khamenei called it exaggerated.

"Their attack achieved nothing significant," he said. "Trump inflated the results to mask his failure."

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on next page**

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However, satellite imagery obtained by Western intelligence suggests otherwise. Footage revealed movement of trucks from the Fordow enrichment site ahead of the strike, raising suspicions that Iran may have preemptively evacuated enriched uranium stockpiles—potentially preserving the core of its nuclear program.

Iran Suspends Nuclear Oversight Amid Rising Tensions

In a parallel development, Iran's parliament, with the support of the Guardian Council, has voted to suspend cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The move is seen as a direct response to U.S.-Israeli actions and signals a broader strategic pivot.

Officials say cooperation with the IAEA will only resume if Iran receives firm guarantees for the safety of its nuclear facilities—a demand that is unlikely to be met without extended international negotiations.

This suspension marks a significant blow to global non-proliferation efforts, leaving Iran's nuclear intentions increasingly opaque.

Diplomacy Uncertain Amid Talk of Oman Meetings

Khamenei briefly alluded to upcoming diplomatic engagements in Oman but stopped short of confirming Iran's participation. U.S. intelligence agencies have indicated that back-channel talks may involve partial sanctions relief in exchange for renewed transparency in Iran's nuclear program.

Observers note that Iran's hardline rhetoric is being carefully balanced with subtle diplomatic signals, suggesting that while Tehran may escalate militarily, it is also leaving the door open to negotiation.

Contrasting Narratives: Netanyahu Also Claims "Historic Victory"

In stark contrast, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has also declared a "historic victory" in a televised address on June 24. He claimed that the 12-day campaign had successfully neutralized existential threats from Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

"We have removed the greatest threat to our national security," Netanyahu said. "Iran's ambitions have been decisively checked."

International analysts have pointed out that both countries' declarations of victory reflect deeper political messaging aimed at rallying domestic support and shaping global perception, rather than objective military outcomes.

Key Takeaways from Khamenei's Broadcast

Defiant Messaging: "Slap to America's Face"

Iran's missile strike on the U.S. base in Qatar was framed as a symbolic assertion of strength. Khamenei claimed Iran can hit American targets "whenever it deems necessary."

Warning of Retaliation

The Supreme Leader vowed full retaliation for any future U.S. attack, describing Iran's capacity to strike back as credible and repeatable.

"Total Victory" Over Israel

According to Khamenei, the war proved Israel's vulnerability and highlighted U.S. dependence on military intervention to shield its ally.

Minimizing Nuclear Strike Damage

He characterized the U.S. and Israeli airstrikes on Iran's nuclear infrastructure as militarily insignificant, though international evidence remains inconclusive.

Nuclear Oversight Suspended

Iran will no longer engage with the IAEA unless given security guarantees, raising the risk of further nuclear escalation.

Ambiguous Diplomacy

Khamenei hinted at possible diplomatic engagements, but offered no commitment—leaving the international community watching closely.

Ayatollah Khamenei's broadcast underscores a dangerous crossroads for the Middle East. With both Iran and Israel claiming victory and the United States warning of "consequences for renewed aggression," regional stability hangs in the balance.

Whether the recent ceasefire marks a pause in escalating hostilities—or a calm before the next storm—will depend on the actions taken in the coming days. For now, Tehran is signaling that it's neither backing down nor giving in.

Starmer set to soften welfare reform plans

By Fatimah Idera

Sir Keir Starmer is preparing to soften key elements of Labour's welfare reform plans in a bid to avoid his first major defeat in the House of Commons.

Facing a growing revolt from within his party, the Prime Minister is considering last-minute amendments to his flagship welfare Bill to prevent a damaging rebellion from more than 120 Labour MPs.

Sources in No 10 confirmed that officials are examining ways to avert a showdown in Tuesday's Commons vote, including options such as accelerating the rollout of support payments for people returning to work and pledging to publish reviews of disability and employment support policies.

