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Nigeria's debt nears N150trn in Q1 2025

By Friday Omosola

Nigeria's total public debt surged to N149.39 trillion by the end of March 2025, according to the latest figures released by the Debt Management Office (DMO).

This represents a substantial increase of N27.72 trillion, or 22.8%, compared to the N121.67 trillion recorded in the first quarter of 2024.

Quarter-on-quarter, the nation's debt grew by N4.72 trillion, or 3.3%, from N144.67 trillion at the close of December 2024.

This sustained upward trend in Nigeria's debt portfolio is attributed to a combination of new borrowing activities and the significant impact of the Naira's depreciation on the value of external debt obligations.

The rise reflects persistent fiscal pressures, increasing government revenue, and continued reliance on both domestic and international loans to finance the national budget.

As of March 31, 2025, Nigeria's external debt reached N70.63 trillion (equivalent to \$45.98 billion), marking a considerable leap from N56.02 trillion (\$42.12 billion) in the same period of 2024. This translates to a year-on-year increase of N14.61 trillion, or 26.1%.

While the dollar-denominated external debt saw a modest quarter-on-quarter rise of \$3.86 billion, the much steeper increase when expressed in Naira underscores how foreign exchange depreciation dramatically inflates Nigeria's liabilities.

Although the specific Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) exchange rate for Q1 2025 was not disclosed, the widening gap in Naira terms suggests a weakened currency, directly increasing the cost of repaying dollar and euro-denominated loans.

External debt comprises loans from various sources, including multilateral bodies like the World Bank and the African Development Bank, bilateral agreements, and commercial creditors,



such as Eurobond investors.

The burden of servicing these debts in Naira terms has intensified due to the local currency's dwindling value, a situation that could worsen if currency stabilisation reforms do not yield positive outcomes.

Domestically, Nigeria's debt also continued its ascent, reaching N78.76 trillion (\$51.26 billion) by March 2025.

This signifies a 20% year-on-year increase (N13.11 trillion) from N65.65 trillion (\$49.35 billion) in March 2024.

Every quarter, domestic debt climbed by N4.38 trillion, or 5.9%, from N74.38 trillion in December 2024.

The Federal Government's share of this domestic debt stood at N74.89 trillion, while the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) collectively held N3.87 trillion.

Notably, state-level domestic debt experienced a slight reduction from N3.97 trillion in Q4 2024 and N4.07 trillion in Q1 2024, indicating improved debt repayment efforts by subnational governments, likely aided by increased allocations from the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC).

Domestic borrowing primarily involves government securities such as Treasury Bills, FGN Bonds, Sukuk, and Green Bonds, used to cover the nation's fiscal deficit.

While these instruments mitigate exchange rate risk, they introduce their own interest cost burdens.

As of the first quarter of 2025, Nigeria's total public debt composition was almost evenly split: domestic debt constituted 52.7%, and external debt accounted for 47.3%.

This marks a slight shift from March 2024, when domestic debt held a larger share at 54% compared to external debt's 46%.

The growing proportion of external debt, particularly its inflated value in Naira, underscores Nigeria's vulnerability to currency fluctuations due to its continued reliance on foreign borrowing.

Simultaneously, the steady rise in domestic debt highlights the government's efforts to raise funds from the local capital market, despite concerns about high debt servicing costs and the potential to limit private sector investment.

Nigeria's current debt trajectory continues to provoke questions regarding the nation's fiscal sustainability.

With the aggregate debt approaching the N150 trillion threshold, concerns persist that the escalating cost of debt servicing is consuming an increasingly large portion of the national budget.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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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
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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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QUARTER PAGE	100,000.00
14X2	109,500.00
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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
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10X5	192,305.50
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QUARTER PAGE	84,641.50
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10X5	201,600.00
10X4	149,440.00
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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
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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
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4X3	N/A
4X2	17,737.50
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3X2	14,923.00
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PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
PRESS RELEASE (4X4)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
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CONTACT US

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

E-mail Address:
info@newdailyprime.news
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Tinubu: Nigerian scholarships for Caribbean students start next year

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has announced that a new scholarship program, enabling students from the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to pursue studies in Nigerian universities, will be launched in the upcoming academic year.

Mr Tinubu confirmed this initiative during a joint press conference with Saint Lucia's Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre, following a high-level working luncheon with OECS leaders on Monday.

He explained that this educational initiative forms part of a broader cooperation framework.

The objective is to strengthen person-to-person connections and broaden opportunities in fields such as education, trade, and development.

Mr Tinubu further disclosed that a proposal for visa waivers for diplomatic and official passport holders from OECS member states is also progressing.

"We can easily do that by having a working commission. And we don't have to look farther away. The organisation itself has indicated several actions. We are moving forward from there. We won't drop the ball," Mr Tinubu stated.

He emphasised the close ties between Africa and the OECS and the shared ambition to facilitate business, education, capacity building, and advancements in agriculture and food security.

The scholarship programme, developed collaboratively with OECS leadership, will be overseen by a joint implementation committee comprising representatives from both Nigeria and OECS member states.

According to Mr Tinubu, this committee's mandate is to finalise all necessary arrangements to ensure beneficiaries can commence their studies in Nigerian institutions as early as the next academic year.



When asked by the media about potential hurdles in expanding cooperation across areas like trade, investment, health, education, culture, and climate resilience, the President expressed a problem-solving mindset.

"I don't look at difficulties. I look at problem-solving," he stated, suggesting that a direct approach would ensure goals are achieved without complications.

Prime Minister Pierre welcomed the scholarship initiative, describing it as a timely and concrete demonstration of solidarity.

"We expect students to begin their studies in Nigeria in the next academic year, based on the President's directive. This is immediate action," the Prime Minister affirmed.

He also confirmed that visa facilitation is a top priority for the newly formed Nigeria-OECS Joint Committee, alongside improving air connectivity, trade, and tourism.

Regarding the timeline for Saint Lucia and other OECS countries to implement

reciprocal visa waivers, Prime Minister Pierre indicated that this issue was discussed at the joint meeting.

He noted that some OECS islands, like St. have existing visa exemptions.

He expressed hope for a swift resolution on visa requirements through the joint committee, which will prioritise people-to-people exchange.

Earlier in the day, Mr Tinubu addressed a special joint session of the Senate and House of Assembly of Saint Lucia, where he presented his vision for a new chapter of engagement between Nigeria and the OECS.

Prime Minister Pierre summarised this, stating, "We had a high-level luncheon where the President outlined to us how the OECS would benefit from the country of Nigeria."

"To this effect, we have formed a joint committee comprising members of the Nigerian government and members of the OECS to deal with some pressing issues: education, air travel, trade, and tourism."

Dalori takes over as APC acting chair, pledges transparency

By **Damilola Olufemi**



Ali Bukar Dalori has officially taken over as the acting national chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), following the resignation of his predecessor, Abdullahi Ganduje.

Ganduje stepped down last Friday, a move the party later confirmed. According to APC National Publicity Secretary Felix Morka, the former Kano governor resigned to focus on “urgent and important” personal matters.

Presenting Ganduje’s resignation letter to the National Working Committee (NWC) during its Monday meeting, the party’s national secretary, Suraj Ajibola, said: “On behalf of the party, I present formally to the NWC the resignation letter of the former chairman, Dr Umar Abdullahi Ganduje.”

He added, “A formal motion was moved for the acceptance of the resignation and was duly seconded. By Article 14 of our constitution, a motion was also passed for the deputy national chairman, Hon. Ali Bukar Dalori, to

assume the role of acting national chairman until the position is filled by the national executive committee.”

Dalori appreciates APC

In his first address to the NWC as acting chairman, Dalori expressed his appreciation and pledged to serve with “humility, responsibility, and loyalty.”

“We are all aware of the significant contributions Dr Ganduje made during his tenure,” he said. “Since assuming office in August 2023, he provided our party with experienced leadership, steadfast commitment, and a clear sense of direction.”

He thanked Ganduje on behalf of the APC and wished him strength and recovery as he turns his attention to his health and personal priorities.

Dalori emphasised that his new role is not a personal triumph but a serious responsibility. “This is a period for consolidation, not conflict. For maturity, not division. And for vision, not personal ambition,” he stated.

He promised to lead with transparency and unity while urging party members to steer clear of divisive rhetoric.

Looking ahead, Dalori stressed the importance of early preparations for the 2027 general elections. He said the party must strengthen its internal processes and reconnect with its grassroots base.

Reaffirming APC’s commitment to President Bola Tinubu’s administration, Dalori praised the Renewed Hope Agenda as a strategic framework addressing the country’s economic, security, and social challenges.

“The APC remains the political vehicle to drive this transformation, and we will stand by the president in full loyalty and partnership,” he declared.

Dalori also announced that a detailed roadmap would soon be unveiled to steer the party under his interim leadership.

Obi: I'll govern for just one term if Nigerians elect me in 2027

By Friday Omosola



Peter Obi, who contested the 2023 presidential election under the Labour Party (LP) banner, has indicated his willingness to serve only one term as president if elected in 2027.

This declaration comes amidst reports of a potential coalition forming, including Mr Obi, former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, ex-transportation minister Rotimi Amaechi, and former Kaduna Governor Nasir El-Rufai, aimed at challenging the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and President Bola Tinubu for federal power.

During a Twitter Space discussion yesterday, Mr Obi articulated that any Southern candidate who assumes the presidency in 2027 must be prepared to vacate office by May 28, 2031.

He linked this to Nigeria's 'unwritten power-sharing agreement' and the established

principle of zoning, which dictates the alternation of the presidency between the Northern and Southern regions.

Mr Obi underscored that adherence to this zoning principle is a commitment he has long upheld.

The former governor of Anambra State stated that should this gentleman's agreement lead to him securing the coalition's ticket for the 2027 presidency, and subsequently winning the election, he would not extend his stay in office beyond the agreed timeframe.

"If you consider the arrangement, which can understandably be called an unwritten agreement for power to alternate between South and North, and if that arrangement is strictly followed, then anyone – not just me – from the South who becomes president in 2027 must be ready to leave on May 28, 2031," he explained.

The 63-year-old noted that he championed zoning during his tenure as governor, noting that his firm stance on this principle has made him a target for political adversaries.

He stressed his unwavering commitment to zoning, stating, "I insisted on it, I maintained it and I followed it to the last letter and till today, I still follow it religiously."

Mr Obi further emphasised that his personal character and integrity supersede any desire for public office.

"I am not desperate to be president of Nigeria," he affirmed.

He added, "If I have the opportunity and if the opportunity is for two years, in two years, I would be able to bring competency, capacity and compassion into governance."

Aminu Dantata: Nigerian billionaire to be buried in Medina

FG team in Saudi Arabia for Dantata's funeral
Tributes pour in for the Nigerian billionaire

By Gbenga Olaleye

Medina, Saudi Arabia – Aminu Dantata, one of Nigeria's wealthiest and most respected businessmen, is set to be laid to rest in the holy city of Medina, Saudi Arabia, following his passing on Saturday in the United Arab Emirates at the age of 94.

The billionaire industrialist, uncle to Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, died in Abu Dhabi. His body has since been transported to Medina, where he will be buried later today with the approval of Saudi authorities.

The city, revered as the resting place of the Prophet Muhammad, held deep spiritual significance for Dantata, who had expressed a lifelong wish to be buried there.

President Bola Tinubu led tributes to the late magnate, describing his death as a "monumental national loss." In a statement, the president praised Dantata's "sterling contributions to Nigeria's growth and development" through decades of enterprise, selfless service, and philanthropy.

A Life of Enterprise and Service

Aminu Dantata was a towering figure in Nigerian commerce, with business interests spanning agriculture, real estate, construction and manufacturing. He began his entrepreneurial journey in the 1940s trading kola nuts and groundnuts, quickly establishing a reputation for astute business acumen.

Born into a lineage of wealth and industry, Dantata was the son of Alhassan Dantata, who was once regarded as the richest man in West Africa. Despite his considerable fortune, Aminu Dantata remained deeply connected to his roots, residing in one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Kano, mirroring the lifestyle of his parents.

He took over the family business in the 1950s at the age of 17, following in the footsteps of his elder brother, Ahmadu Dantata. Under his leadership, the business expanded significantly,



contributing to the industrial development of northern Nigeria.

Education and Early Training

Dantata's educational foundation was grounded in Islamic studies, before he attended a secondary school built by his father in Kano. In a widely-viewed interview with Trust TV last year, he reflected on his early training in business:

"In our family, a child starts learning how to earn money from as early as five, six or seven years old, during school breaks, our father would use the time to teach us how to do business," he recalled.

This early immersion in commerce would shape a lifelong commitment to industry, investment and empowerment.

A Philanthropist at Heart

Though widely admired for his business acumen, Dantata was equally revered for his generosity. He was known across Nigeria for his wide-reaching philanthropic efforts. In 2024, he donated 1.5 billion naira (approximately £710,000) to victims of devastating floods in Borno State, underscoring his

compassion and commitment to humanitarian causes.

Dantata also played a discreet but significant role in national politics. His counsel was frequently sought by political figures, particularly in the lead-up to elections. A video showing President Tinubu bowing to greet him in the run-up to the 2023 general election went viral, capturing his enduring influence.

Final Journey

A special prayer session was held in Kano, his lifelong home, in honour of his memory. Dignitaries including two Nigerian state governors and four federal ministers have travelled to Medina to attend his funeral.

Dantata is survived by three wives, 21 children and an extraordinary legacy through 121 grandchildren. His burial in Medina marks the end of an era in Nigerian business, philanthropy, and tradition.

As Nigeria mourns the passing of a titan, Aminu Dantata will be remembered not only for his wealth, but for his wisdom, humility and unwavering dedication to community and faith.

Despite police blockage, PDP holds 100th NEC meeting, Damagun sues for unity

By Damilola Olufemi

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Monday held its much-anticipated 100th National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting at the party's national headquarters in Wadata Plaza, Abuja, despite a brief police presence at the venue earlier in the day.

The gathering brought together members of the Board of Trustees (BoT), governors, lawmakers, and other key NEC stakeholders.

In his remarks, Acting National Chairman Umar Damagun clarified that the meeting's sole agenda was to set a date for a broader NEC session where issues surrounding the party's convention would be discussed. He explained that this limited focus was agreed upon following prior consultations with PDP governors.

He also called for unity within the party, cautioning members against actions that might tarnish the PDP's image. "Stop demarketing the party," Damagun urged.

By the end of the meeting, members settled on July 23 as the date for the next NEC meeting, where broader issues — including those tied to the national convention — would be addressed. It was also resolved that Samuel Anyanwu would remain in his role as National Secretary for now.

The NEC session followed a closed-door meeting earlier that day involving PDP governors at the Bauchi State Governor's Lodge in Asokoro. Attendees included Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi (who chairs the PDP Governors' Forum), Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo, Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa, and former Senate President Bukola Saraki.

PDP's Mohammed slams police disruption

Addressing the media, Governor Mohammed spoke on the police presence



at the PDP headquarters, which had temporarily disrupted access. He explained that security agents were deployed to prevent any "miscreants" from causing chaos during the meeting.

Meanwhile, the earlier scheduled BoT meeting was relocated from Wadata Plaza to the Yar'Adua Centre due to what party officials described as security concerns. "The meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT)... has been moved to Yar'Adua Centre," the party confirmed in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

Party leaders sharply criticised the police deployment, with some describing it as intimidation. Reports indicated that BoT members like Bode George and Maina Chiroma were barred from entering the original venue.

Former PDP National Secretary, Umar Tsauri, told Channels Television that officers at the scene said they were acting under "orders from above."

However, the FCT Police Command denied shutting down the PDP secretariat. Spokesperson Josephine Akeh clarified that officers were only there to maintain peace. "At no time was

the Secretariat sealed off by the police," she said.

Monday's events come against the backdrop of ongoing internal tensions within the PDP, especially over the party's leadership structure and the contested office of National Secretary.

Although Damagun recently announced the postponement of the NEC meeting, the National Working Committee (NWC) overruled him and proceeded with the gathering on June 30, arguing that only the NEC itself has the authority to shift such meetings.

At the centre of the party's leadership row is the battle for the position of National Secretary, claimed by both Samuel Anyanwu and Sunday Ude-Okoye. Damagun's move to reinstate Anyanwu has faced stiff resistance from the NWC, escalating the feud into multiple court cases.

Despite a Supreme Court judgment in March, both sides have continued to interpret the ruling to suit their positions. Another case on the matter is scheduled to be heard by the Federal High Court in Abuja on September 22.

ICAN applauds Tinubu's tax bills

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd.) has raised the alarm over what it described as a calculated sabotage campaign orchestrated by a network of individuals, both within and outside the organisation.

In a statement released on Friday, NNPC Ltd. said the group behind the scheme is deliberately spreading falsehoods and misinformation aimed at undermining the company's leadership and discrediting its reform efforts.

According to the management, "Their tactics include planting scandalous and fabricated reports, curated to distract leadership, mislead the public, and undermine the commitment of our dedicated workforce and reform-minded Nigerians."

The company accused the unnamed actors of attempting to derail its ongoing



transformation into a transparent, corruption-free, and results-driven national energy company — a vision aligned with the directives of President Bola Tinubu.

"These are calculated efforts by those who feel threatened by reform, transparency, accountability, and change," the statement said. "It is clear evidence of the lengths to which they will go to obstruct the transformation of Nigeria's foremost energy institution."

NNPC warned that more defamatory content could surface in the coming days, but insisted it would not be swayed or intimidated.

NNPC remains undeterred

"We expect a surge of defamatory content in the days and weeks ahead, but NNPC Ltd. remains undeterred. The transformation is underway, and no amount of sabotage will stop it," it stated.

The company also called on its staff, industry stakeholders, and Nigerians at large to remain focused and not be discouraged by the ongoing smear campaign.

"We urge our dedicated staff, stakeholders, and all patriotic Nigerians to stay focused, ignore the noise, and not be discouraged," the statement concluded.

We're not reopening loan portal – NELFUND

By Alade Adisa

The Nigerian Education Loan Fund, NELFUND, has said it is not reopening its loan portal yet.

The body has therefore warned the public to be wary of some claims online that President Bola Tinubu has directed it to reopen the loans portal and also click a link purported to belong to it.

It described the claim as fraudulent and intended to defraud innocent members of the public.

In a statement on Monday, the Director, Strategic Communications, Oseyemi Oluwatuyi, read, "The attention of the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) has been drawn to a fraudulent message currently circulating online, falsely claiming that President Bola Tinubu has directed the reopening of the NELFUND Student Loan portal, with a link to a fake website: <https://nelfund->



[student-loan-2025.portal.com/NELFUND/s](https://nelfund-student-loan-2025.portal.com/NELFUND/s)

"We wish to categorically state that this website is FAKE, and the information contained in the message is false and misleading.

The only official portal for the

NELFUND Student Loan Application is: <https://nelf.gov.ng>

"We urge the general public, especially students, parents, and guardians, to avoid clicking on unverified links and to never submit personal or financial information on suspicious websites.

"NELFUND remains committed to transparency, safety, and fairness in the loan application process and will always make announcements through its verified platforms.