More than 123 Labour MPs, over a quarter of the party's 403 in Parliament have signed a rebel amendment seeking to block the Bill. With Labour holding a majority of 165, just 83 MPs would need to vote against the legislation for the government to lose the vote.

Some of the most controversial aspects of the proposed reforms include raising the threshold for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), halving the Universal Credit health top-up for new claimants from 2026, and scrapping the Work Capability Assessment measures that have provoked widespread backlash among Labour backbenchers.

The scale of dissent has forced No 10 to explore concessions, including possibly removing or postponing the most contested reforms, such as disability benefit cuts. Starmer is also expected to personally intervene in the coming days by holding talks with dissenting MPs.

'Starmer did not rule out further changes' At a press conference on Wednesday, the Prime Minister did not rule out further changes, and Deputy Leader Angela Rayner confirmed that discussions were ongoing. She said Labour MPs would not be forced to vote against their values, stating: "We're not expecting our benches to do anything that isn't in check with them."

Critics within the party say the current plans risk damaging support for the



government and harming vulnerable groups. Diane Abbott called accusations that opposing the reforms is immoral scandalous, while another Labour MP accused No 10 of panic and resorting to bankrupt arguments.

Outside Parliament, Labour mayors Andy Burnham and Sadiq Khan have urged the government to pause the legislation.

Meanwhile, opposition parties, including the Liberal Democrats and Reform UK, are planning to vote against the Bill, increasing the chances of defeat.

Reform leader, Nigel Farage, declared: "I won't do anything to help a Government get out of trouble that is doing such damage to our nation."

Despite the pressure, Starmer defended his leadership and political instincts at the Nato summit in The Hague, pointing to Labour's landslide election victory as proof that he understands how to read the room.

The government is now considering whether to introduce a rival amendment to address some of the rebels' concerns. One idea being discussed is bringing forward elements of a £1 billion employment support package, although this would complicate the £5 billion in annual savings already planned by the Treasury.

The backlash has been fuelled by concerns that too much of the support for those returning to work won't be

delivered until near the end of the decade. A key independent review, led by former John Lewis Partnership chairman Sir Charlie Mayfield, is expected in the autumn but cannot be fast-tracked.

On Thursday, the Centre for Social Justice is set to publish an analysis suggesting up to £9 billion could be saved by limiting mental health-related benefits to only the most severe cases.

Conservative leader, Kemi Badenoch, plans to back the proposal in a speech, criticising Starmer for caving in to internal pressure.

"This weak Government is discussing watering down their already ineffective welfare Bill," she said.

Former Labour home secretary Lord Blunkett warned that a Commons defeat on the Bill would be a humiliating blow, and could force the government to call a confidence vote to prove it still holds a majority.

"If they lost it, they would have to go for a vote of confidence," he told LBC. "The embarrassment of that, one year in, leaves you with two problems: humiliation and an unresolved welfare issue."

As the government scrambles to avoid a defeat, public consultation continues, and all eyes turn to Tuesday's crucial vote, a test not only of Starmer's policy agenda but also of his ability to hold his party together.

Liberal democrat council to charge residents £70 for parking outside their homes

By Fatimah Idera



Locals in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP), could soon be charged £70 a year to park outside their own homes under new proposals from the Liberal Democrat-led council.

The plan would see parking meters installed on streets within one kilometre (0.6 miles) of the seafront.

Residents would need to buy permits for £70 to continue parking in these areas, which are currently free. The council says the move is intended to curb illegal parking by tourists and raise funds for better enforcement, including more tow trucks.

But the proposal has sparked anger among residents, who accuse the council of hypocrisy after it sold two key seafront car parks. Critics say this is the latest example of the council's anti-car agenda, especially following years of disruptive roadworks to build nearly 50 miles of cycle lanes.

The council says the new charges are needed to tackle a surge in irresponsible parking, especially during the summer tourist season. In recent weeks, cars have been seen parked on pavements, grass verges, and even roundabouts. Last weekend alone, over 1,000 vehicles were fined, and ten were towed away.