"Please report any suspicious messages or websites to us via email at info@nelf.gov.ng or reach out through our official social media platforms: X (formerly Twitter): @nelfund; Instagram: @nelfund; Facebook & LinkedIn: Nigerian Education Loan Fund – NELFUND."

APC to select new national chairman July 24

By Friday Omosola

The All Progressives Congress (APC), Nigeria's ruling party, has set July 24, 2025, as the date for its National Executive Council (NEC) meeting, a crucial gathering intended to nominate a new substantive National Chairman.

This decision was made public by the National Working Committee (NWC), led by Deputy National Secretary Festus Fuanter, following an emergency session held at the party's national secretariat on Monday.

Mr Fuanter confirmed that the upcoming NEC meeting will provide the platform for the party to formally select a new leader.

He also noted that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has been duly notified of the planned NEC meeting.

Meanwhile, Ali Bukar Dalori commenced his duties as the party's Acting National Chairman on Monday.



Mr Dalori, who previously served as the APC's Deputy National Chairman (North), assumed this interim leadership role following the recent resignation of Abdullahi Ganduje from the top position.

Mr Ganduje, representing the North-West geopolitical zone, had taken over the party's leadership in August 2023, succeeding Abdullahi Adamu, who hailed from the North-Central zone.

In his address, Mr Dalori assured APC members of his unwavering commitment to fulfilling his new responsibilities with

transparency, an inclusive approach, and a strong sense of unity.

He expressed his readiness to collaborate with all members, viewing them as partners in the collective mission to uphold the party's unity, discipline, and strategic direction.

Mr Dalori urged NEC members to maintain focus on the broader objective of delivering effective governance to Nigerians and strengthening democratic processes within the party's internal structures.

'Liberty or Death': Okonkwo slams emergency threats

By Gbenga Olaleye

Veteran Nollywood actor and former spokesperson of the Labour Party (LP) Presidential Campaign Council, Kenneth Okonkwo, has issued a bold statement amid rising political tensions in Nigeria.

Speaking on recent threats of imposing a state of emergency in certain states, Okonkwo declared that he would resist any such move if he were serving as a governor.

"If I am a Governor, and Tinubu threatens me with a state of emergency in my state as the elected chief executive, I will never leave that Government House. It's either they give me liberty or death," Okonkwo



stated.

The comment comes amidst growing speculation surrounding the Federal Government's handling of dissenting

state administrations and fears that President Bola Tinubu's government might resort to emergency powers in politically tense regions.

Okonkwo's remark has sparked significant reactions on social media, with supporters hailing his defiance as a stand for democratic principles, while critics have called it incendiary and unnecessarily confrontational.

Analysts suggest the statement reflects a deepening mistrust between the opposition and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), particularly as the country grapples with economic challenges and rising insecurity.

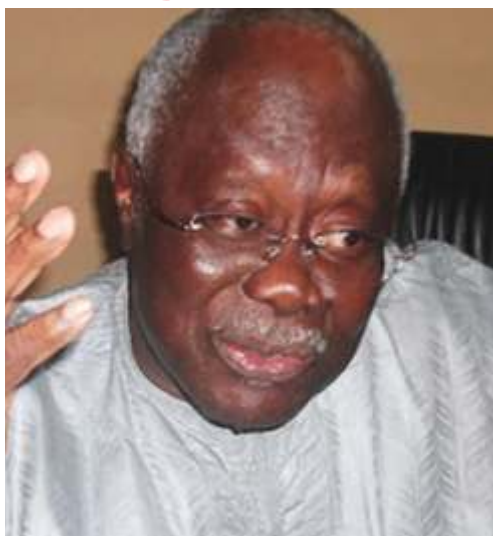
Bode George condemns police takeover of PDP secretariat, warns against crisis

By Damilola Olufemi

A prominent chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Bode George, has condemned the deployment of armed police officers to the party's national secretariat in Abuja, which disrupted the planned meetings of the National Executive Council (NEC) and Board of Trustees (BoT) on Monday.

Speaking to journalists after Bode George and other members of the party's National Working Committee were denied access to the Wadata Plaza headquarters, George criticised the action and cautioned the Federal Government against igniting political unrest.

"It's strikingly annoying. This is our property. Was there any court order to say we will not hold our meeting in our office? What is going on?" he queried. "I was a young man in 1962 when it all started in the South West. We must avoid that madness. What is it? Can't we sit and talk? What is the



essence of democracy?"

Bode George speaks further

Visibly frustrated, George likened the situation to authoritarian regimes, saying, "Nigerians are watching. You came to our

office, surrounded by police, because we want to have a meeting? You want to turn us into North Korea or turn this country into Russia? We will not allow it, Nigerians will not allow it."

Despite the disruption, George affirmed that the NEC meeting would still take place but did not reveal the new venue.

Earlier on Monday, New Daily Prime reported that armed security personnel from the Nigeria Police and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) have taken over the national secretariat of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, in Abuja.

This is as a result of moves by the different groups in the party to meet today at the same venue.

The groups are led by the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike and the Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde.

Pension funds yet to optimise potential – PenCom boss

By Alade Adisa

Despite the favourable long-term demography of members, pension funds in Nigeria are yet to fully optimise their investment potential, the Director-General of the National Pension Commission (PenCom), Ms Omolara Oloworaran, has said.

According to her, the current economic landscape—characterised by volatility, rising inflation, and declining purchasing power of Retirement Savings Account (RSA) contributors—requires dynamic and resilient investment strategies.

Oloworaran stated this weekend while giving her opening remarks at the sensitisation workshop on investment in alternative assets for chairpersons of the Board Investment Strategy and Risk Management Committees of Pension Fund Administrators in Lagos.

She opined that pension funds could effectively leverage these opportunities to mitigate portfolio concentration risk, enhance investment returns, and achieve sustainable growth.

She said, "The overarching theme of investment in the pension industry has consistently been the preservation of capital and the generation of fair returns. However, the misperception of safety as synonymous with liquidity has limited the ability of PFAs to optimally deploy pension funds under their management. Consequently, Nigerian pension funds are yet to fully optimise their investment potential, despite the favourable long-term demography of members.

"Today, over 80% of pension fund assets are invested in fixed-income securities, with Federal Government Securities accounting for 62% of total pension assets valued at N24.11 trillion as of 30 May 2025. The allocation to alternative assets (private equity and infrastructure funds) was only about 3%.

Pencom boss speaks on traditional asset classes

Oloworaran noted that while traditional asset classes such as bonds and public equities have served their purpose, the current economic landscape, characterised by volatility, rising

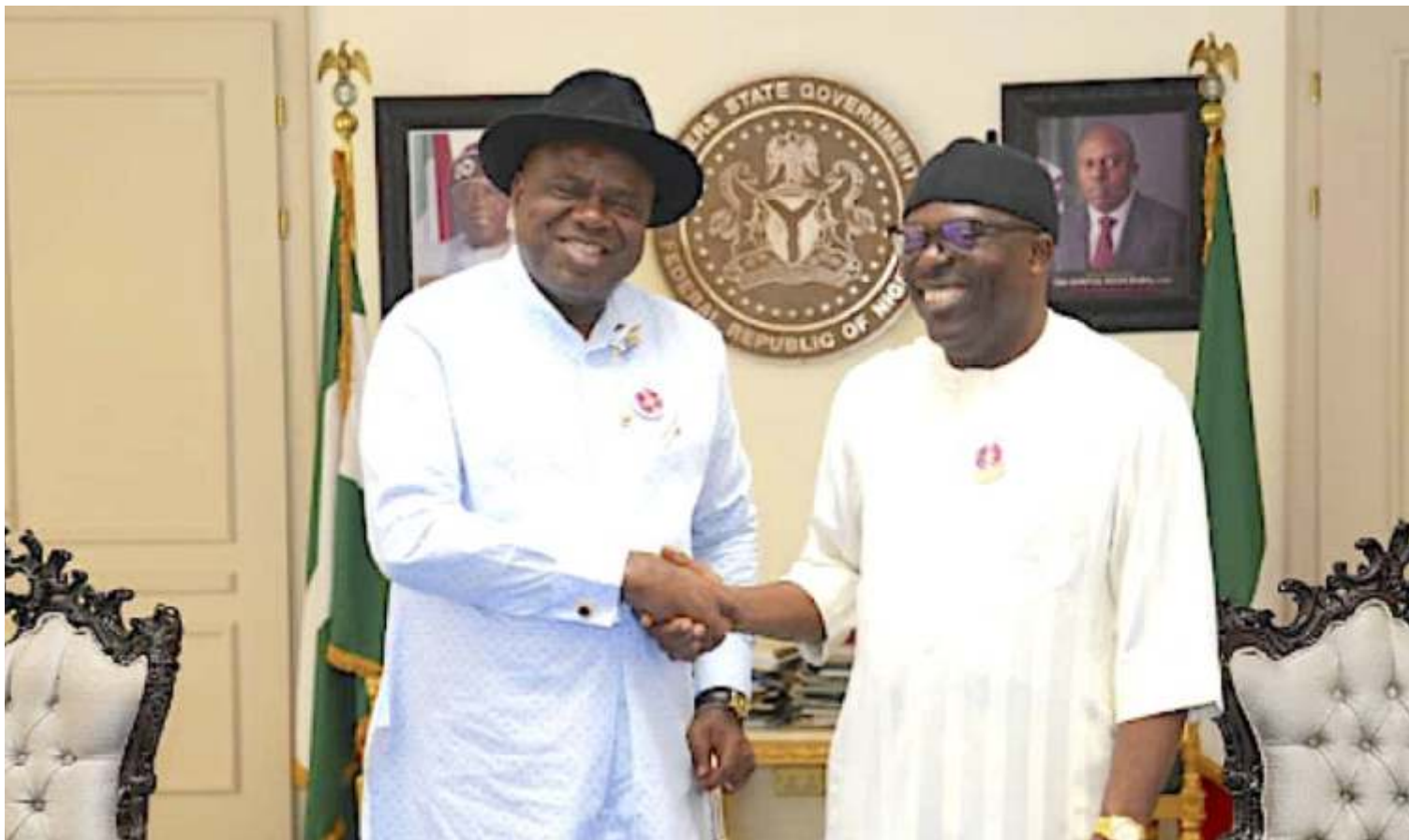


inflation, and declining purchasing power of RSA contributors, requires dynamic and resilient investment strategies.

"These strategies must optimally balance risk, return, and long-term sustainability, while delivering a discount rate that addresses pension inadequacy. In this context, alternative assets provide a complementary pillar to the core investment strategies of pension funds. Investments in infrastructure and private equity, in particular, help align pension fund portfolios with their investment horizon, provide opportunities for diversification of pension assets, and enhance risk-adjusted returns," she said.

Bayelsa, Rivers governors tipped to join APC

By Gbenga Olaleye



Governors from at least five Nigerian states, including Bayelsa, Rivers, Plateau, and Kano, along with either Abia or Enugu, are expected to formally join the All Progressives Congress (APC) within the next two months.

This revelation was made by Dr Ijeoma Arodiogbu, the APC National Vice Chairman (South East), during a press briefing on Sunday.

Dr Arodiogbu dismissed recent speculation about opposition unity as mere political theatrics, asserting that discussions and arrangements for the defections are well underway and no longer speculative.

“We are talking about governors from Bayelsa, Rivers, Plateau,

Kano, either Abia or Enugu. In the next two months, you will see them join us officially,” Arodiogbu stated confidently.

He criticised talks of an opposition coalition as “a media stunt,” suggesting that those involved were more interested in maintaining public visibility than building a credible alternative.

“These politicians just want to keep their names in the headlines. But Nigerians are aligning with a party that is delivering and that is the APC,” he said.

Dr Arodiogbu specifically mentioned Bayelsa as being in “the picture”, reinforcing earlier rumours about a potential shift in the state’s political allegiance. When asked about Osun State Governor Ademola Adeleke, he

declined to confirm any firm plans but acknowledged that “moves have been made.”

“We’re not ruling out Governor Alex Otti of Abia or the Enugu State governor either,” he added, hinting at ongoing behind-the-scenes talks with the South East governors.

If confirmed, the wave of defections would mark a significant political realignment ahead of the 2027 general elections, potentially altering the balance of power across key regions in the country.

Neither the affected governors nor their respective state governments have responded to the claims as of the time of filing this report.

PDP to hold 101th NEC July 23, Anyanwu reinstated as nat'l secretary

By **Damilola Olufemi**



The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has formally reinstated Senator Samuel Anyanwu as its National Secretary, following its landmark 100th National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting held on Monday in Abuja.

Addressing journalists after the session, Acting National Chairman Umar Damagum confirmed the decision and announced that the next NEC meeting — the 101st — will take place on July 23. That gathering is expected to finalise plans for the party's national convention.

Damagum emphasised the unity displayed at the meeting, saying, "We were all together, and we all agree that Senator Anyanwu will continue to act as National Secretary." He added that the July meeting would serve to meet Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) requirements for a proper convention: "At that time, we will be able to convene a proper NEC, where I and Senator Anyanwu will sign."

The PDP has been grappling with significant internal divisions since the 2023 general elections, and the crisis over the position of National Secretary has deepened tensions. The leadership's letter to INEC on June 24 regarding the role further inflamed the situation.

In a bid to consolidate positions before the NEC, Damagum had called a meeting at Wadata Plaza on Sunday with key allies, including Anyanwu, National Organising Secretary Umar Bature, Legal Adviser Kamaldeen Ajibade (SAN), Vice Chairman (North West) Senator Bello Gwarzo, and two other NWC members. The group reaffirmed their backing of Anyanwu and endorsed Monday's NEC meeting.

Later that day, a rival faction led by Deputy National Chairman (South) Taofeek Arapaja and others — including National Vice Chairman (South East) Ali Odefa, Acting National Secretary Setonji Koshedo, and National Publicity Secretary Debo Ologunagba — held a parallel meeting, insisting that Koshedo remain as secretary.

This divide reflects a broader power struggle. One camp, supported by Governors Seyi Makinde (Oyo), Peter Mbah (Enugu), Douye Diri (Bayelsa), Ademola Adeleke (Osun), Dauda Lawal (Zamfara), and a majority of NWC members, firmly rejected Anyanwu's return. Meanwhile, a rival bloc, aligned with former Rivers Governor Nyesom Wike and backed by Governors Caleb Mutfwang (Plateau), Kefas Agbu (Taraba), Adamu Fintiri (Adamawa), Bala Mohammed (Bauchi), as well as Damagum and Bature, supported his

reinstatement and wanted the NEC meeting delayed.

Police storm PDP secretariat

Tensions escalated when both factions attempted to hold competing meetings at the PDP headquarters. Security agencies, including the police, temporarily blocked access to Wadata Plaza, prompting party stakeholders to regroup at the Bauchi State Governor's Lodge for an emergency session. There, leaders resolved to proceed with the 100th NEC meeting, as mandated by the 99th NEC.

By 3 p.m. Monday, PDP leaders returned to the national secretariat to hold the NEC meeting as planned.

Following the session, Damagum emphasised the party's resilience and ability to manage internal disputes: "To our detractors who thought this meeting would derail or be the end of the party, the beauty of the Peoples Democratic Party is that it knows how to resolve its issues internally and operate freely."

He pointed to the presence of governors and key leaders as proof of unity and downplayed the earlier turbulence: "All our governors attended the meeting; all members of the NWC were on the same page. You will not be seeing all these press releases and counter-press releases."

Sanwo-Olu advocates for professional collaboration in sustainable urban development

By Friday Omosola

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State has underscored the critical need for robust collaboration between the government and professionals in the built environment, particularly architects, to ensure the state's infrastructure and urban planning meet standards of sustainability and innovation.

Speaking at the 6th Lecture of the Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA), held at the Ecobank Pan African Centre (EPAC), Victoria Island, Mr Sanwo-Olu, represented by his deputy, Obafemi Hamzat, highlighted architecture's fundamental role in shaping the spaces where people live, work, and thrive.

"As Lagos State grows as a megacity and economic hub, fostering collaborations with professionals like you ensures that our infrastructure and urban planning meet the highest standards of sustainability and innovation", Mr Sanwo-Olu stated.

He emphasised that this synergy would ultimately lead to a 'functional, beautiful, safe, and inclusive' Lagos for all residents.

He reaffirmed architecture's foundational importance for sustainable national development, noting its influence on economic growth, societal well-being, and environmental stewardship.

The governor stressed that his administration recognises architects' pivotal role in transforming Lagos's urban landscape into a model of innovation, resilience, and inclusiveness.

He urged professionals to actively voice their insights and ensure proper practices are followed.



Mr Sanwo-Olu remarked that civilisation's sustainability hinges on maintaining a decent and aesthetically pleasing environment, which should be shaped by relevant professionals.

Mr Sanwo-Olu commended the NIA for its commitment to excellence, knowledge sharing, and visionary ideas through its lecture series, encouraging active engagement and the exchange of ideas to advance architectural excellence.

During her lecture titled 'Harmony in Diversity', Arc. Olubukunola Ejiwunmi, the Institute's first female President and a retired Permanent Secretary in the Lagos State Public Service, called on Nigerians to champion policies that prioritise sustainability, equity, and cultural integrity.

She explained that harmony is an 'active pursuit' requiring deep listening, purposeful design, and courageous leadership.

By embracing these principles, architects fulfil their professional duties and their responsibility as stewards of a richly diverse nation.

Ejiwunmi urged architects to build not just with materials like concrete and steel, but with 'conviction and compassion, emphasising that pursuing harmony in diversity should be a professional creed, not merely a slogan.

Earlier, in her welcome address, NIA President Arc. Mobolaji Adeniyi (FNIA) noted that the annual 'Distinguished Lecture Series' celebrates architectural excellence, maintaining a tradition where past presidents deliver the lectures.

She described 'Harmony in Diversity' as a timely and relevant topic, poised to inspire and challenge architects to leverage diversity for a better future.

National Library project still in limbo since 2006

By Alade Adisa

Many Nigerians who attended primary and secondary schools up until the 1990s would not deny that they made use of a library in one way or another, whether in their schools or at public libraries run by the government. Now, that era feels like a distant memory, as libraries have disappeared from most schools, and the few public ones that still exist are in a state of disrepair. Some of the remaining public libraries merely offer seats and shelves stocked with a handful of outdated books.

“Readers are leaders,” as the saying goes, but with the country’s current economic challenges, many parents and guardians cannot afford the necessary textbooks for their children and wards. Therefore, the establishment of libraries by the government for public use is not beyond what citizens expect. This underscores the importance of public libraries. Since education falls under the Concurrent List in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, all tiers of government are permitted to set up libraries for public use.

History of National Library of Nigeria

The National Library of Nigeria began operations in the mid-1960s following the enactment of the National Library Act of 1964, later replaced by Act No. 29 of 1970. Before the Act’s passage, a series of educational conferences held in Ibadan laid the intellectual foundation for creating a network of libraries funded by the federal government to make educational materials more accessible to Nigerians.