Areas affected by the proposal include Canford Cliffs, Branksome Chine, Westcliff, Boscombe, and Southbourne, all currently free for residential street parking.

Peter Schroeder, chairman of the Branksome Park Residents Association, slammed the plan as stupid and hypocritical. He said, "We say no to residents paying to park their cars on their streets. We already pay some of the highest council tax in the area. This is just another cost for residents, their guests, and tradespeople."

Locals questions parking

Other locals took to social media to question the logic. "How is charging for currently free parking going to stop people from parking illegally on grass verges and double yellows?" asked resident Shaun White.

Councillor Richard Herrett, who oversees leisure and commercial operations at BCP Council, defended the proposal: "We welcome over 10 million visitors to our seafront each year. Illegal and inconsiderate parking causes safety issues and affects residents' quality of life. These proposals could help fund better enforcement across a wider area."

The plan will now go to public consultation before any final decision is made.

UK Labour plans tougher rules on alcohol advertising

By **Fatimah Idera**



Ministers are weighing plans to tighten regulations on alcohol advertising, including potential bans before the 9 pm watershed and online.

The proposed changes, described as partial restrictions, aim to align ethanol marketing rules more closely with those already in place for unhealthy food. Health officials are exploring measures that could see a complete ban on alcohol advertising online, including across social media and influencer content.

Similar to junk food ad regulations, new rules could prohibit alcohol ads in any media where over 25% of the audience is under 16. Marketing content would also need to avoid youth-focused language, celebrity endorsements popular with younger viewers, or anything that appears to be targeted at under-18 viewers, as restrictions are currently only advised under self-regulation.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting is expected to announce a new 10-year health strategy next week that will prioritise prevention. A draft section of the plan, reported by the media, outlines possible full or partial bans on alcohol ads.

Agency denies total ban of alcohol

However, the Department of Health and Social Care has denied that a total ban is on the table, saying: "We are exploring options for partial restrictions to bring it closer in line with advertising of unhealthy food."

Dr Richard Piper, CEO of Alcohol Change UK, backed the move, calling ethanol a leading health polluter in Britain that harms millions despite declining consumption levels. He criticised the current lenient advertising rules compared to international standards and was warned of the influence of constant online marketing, which

he said glamorises alcohol and presents it as essential to daily life.

"This is a real opportunity to move ethanol out of the spotlight and reduce harm for millions of people," he said, urging the Government's upcoming health plan to address out-of-control alcohol advertising.

Globally, pressure is mounting for tougher rules. In 2022, the World Health Organisation (WHO) called for stricter regulation on alcohol marketing. Ireland has since banned ethanol advertising on TV between 3 am and 9 pm.

However, some experts question the effectiveness of such measures. A report by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) found that while advertising can shift consumer preference between brands, it does not appear to significantly increase overall ethanol consumption.

Starmer's welfare cuts spark fears of seat losses for labour rebels

By Fatimah Idera

Dozens of Labour MPs rebelling against Sir Keir Starmer's proposed welfare cuts could lose their seats at the next election if benefit claimants turn against the party.

The Prime Minister is facing the most significant rebellion of his leadership over controversial plans to cut Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment (PIP), the latter a benefit supporting people with disabilities.

The proposed changes, designed to save £5 billion annually, have triggered widespread discontent after the government's impact assessment warned that around 50,000 children could be pushed into poverty as a result.

More than 120 Labour MPs have signed a rebel amendment demanding that the government abandon the plans. If supported by the opposition, including Conservatives or minor parties, the rebellion could result in Starmer's first Commons defeat since becoming Prime Minister.

Analysis shows that 51 of the rebel MPs represent constituencies where the number of PIP claimants exceeds the size of their electoral majority, leaving them especially vulnerable to backlash. Many of these seats are already marginal and under threat from Reform UK, which has made notable gains, particularly in so-called Red Wall constituencies.