An advisory committee was subsequently established to explore the need for a national repository of



knowledge. The committee was tasked with helping the government highlight the intellectual foundations of its policies, establishing a national bibliographic centre, and creating a platform for knowledge promotion. It became the first major body to recommend the creation of a National Library. The government accepted the recommendation and took steps to establish the library, which was initially sited in Lagos, the then capital of Nigeria.

New National Library palaver in Abuja

Following the relocation of the capital to Abuja, the government decided in 1981 to construct a new National Library there. The contract was awarded to Reynolds Construction Company in 2006 at a cost of N8 billion. This amount was later revised to N34 billion, and by the time the Muhammadu Buhari administration left office two years ago, the project cost had ballooned to N100 billion.

The National Library project, which began in 2006 and was initially scheduled for completion in 2008, has faced numerous setbacks. Construction was halted in 2012, and the structure has remained abandoned

for years.

State of affairs

Though President Buhari, before leaving office, directed the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to step in and complete the project, no progress was made. The Fund is already overwhelmed with responsibilities, seemingly biting off more than it can chew.

In March this year, President Bola Tinubu reiterated the directive, mandating the Fund to support the project’s completion. The Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa, also assured that TETFund had earmarked a portion of its budget to resume work on the site.

During his visit, Alausa reaffirmed President Tinubu’s commitment to completing the long-overdue project, which many stakeholders have described as a “national embarrassment.”

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“We had three national monuments planned for the Federal Capital Territory: the National Mosque, the National Ecumenical Centre, and the National Library. The mosque and ecumenical centre were completed decades ago, yet the National Library remains unfinished,” Alausa stated.

To ensure steady progress, he announced that the project would be completed in phases, starting with Basement Levels 1 and 2, Ground Floor, First Floor, Second Floor, and the Perimeter and Aesthetic Works.

“We have spoken to the consultants and contractors, and they have a deadline to return to the site on or before June 2025,” Alausa assured.

Staffing Needs

The Chief Executive Officer of the National Library of Nigeria, Prof. Chinwe Veronica Anunobi, while commending the efforts to complete the building, raised concerns about staffing.

The national librarian explained that while the library operated with 2,001 staff in 2013, the number had since reduced by 500, a development she said was affecting operations.

In addition, Prof. Anunobi lamented poor funding, saying it was difficult to procure essential materials needed for 21st-century library services.

Speaking in a chat, she said that the original mindset behind the library's creation was simply: “...just to collect and preserve materials and believing that people will just come and read, “but with the new assets and new methods of looking for resources, the National Library has changed with its new strategic goal.”

Expressing concern about the reduced workforce, she added: “Let them rejuvenate the staff by at least 500, and then we will take it from there. We moved from 1,000 to 590, so if you give me back the 500, then I will now begin to work with it. Can you have a library and only one staff member there? Is it possible?”

“We were opening branches because that is the mandate of the National Library—that we should open branches all over the country, that every state should have a branch. We had 24 branches before, and we moved to 33, still managing with the little staff we have,” she said.

Modern resources and facilities

Prof. Anunobi also stressed the need for modern resources and facilities in the library.

“We have not been able to acquire the electronic resources that we should acquire, like journals for the Nigerian public in the areas of reading, learning, and research.

Because we are serving not only the low level of the educated but also the high level of educated public.

We don't have the money to acquire electronic and data resources—they are very expensive.

We tried to approach TETFund, but they said it's not within their mandate.”

“We want to acquire these resources, like the e-Library USA, which acquired these resources and subscribed for the general public. We don't even have the money to acquire these resources,” she said.

Call for engaging professional librarians

Regarding staffing leadership in libraries nationwide, the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) stated that governments at various levels had not appointed professional librarians to head libraries in the past 30 years.

The President/Chairman of the Council of the NLA, Pastor Dominic Amenaghawon, therefore called on federal and state governments, as well as employers and regulators in the education sector, to act urgently to correct the situation.

“It is imperative that leadership positions in libraries be rightfully filled by qualified and certified librarians who possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and commitment to

advance the field of librarianship in Nigeria.

The federal government should, through the office of the Head of Service of the Federation, grant employment waivers for professional librarians in the Federal Civil Service. State governments should also do the same.”

“It will amaze Nigerians to know that despite the embargo on employment by the Federal Government, special waivers have been given to some MDAs to employ staff to fill vacancies arising from retirement and job migration. But the Head of Service of the Federation has not seen the need to give waivers for the employment of librarians in the Federal Civil Service.”

“It may interest you to know that the school library system in Nigeria has collapsed.

We do not have librarians manning the school libraries anymore because there is no replacement for retiring and promoted librarians in the school system,” he added. “The public library system is the university of the ordinary Nigerian, but the story today is appalling and a shame to the elite of this country.

It is time to review the laws and ensure standardisation of the public library system in Nigeria.”

“Another area of neglect is the parliamentary libraries at the national and state assembly levels.

Permit me to state here that a reading society is a leading society, and Nigeria should not be found wanting in the promotion of readership and literacy for all.”

“The National Universities Commission, National Board for Technical Education, and the National Commission for Colleges of Education should call institutions under their purview to order and ensure they engage librarians as part of their accreditation and resource verification teams, to help address these anomalies,” he said.

Nigeria lag in research funding as varsities get zero allocation

By Alade Adisa



With the giant strides being recorded by countries in the area of research and development—efforts that have propelled many into the ranks of industrialised and advanced nations—Nigeria does not appear to take the issue of research seriously.

Findings by this paper show that practically nothing is being done in the nation's universities and research institutes, which are supposed to take the lead. It is unbelievable that no fund is allocated for research in Nigeria's public universities, whereas their peers globally, and even in South Africa, are making significant progress in that sector.

Some experts in science and technology have described Nigeria's attitude towards R&D as akin to "a nation trying to fly without wings." R&D, they argue, is the wing on which countries soar to achieve great developmental status.

Spending on research in other countries

Some universities in the United States spend annually on research amounts that are almost as large as Nigeria's federal

budget. Johns Hopkins University, for instance, spent over \$3.1 billion on R&D in 2020. In the same year, Harvard University spent about \$1.24 billion on research, covering faculty, staff, labs, supplies, and services.

In the United Kingdom, by July 31, 2023, the University of Oxford received £789 million in research grants and contracts for just one year.

On the African continent, the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa commits over \$100 million annually to R&D and has for years been rated the best on the continent.

How research is handled in Nigeria

In a bid to promote research, science, and technology, the Federal Government established the Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology (FMIST), currently headed by Chief Uche Nnaji.

The ministry's mandate includes harnessing science, technology, and innovation to drive Nigeria's socio-economic development. It also

implements the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy of 2022, which aims to promote the development and utilisation of scientific research across all sectors.

Additionally, under the National Science and Technology Act of 1980, the ministry is responsible for establishing research institutes in Nigeria, with the approval of the President and Commander-in-Chief.

Budget for the ministry

In 2024, the ministry received a total allocation of N11.05 billion—about \$6.7 million at an exchange rate of N1,650 to the dollar. The proposed 2025 budget is N69.2 billion (about \$30 million), inclusive of capital and overhead costs. From this budget, the ministry is expected to oversee 66 research institutes, most of which were established and are funded by the Federal Government.

The situation in universities

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While some private universities, such as Covenant University in Ota, Ogun State, are making efforts to support their researchers with funding, New Daily Prime found that there is zero allocation for research in public universities, both federal and state.

Commenting on the development, Dr. Niyi Sunmonu, National President of the Congress of University Academics (CONUA), said the reliance on the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to shoulder all research funding responsibilities is unfortunate and inadequate.

“TETFund alone cannot shoulder all the responsibilities. They are trying, and I have benefited from their grants. The quality of academics in the university is linked to the quality of research output, which, in turn, benefits society.

“Before 1976, there was dedicated research funding in universities, but now, I doubt if that exists in any public university. Government departments should identify areas for collaboration and fund research locally, even if we’re thinking globally,” he said.

His view was echoed by the immediate past National President of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Prof. Emmanuel Osodeke, who noted that beyond TETFund, researchers in the country get nothing.

“There is no budget for research. It is so sad. Check the overhead cost for the University of Ibadan for 2025—it’s about N2 billion—but research isn’t listed. TETFund grants are insufficient, and researchers scramble for them. It is foreign universities’ research that lifts their global rankings,” he said.

In 2024, TETFund spent about N3.4 billion (roughly \$2.5 million) on the National Research Fund, offering a maximum of N100 million (about \$75,000) to research groups. It also spent N7.02 billion (about \$5 million) on Centres of Excellence and over N6 billion (\$4.5 million) on institution-based research.

How TETFund intervenes

Responding to an enquiry from our reporter, TETFund’s spokesman, Mr. Akanbi Oniyangi, said: “The Board of Trustees established the following intervention lines: Institution-Based Research (IBR), National Research Fund (NRF), and TETFund Centres of Excellence.

“The IBR intervention aims to promote finding capacity and competence among

lecturers in beneficiary institutions. There are no thematic restrictions, and institutions vet and recommend proposals to TETFund.

“To address inflation, the IBR grant ceiling was increased to N5 million for science-based projects and N4 million for Humanities and Social Sciences. In 2024, a total of 3,100 IBR projects were completed across universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education.”

On the NRF, he said it was created to resuscitate findings in tertiary institutions and tackle global challenges. In 2024, N3.3 billion was disbursed under the NRF, covering Science, Engineering, Technology, Humanities, and Cross-Cutting themes.

The Centres of Excellence, according to Oniyangi, aim to promote specialisation and develop institutional capacity in areas aligned with national development needs. TETFund has disbursed N7.02 billion to such centres across universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education.

Terrible situation at state Level

Most state governments that operate their universities are not investing in research either. Only Lagos State has a dedicated agency—the Lagos State Science, Research and Innovation Council (LASRIC), established in 2017 during Governor Akinwunmi Ambode’s tenure with a seed fund of N500 million.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu recently reconstituted the board and increased the fund to N1 billion. LASRIC supports individual and institutional researchers resident in Lagos with grants of up to N100 million.

‘Researchers face multiple challenges’

Dr. Gever Verlun, a top researcher in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, said:

“It’s very difficult to secure grants. With TETFund, the issue is the number of applicants. There are many more people than there are available resources. Because of this, some feel the process is politicised. I don’t subscribe to that view—I think administrative procedures and limited funding are the main issues.

“Lecturers receive different levels of support depending on the discipline. The sciences typically get more funding than the Humanities. International grants are even harder to get and come with stricter conditions.

“I’ve personally gone through a lot. I got

grants for our departmental journal three times, and it was very stressful to meet all the requirements. I also got an IBR grant and an international grant from Germany. But the truth is, researchers get nothing personally from these grants. All expenses must be receipted. You can receive a N10 million grant and not take home a naira. That’s part of why researchers are poor. The system is built that way.”

Govt eases TSA rules on research grants

Federal universities operate under the Treasury Single Account (TSA), which requires that all funds go through government control. This has significantly hampered research funding.

However, after years of pressure, the government finally exempted third-party research grants from the TSA. A directive to this effect was conveyed in a letter dated September 6, 2024, from the Acting Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Chris Maiyaki, to vice-chancellors.

The letter communicated a directive from the President to exclude research grant funds from the TSA, easing access to donor and external funding for research.

Also, the Federal Government has pledged to continue investing in research. The Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa, made the assurance at the maiden TETFund National Research Fair/Exhibition in Abuja, stating that impactful research and innovation were critical to transforming Nigeria’s fortunes.

Tapping into alumni associations

To keep up with global peers, Nigerian universities are increasingly reaching out to their alumni—especially those in the diaspora—for research support.

These efforts are yielding results. The College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, has received \$1 million donations twice from former students. One donation came from US-based professor Dr. Philip Ozuah for the student hostel building fund in August 2022. Another \$1 million, consisting of medical equipment, was donated by the class of 1989 and facilitated by Project C.U.R.E., a US-based NGO.

The equipment included specialised beds, consumables, and mobile ultrasound machines, and was described as the single largest donation received during the tenure of the Chief Medical Director, Professor Jesse Abiodun Otegbayo.

Where are Nigeria's First-Class graduates?

By Alade Adisa



At the 2024 convocation ceremony of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD), Ogunlana Abiodun Omolara stole the show as she emerged the best graduating student, not only in her department but in the entire university. She graduated with a perfect CGPA of 5.0/5.0 in Aerospace Engineering.

In a world where the average is common, Omolara chose excellence. She didn't just graduate—she soared.

She emerged as the Best Graduating Student in the Department of Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering; the Best in the College of Engineering, Afe Babalola University; and the Overall Best Graduating Student, Class of 2024.

A CGPA of 5.0 is no small feat. It means straight A's every semester—no slacking, no slip-ups—just consistency, discipline, and drive. While many ran from the pressure, she walked through it with grace and emerged as one of Nigeria's brightest young minds.

She now holds the title of GMNSE (Graduate Member, Nigerian Society of Engineers) and is well on her way to becoming one of Africa's leading aerospace engineers.

Graduating with First Class honours from any university in the world is no easy achievement. It requires earning A grades in all courses and a CGPA of 4.50 and above.

However, some undergraduates break the barrier by attaining a CGPA of 5.0. People in this category are often seen as highly talented, even whiz kids, and are treated with great respect by society.

Universities often try to retain such graduates in their faculties, but the situation in Nigerian public universities has changed.

Those who are not retained—especially in developed countries—are recruited into research and development (R&D) and other critical sectors of the economy.

Other notable perfect score graduates

Omolara's feat at ABUAD is not the first time someone has graduated with a perfect score, as others have done so before.

The University of Lagos (UNILAG) recorded its first perfect score in the 2014/2015 session, when Ayodele Daniel Dada graduated with a 5.0 CGPA from the Department of Psychology. In appreciation, the university awarded him one million naira, and the then Speaker of

the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila facilitated his appearance before the House on March 22, 2016.

Ayodele, who hails from Ekiti State, was also honoured by the then Governor, Mr. Ayodele Fayose.

A year later, Miss Taiwo Bukola and Miss Ajoke Omotuyi also graduated with a 5.0 CGPA from UNILAG—in Cell Biology and Genetics, and Systems Engineering, respectively.

Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, produced its first 5.0 CGPA graduate in Miss Motunrayo Ajia in 2018/19 from the Department of Petroleum Engineering. Ewerechukwu Asaka followed in the 2020/21 session from the Department of Computer Engineering.

Lagos State University (LASU) produced its first perfect score graduate, Miss Amina Yusuf, from the Faculty of Law in the 2023 session. She was awarded N10 million by Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu and offered automatic employment, which she reportedly declined.

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What the situation was before

Until Nigeria began experiencing economic difficulties in the late 1980s, First Class graduates were almost guaranteed retention as graduate assistants or offered support to further their education.

Recalling the past, a First Class graduate of the then University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Pastor Dr. Peter Olayinka Sonaike, said:

“I graduated in 1970 with First Class from the Department of Economics, University of Ife. I was the first person to graduate with First Class in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the only one in the entire university that year. Immediately after graduation, I was appointed Assistant Lecturer.

“A year later, I was sent to Oxford University on sabbatical leave for a doctorate. My four-year postgraduate programme was financed by the UK Technical Assistance Programme and the University of Ife. I also had a scholarship from the Population Council, which I didn’t use.

“At the time, the University of Ife was expanding and needed many lecturers. Brilliant students who graduated with Second Class Upper and above were encouraged to return as graduate assistants or assistant lecturers and were sponsored for postgraduate studies both locally and abroad.

“All arrangements—admission, visa, travel, and reception abroad—were handled by the university and foreign sponsors.

“We were treated as staff on sabbatical leave and given generous allowances. It was a deliberate policy to develop manpower for the university. The sponsorship usually came with a bond to serve the university for a set period.

“Back then, federal universities had full autonomy and were governed by their own councils and senates.”

Where are they now?

Findings by New Daily Prime show

that Ayodele, the UNILAG scholar, went to Stanford University in the U.S. in 2019 for further studies in Psychology and is likely still contributing to research there.

Miss Ajia joined Boston Consulting Group in Lagos, later proceeded to the University of Oxford for a master’s in Energy Systems, and is part of the Africa Oxford Initiative.

Miss Asaka, from Igbanke in Edo State, was offered employment by Governor Godwin Obaseki, which she declined. She later won a master’s degree scholarship through the Rhodes Scholarship for West Africa and is currently studying at Oxford University.

Why graduates are no longer retained

Besides the absence of any law mandating universities to employ their First Class graduates, the sheer volume of such graduates has become a challenge.

Speaking on the issue, former Acting Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Dr. Chris Maiyaki, said:

“It is just a convention, not a law, that First Class graduates are taken by universities to serve as a core of their academic programmes. Universities are not compelled to employ them. However, they are encouraged to pursue higher degrees and can be employed if vacancies exist.

“You may attend a convocation and see over 100 First Class graduates. Their distribution may not be even—some departments produce many; others, none.

“If the university wishes to retain any, employment must go through the Governing Council. Where there is no council, the process must go through the NUC, with input from the Federal Character Commission, the Budget Office, and others before approval is granted.”

Also commenting, the National President of the Congress of University Academics (CONUA), Dr. Niyi

Sunmonu, said:

“In the past, universities nurtured their best graduates and incentivised them for postgraduate academic training to eventually replace retiring teachers.

“They were sent abroad for further training while their faculty positions were held for them and salaries paid. This fostered loyalty to the Nigerian university system.

“Due to inadequate funding and lack of autonomy, this practice declined. Employment embargoes worsened the situation.

“Now, universities only keep tabs on their best graduates and may contact them if jobs open up—assuming they’re still available.

“Low academic salaries also discourage top graduates from staying.

“To revive our university system, we must improve funding, grant autonomy, and adopt global best practices.”

Parents want them engaged

The National President of the National Parent Teacher Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN), Alhaji Haruna Danjuma, has called on the government to create programmes for engaging First Class graduates.

According to him, with the huge number of vacancies in Nigerian universities, such talented individuals should not be left idle due to poor planning and bureaucracy.

“Government has failed in creating job opportunities for our youth—federal, state, and local levels,” Danjuma said.

“They keep telling us our children should acquire skills and not depend on white-collar jobs. That means the government has failed.

“That’s not what they promised during campaigns. Many involved in cybercrime are graduates with tech skills. Millions are unemployed. These young people are becoming a threat to us because they have nothing to do.”

Young Jonn: Davido's wealth pushes me to hustle harder

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian singer and record producer Young Jonn has revealed that superstar Davido's financial success often makes him feel "broke," but in a way that pushes him to do more.

The "Go Hard or Go Home" singer confessed during a lighthearted sideline interview at the 2025 Paris Fashion Week in France. When asked if he had ever met someone who made him feel financially small, Young John didn't hesitate to name Davido.

"Too many times, bro. Davido. Whenever I see his money, I'm like, I need to work hard and drop more songs," he said with a laugh.

Though it was said in a casual tone, the statement reflected both admiration and motivation. For Young Jonn, Davido isn't just a friend or colleague; he is also a symbol of what's possible in the industry.

From studio genius to chart-topping star

Young Jonn's journey in the music industry didn't begin behind the mic. He admitted in a 2024 interview that becoming a singer wasn't part of the plan. According to him, he "became an artist by accident."