Starmer may water down policy elements

Despite signs that Starmer may water down elements of the policy to reduce the risk of rebellion, many backbenchers are standing firm, fearing the long-term political cost. Labour MPs say they were elected on promises to protect vulnerable and low-income constituents, a pledge they now believe is under threat.

MPs have also expressed frustration that while Labour pushes through contentious policies in Westminster, they are left to defend them to angry



constituents at the weekends. One rebel MP said the rebellion is democracy in action, adding: "We are responding to the issues raised in our constituencies."

Some of the most vocal opponents include Neil Duncan-Jordan, a rebel leader with a slim 18-vote majority, and Tan Dhesi, one of the highest-profile MPs supporting the amendment. Others, like Cat Eccles, have gone further, suggesting they are prepared to lose the party whip over the issue.

Speaking to the media, Eccles said: "The number of MPs willing to vote against the Government is much bigger than we imagine."

The analysis also reveals a clear trend: constituencies with higher numbers of PIP claimants are more likely to be marginal Labour-Reform battlegrounds. In those at-risk seats, Labour's average polling lead over Reform is just 21%, compared with 36% elsewhere.

Under the proposed changes, eligibility for PIP will be tightened, with the Office for Budget Responsibility estimating that one in four current claimants could lose access to the benefit. While Starmer argues the system is broken and the rising costs are unsustainable, with 1,000 new claims being processed daily and many Labour supporters see the reforms as a betrayal of the party's core values.

PIP is separate from Universal Credit and specifically helps disabled people with the additional costs of daily life. Critics warn that any cuts would disproportionately harm some of the most vulnerable citizens.

Polling expert, Sir John Curtice, said that although public support for expanding welfare has dropped, there is little appetite among Labour voters for cutting it. "Among Labour supporters, twice as many say it's too hard to claim benefits as say it's too easy," he noted.

Luke Tryl, director of the research group More in Common, warned that Starmer is now navigating a fragile political coalition. "It's an unwieldy coalition to hold together on difficult issues like welfare," he said. "Making tough choices means some parts of the coalition will feel left behind."

While Labour maintains that reform is necessary to bring the welfare system under control, the party now risks alienating a key segment of its base just one year into Starmer's premiership. With a crucial Commons vote looming and pressure mounting, the Prime Minister must now decide whether to hold firm or make deeper concessions to avoid a political crisis within his ranks.

Trump's nobel peace prize nominations withdrawn amid global criticism

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

U.S. President Donald Trump's bid for the Nobel Peace Prize has suffered a major blow after both Pakistan and Ukraine withdrew their nominations amid intense political backlash, rising international tensions, and growing skepticism about his global leadership credentials.

What began as a surprising endorsement by two key U.S. allies has quickly turned into a diplomatic embarrassment — one that raises questions about Pakistan's foreign policy coherence and Ukraine's confidence in Trump's peace-brokering claims.

Pakistan's Nomination Sparks Firestorm at Home and Abroad

Pakistan's decision to nominate Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize triggered fierce backlash from opposition lawmakers, civil society, and former diplomats. Critics labeled the move a case of "crass flattery" and a national humiliation, especially coming just hours before the U.S. bombed Iranian nuclear sites — an action Pakistan officially condemned as a "serious violation of international law."

The timing placed Islamabad in a deeply awkward position. Pakistan has long supported both Palestine and Iran, and its diplomatic ties with Tehran are rooted in decades of religious and strategic alignment. The contradiction was glaring.

"This nomination undermines Pakistan's dignity," said Maleeha Lodhi, Pakistan's former ambassador to the U.S.

Senator Kamran Murtaza submitted a formal resolution in the Senate demanding the withdrawal of the nomination, calling it incompatible with Pakistan's long-standing foreign policy principles.

Prominent voices, including Mushahid Hussain and Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, lambasted Trump's recent foreign actions — particularly his approval of the U.S. strikes on Iran, his unwavering support for Israel's actions in Gaza, and what Hussain called "a willful unleashing of an illegal war."