Born Udomboso John Saviours, Young Jonn first made his mark as a record producer. His early career blossomed under the YBNL Nation label, headed by indigenous rap icon Olamide. While at YBNL, he produced some of the biggest hits of the 2010s, including tracks for Lil Kesh, Olamide, and other rising stars at the time.

His unique sound, often blending Afrobeat rhythms with street energy, earned him the nickname "The Wicked Producer." But it wasn't long before his talents behind the scenes spilt over into the spotlight.

A natural transition into singing



Young Jonn's leap from beatmaker to singer came as a surprise to many, including himself. What started as studio freestyles and background vocals soon became full songs. Encouraged by fans and colleagues, he began releasing singles of his own. The response was immediate.

His solo efforts, including tracks like Xtra Cool, Dada, and Go Hard or Go Home, quickly gained traction across Nigeria and the diaspora. They showcased a softer, more melodic side of his artistry, proving that he wasn't just a master at producing for others but also capable of building a unique identity as a performer.

"I didn't plan this," he once said about his transition. "I was just vibing. But the love was strong, so I followed the music."

Davido as inspiration, not competition

Despite his growing success, Young John remains humble. He sees his peers, especially Davido, not as competition but as motivation. The Paris Fashion Week moment offered a rare, honest look at how industry figures view one another outside the studio.

"Davido's lifestyle is crazy the cars, the jets, the jewellery. But it's not envy. It's an inspiration. It makes me want to push harder and stay consistent," Young Jonn explained further in another interview earlier this year.

His comments highlight an important dynamic in Nigeria's music scene: mutual admiration. Many of the industry's biggest names often lift each other up publicly, knowing that one artist's success can spark another's ambition.

What's next for Young Jonn?

As 2025 rolls on, Young Jonn shows no signs of slowing down. He has teased new music, international collaborations, and more live performances. With several hits already under his belt, fans are eager to see how he continues to evolve.

He may feel "broke" compared to Davido, but in the eyes of many, Young John is already rich in talent, creativity, and potential. And with every new song, he's proving that he belongs at the top.

Speed Darlington dares NAPTIP, vows not to present self

By Damilola Olufemi



Nigerian entertainer Darlington Okoye, popularly known as Speed Darlington, has reacted defiantly after the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) declared him wanted over serious allegations including rape, cyberbullying, and cyberstalking.

In a video shared on YouTube Monday, Speed Darlington rejected the claims, saying he had done nothing wrong. "I'm not coming. You hear me? I'm not coming. I have not committed any crime. All I did was speak," he said in the video, dismissing the allegations as unfounded.

He accused NAPTIP of trying to gain attention by targeting him. "Where is your evidence? Who is the complainant? You want to use me to collect social media clout? Hey, look at us. We are doing our job. We summoned a celebrity and he came," he added.

Okoye further described the agency's invitation as manipulative and insisted he should be paid if they wanted his appearance. "2.5 million is what I charge for my appearance. You want to pay me 2.5 million plus? Round-trip tickets for me and my PA to come. Because I call that appearance," he stated.

Referencing the controversial livestream at the centre of the storm, he maintained that there was no concrete evidence against him. "There is no crime. All I did was try to claim it. You have no evidence. You have nothing. So, me coming here is a waste of my time," he said.

NAPTIP declares Speed Darlington wanted

NAPTIP had announced last Friday that Okoye was wanted to allegations of rape and cyber-related offences, following his failure to honour multiple invitations. The agency posted a notice on Instagram urging anyone with credible information about his whereabouts to contact them.

The controversy stems from a viral video during an Instagram livestream on Children's Day, in which Okoye claimed to have had sex with a 15-year-old girl. The video sparked widespread outrage and drew attention from the Lagos State government and women's rights groups.

In response, NAPTIP invited him to appear at its Abuja headquarters on May 30, sending a formal letter on May 28. Okoye declined, citing other engagements, and proposed June 26

instead. The agency rejected the rescheduling and gave him a final deadline of June 2, which he also ignored.

"The issue at hand is of urgent national importance and requires an urgent response," NAPTIP said in a letter, warning that failure to cooperate could result in legal action.

Following the backlash, Okoye claimed the video was a joke intended to stir controversy and promote his music. "I need controversy to eat," he said. But critics argued that making light of child sexual abuse — even for publicity — was unacceptable.

NAPTIP, however, insists that if the statements in the video are verified, they could amount to breaches of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015, as well as the Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015.

Meanwhile, Okoye has hinted at fleeing the country. In a recent video, he declared that he had "left Lagos girls for New York girls," fuelling speculation that he has relocated abroad to avoid arrest.

Mohbad: VeryDarkMan releases 'voice record' between Zlatan, Sam Larry

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian social media activist Vincent Otse Martins, popularly known as VeryDarkMan (VDM), has stirred public attention once again by releasing an alleged voice recording involving singer Zlatan Ibile and music promoter Sam Larry.

The audio clip, which has since gone viral, reportedly captures a conversation between the two men discussing the tragic death of rising music star Ilerioluwa Aloba, better known as Mohbad.

In the recording, Zlatan, speaking in Yoruba, is heard expressing hesitation about getting involved in the public controversy that followed Mohbad's sudden passing in September 2023. He cited the backlash and chaos that often come with speaking out on sensitive matters, especially on social media.

VDM issues 48-hour ultimatum

VeryDarkMan, who uploaded the audio to his Instagram page, is not taking Zlatan's silence lightly. He issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the rapper, demanding that he publicly explain what he knows about the events surrounding Mohbad's death and why he chose to remain silent during the early calls for justice.

"I am going to play a voice recording between Zlatan and Sam Larry, recorded around the time Mohbad died," VDM said in a video shared on his page. "I expect Zlatan to come out in the next 48 hours to explain what he knows and why he didn't speak when we were seeking justice."

VeryDarkMan Renew push for justice

The activist also addressed critics who questioned his decision to revisit the case. He argued that many Nigerians had moved on too quickly from the issue, which he believes has hindered the pursuit of justice. According to him, the refusal of the public to keep the case alive has allowed key players to escape scrutiny.

"A lot of people have asked why I brought back the Mohbad case," VDM said. "That alone shows many of you were never serious about getting justice. I brought it back because I noticed



people have moved on, and that's the same reason our government doesn't take us seriously. We forget too fast."

He went further, saying, "I want justice for that boy. He hasn't even been buried yet. His spirit is still wandering. Some people know the truth but have been using intimidation and silence to bury it. And Zlatan, you chose to keep quiet."

Blunt criticism and social media reaction

In his usual blunt manner, the RATEL MOVEMENT leader accused Zlatan of abandoning the cause at a crucial time and called out those defending the singer's silence. "I have reopened this case. If you don't like it, go into the bush. You're not real if you ask why I'm speaking about this again," he said.

"You say you wanted justice, yet you're telling me to leave the case. Many of you are fake. You never truly wanted justice."

The video triggered strong reactions online. While some users defended Zlatan, suggesting that silence may have been a safer option in a tense environment, others urged him to finally break his silence and share his side of the story.

Background on Mohbad's death

Mohbad, a former signee of Marlian Music, died under mysterious circumstances on September 12, 2023. His death sparked outrage across Nigeria, with fans and celebrities demanding a thorough investigation. Allegations of bullying, intimidation, and neglect surrounded the incident, with Sam Larry and others linked to Mohbad's troubled career.

Despite widespread protests and online campaigns, authorities have yet to provide clear answers about the cause of his death. The delay in burying his body, even months after his demise, continues to fuel suspicion and anger among fans.

The pressure mounts

As the 48-hour deadline given by VeryDarkMan ticks down, all eyes are now on Zlatan Ibile. Will he speak out, or will he maintain his silence?

For many Nigerians, the fight for justice for Mohbad remains unfinished. And with voices like VeryDarkMan keeping the conversation alive, it may be impossible for the case to be buried, literally and figuratively, until answers are found.

Ayra Starr: Acting debut deepened my respect for actors

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Grammy-nominated Nigerian singer Ayra Starr has made her acting debut in the highly anticipated American fantasy film *Children of Blood and Bone*.

In a recent interview with CBS, the 23-year-old star opened up about her experience stepping into a new creative world, one that demanded discipline, punctuality, and a deep respect for the craft of acting.

A new experience on set

The singer, known for her chart-topping hits and energetic performances, admitted that her first film role was a big shift from the music world she's used to. Unlike her usual studio sessions, where she calls the shots, film sets operate by strict schedules and teamwork.

"This is my first movie ever," Starr revealed during the interview. "I'm used to being the singer, the diva on set. But this, this is different. In acting, it's not about you. You have to be on set on time. That really changed my perspective."

She added that she had to adjust to "military time," a term often used in film production to describe the rigorous schedule that cast and crew follow. "It made me work harder. Now I have so much more respect for actors. Their stamina is amazing."

Ayra Starr's longtime love for acting

Despite her global fame as a music artist, the Cotonou-born explained that acting has always been a dream of hers. However, she had kept it on the back burner due to self-doubt.

"Acting is something I've always wanted to do," she said. "I love



music, but I've always loved acting too. I've just always been shy about it. This is the first time I've ever been in front of a camera without singing, and it was incredible."

The Mavin Recordings star added that the experience taught her more than just how to act; it taught her to learn from everyone on set, regardless of their level of fame. "I learned so much from everyone, not just the greats," she said.

A star-studded film

Children of Blood and Bone is based on the bestselling novel by Nigerian-American author Tomi Adeyemi. The fantasy tale follows a young girl's journey to bring magic back to her oppressed people in the fictional land of Orisha, inspired by West African mythology.