Ukraine Walks Back Nomination After 'Losing Faith'



In a parallel move, Ukrainian MP Oleksandr Merezhko, head of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, announced he had formally withdrawn his nomination of Trump for the Nobel Prize.

Merezhko had nominated Trump in November 2024 in praise of his bold pledge to end the Russia-Ukraine war within 24 hours of returning to the White House. However, he has since expressed deep frustration, citing a lack of tangible progress and Trump's inability to convince Russia's President Vladimir Putin to accept a 30-day ceasefire plan — a proposal Ukraine had accepted.

"I've lost any sort of faith and belief in Trump's capacity to broker peace," Merezhko said.

Trump Defends Netanyahu Amid Trial, Calls It a 'Horror Show'

Further intensifying global scrutiny, Trump used his Truth Social platform to defend Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, currently on trial for corruption in Israel.

"I was shocked to hear that Israel is continuing its ridiculous witch hunt against their great wartime Prime Minister!" Trump wrote.

Drawing comparisons to his own legal

troubles, Trump mocked the trial as a "Horror Show", dismissing the charges — including bribery and breach of trust — as being about "cigars, a Bugs Bunny doll, and numerous other unfair charges." He urged Israel to "cancel the trial immediately or pardon Netanyahu."

Trump added:

"It was the United States of America that saved Israel, and now it is going to be the United States of America that saves Bibi Netanyahu. THIS TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE CANNOT BE ALLOWED."

Global Backlash Highlights Diplomatic Missteps

The sudden withdrawal of Trump's Nobel nominations from two countries with deeply strategic relationships to the U.S. is a stunning reversal. It reflects not only disillusionment with Trump's diplomatic rhetoric but also a broader global discomfort with his combative style, controversial alliances, and perceived instability on the world stage.

While Trump remains popular in segments of American politics, his reemergence on the international scene — through military posturing, ideological statements, and volatile interventions — is now provoking more division than diplomacy.

Ronaldo extends Al Nassr stay until 2027

By **Gbenga Olaleye**



Cristiano Ronaldo has officially extended his contract with Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr, committing to the Riyadh-based side until 2027.

The announcement was made on Thursday, with the club releasing a statement and a photograph of Ronaldo holding a jersey emblazoned with “2027” alongside Al Nassr Chairman, Mr Abdullah Almajid.

The extension ensures that Ronaldo, who also captains the side, will remain with Al Nassr for at least two more years, continuing a chapter that began in January 2023.

Taking to his official X account, Ronaldo shared his enthusiasm: “A new chapter begins. Same passion, same dream. Let’s make history together.”

Al Nassr praised Ronaldo’s leadership both on and off the pitch,

describing the extension as a reaffirmation of their successful partnership.

The club also underlined the Portuguese star’s role in boosting its profile, both regionally and globally.

The move is widely seen as a further endorsement of the Saudi Pro League’s ambitious efforts to elevate its global standing, with Ronaldo continuing to be a key figure in the country’s expansive football vision.

“Ronaldo’s presence is a key factor in developing the Saudi league in the last two years and a half. He opens the door for elite and young players to come to Saudi Arabia,” a source from the Public Investment Fund (PIF), a major investor in Saudi football, told AFP last month.

The oil-funded PIF, the sovereign wealth fund behind a number of big-ticket Saudi investments, controls a group of Pro League clubs including Al Nassr, Al Hilal and Al Ahli.

Ronaldo’s announcement in May came just months after Brazilian star Neymar ended his injury-plagued 18-month stay in January, after playing just seven times for Al Hilal — on a reported salary of around \$104 million a year.

Although Ronaldo was the Pro League’s top scorer with 25 goals, he has been unable to win a Saudi or continental trophy with Al Nassr, who lost in the Asian Champions League semi-finals last month.

Last year, the five-time Ballon d’Or winner said he could end his career with Al Nassr, the Riyadh team favoured by a number of Saudi royals.

Saudi Arabia has shaken up football by spending heavily on stars from Europe, starting with Ronaldo’s move, and the desert nation will host the World Cup in 2034.