The film is directed by award-winning filmmaker Gina Prince-Bythewood, known for *The Woman King* and *The Old Guard*. The project boasts an impressive cast, including Damson Idris, Tosin Cole, Idris Elba, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Cynthia Erivo,

Viola Davis, and Thuso Mbedu.

Starr's involvement adds a new layer of excitement to the production, especially among fans of Afrobeats and African storytelling. While her specific role in the film has not yet been disclosed, her enthusiasm suggests a performance that fans won't forget.

A Hollywood release awaits

The movie is set for a theatrical release by Paramount Pictures on January 15, 2027. It is expected to be one of the biggest fantasy releases of the year, combining African culture with Hollywood production quality.

As Starr embraces this new chapter in her career, fans can look forward to seeing a different side of the singer, one that shows not just her voice but her versatility as a performer.

"I'm proud of myself," Starr concluded. "This is just the beginning."

Rapper MI: 'I regret supporting APC in 2015'

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nigerian rapper Jude Abaga, widely known by his stage name M.I Abaga, has admitted that supporting the All Progressives Congress (APC) during the 2015 general elections was a mistake.

The acclaimed lyricist, often referred to as "Mr. Incredible" or "African Rapper Number One," opened up about his past political stance during a recent episode of the Menism Podcast.

He said he threw his weight behind the APC at the time because he believed the then-ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) was deeply corrupt.

Why I supported APC in 2015 – MI

Explaining his decision, the 43-year-old said he genuinely believed a change in leadership would move the country in a better direction. Like many other Nigerians, he hoped a different political party would offer transparency, development, and a new direction.

"Yes, I supported APC because at that time, I felt that the PDP government was very corrupt," he said during the interview. "I was one of those who raised their voices and said, 'Let us unite and bring in democracy.'"

The rapper emphasised that his support was based on a desire to see good governance. He stressed that, at the time, the promise of the APC seemed like a hopeful alternative to the status quo.

Disappointed in APC's performance

However, the rapper admitted that the APC has failed to live up to its promises and his expectations.

"Unfortunately, this isn't the APC of my dreams," he confessed. "As human beings, no matter how much you try to be right, you will be wrong sometimes."



He made this remark while responding to criticism from social media users. According to the rapper, some of his followers reminded him of his political support when he posted a tweet condemning the deadly herdsmen attacks in Benue State. They pointed out that he had backed the same party under whose leadership these issues escalated.

M.I. explained that his views have evolved, shaped by real-world events and the realities of Nigeria's political landscape. He said he is no longer driven by blind loyalty to any political group. Instead, he is focused on finding real solutions.

A shift towards youth empowerment

Today, M.I. says his mission has shifted. He is more concerned with using his voice, music, and platform to inspire and work with young Nigerians.

He believes the youth hold the key to Nigeria's future and that real change can only come through collective effort.

"I am now more focused on collaborating with other young people to build a better nation," he said.

This marks a turning point for the rapper, who has often been outspoken about national issues. Over the years,

M.I. has used his lyrics and influence to address matters such as corruption, poor leadership, insecurity, and social justice.

Fans react to his honest reflection

M.I.'s statement has stirred discussions on social media, with many praising him for owning up to his past decisions. Some fans noted that it takes humility and courage to admit political misjudgment, especially in a country where public figures often shy away from accountability.

Others have commended his willingness to evolve and shift focus toward solutions that can help Nigeria move forward.

A call for responsible citizenship

While M.I. may no longer be aligned with any political party, his words carry a powerful message about civic responsibility. His experience serves as a reminder to many Nigerians to stay informed, question political narratives, and hold leaders accountable.

As the country prepares for future elections, voices like M.I.'s may inspire more young people to engage meaningfully in the democratic process, not just with votes, but with advocacy, action, and creativity.

Pretty Mike recalls losing virginity to housemaids at 13

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian socialite and businessman Eze-Nwalie Nwogu, widely known as Pretty Mike, has bravely shared his experience of childhood sexual assault.

In a recent episode of the podcast *In The Company Of Men*, he revealed that he was molested by two house helpers during his formative years. This disturbing revelation sheds light on the often-overlooked issue of male victims of sexual abuse.

The impact of abuse

The business mogul disclosed that he lost his virginity at the tender age of 13 due to the abuse he suffered. He emphasised that this traumatic experience significantly altered his perspective on sex and relationships. "I lost my virginity at 13 to my housemaid. Not just one, but two," he said. His openness about such a painful subject highlights the critical need for dialogue around male sexual abuse.

Despite his difficult past, Pretty Mike expressed a desire to move forward. "Did that change my orientation about sex? Yes. Am I coming out to report it to say that something negative happened to me? I think I have decided to let it go, especially at that age," he explained. He acknowledged that, in today's context, a 13-year-old might be viewed as more mature than in previous generations.

A call to action for parents

In his podcast appearance, Pretty Mike urged parents to pay equal attention to their male children, just as they do to their female children. He pointed out a common oversight: many parents focus primarily on the safety of their daughters when hiring domestic workers. "I have realised that parents often consider their female children when hiring help, but what about the male child? They are all young," he stated.

This call for awareness is particularly important. "There shouldn't be a double standard," he asserted. Pretty Mike's message is clear: all children, regardless



of gender, deserve protection from potential abuse. He stressed, "Look out for your kids and make sure nobody takes advantage of both the female and the male."

Breaking the silence

His comments come at a time when conversations about sexual abuse are becoming more common. Men are increasingly encouraged to speak out about their experiences. Pretty Mike's courage in sharing his story serves as a vital reminder that male victims exist and deserve support.

He believes that breaking the silence around male abuse is crucial for healing. By sharing his story, he hopes to inspire other men to come forward. "Men have been encouraged to come out to talk about sexual abuse and being taken advantage of sexually at a tender age," he noted.

Understanding childhood abuse

Childhood sexual abuse can have long-lasting effects on a person's life. Many victims carry the trauma into adulthood, affecting their relationships and mental health. Pretty Mike's experience underscores the importance of addressing this issue openly.

For those who were victims at an even younger age, such as 6, 7, or 8, the impact can be even more severe. "For people who were taken advantage of at such a young age, it is totally wrong because they had no idea," he pointed out. This highlights the critical need for awareness and education around the signs of abuse.

Moving forward

Pretty Mike's story is a powerful reminder that sexual abuse can affect anyone, regardless of gender. Parents and guardians must remain vigilant and proactive in protecting their children. By fostering an environment where both boys and girls feel safe, we can begin to address this pervasive issue.

In conclusion, Pretty Mike's brave revelation serves as a wake-up call. It encourages parents to reflect on their practices and to ensure that all children are safeguarded. His message is clear: awareness and vigilance can help prevent future abuse. In a world where conversations about such topics are becoming more normalised, it is crucial to keep these discussions alive.

As we move forward, let's commit to listening, learning, and protecting our children, no matter their gender.

Stop comparing me to other artistes, Chris Brown tells fans

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

American R&B superstar Chris Brown has issued a passionate message to fans and music critics, urging them to stop comparing him to other artists.

In a recent Instagram story post, the award-winning singer expressed frustration over constant comparisons, stating that no one else in the industry has endured what he has while maintaining such longevity and self-reliance.

‘Do it all by yourself first’ – Chris Brown Brown, known for hit songs like Under The Influence, No Guidance, and Loyal, made it clear that he believes his journey in music is different from most.

“I wish y’all would stop comparing me to other artists and saying ‘me versus someone else,’” Brown wrote. “Until one of these artists does all this sh*t by themselves with no help and while the media constantly f**ks with them, then come holla at me.”

The post, laced with emotion and expletives, reflected the singer’s apparent frustration with being constantly placed side-by-side with other names in the industry.

20 years of consistency

The 35-year-old singer also reminded fans that he has been in the music business for two decades and is still going strong. He emphasised that he’s not in it just for fame or competition, but to make a living.

“I do this for my survival. I’ve been consistent for 20 years straight,” Brown said. “Everything I’ve built, I had to fight for. Nothing was handed to me.”

The Virginia-born artist’s career started in 2005 when he released his debut self-titled album at just 16 years old. The album featured chart-topping singles like Run It! and helped launch him into instant stardom.

Comparisons to music icons



Over the years, Chris Brown has often been compared to legendary performers like Michael Jackson and Usher. Fans frequently debate who is the better singer, dancer, or overall performer. While many admire his vocal range and dynamic stage presence, some critics argue that such comparisons are premature or inappropriate.

The debate surrounding Brown and Michael Jackson, in particular, has remained popular across social media platforms. Supporters of Brown point to his dancing, choreography, and music catalogue as evidence, while critics highlight Jackson’s unmatched global influence and pioneering legacy.

Aside from those two, Brown’s name has also been linked in comparison with artists like T-Pain, Trey Songz, Mario, Akon, and Nelly, many of whom rose to fame during the same era and within the same genre.

A career shaped by highs and lows

Brown’s career has been both successful and controversial. Despite delivering countless hits and sold-out concerts around the world, he has faced legal battles and negative media coverage, especially after his 2009 assault case

involving fellow singer Rihanna.

Still, he has managed to retain a loyal fanbase and consistently stay relevant in the ever-changing music industry. His ability to evolve with the times while maintaining a unique sound has earned him recognition as one of the most influential R&B artists of his generation.

A message to critics and fans alike

In his post, Brown did not mention any artist by name. However, he wanted to set the record straight. For him, his journey cannot be fairly compared to anyone else’s unless they’ve walked the same path, one marked by personal battles, independence, and an often hostile media environment.

With this message, Brown is not just defending his legacy but also calling for a deeper appreciation of what it takes to survive and succeed in the music industry for two decades without major institutional support.

As fans continue to debate and draw comparisons, Brown’s message is simple: respect the journey, acknowledge the struggle, and recognise the uniqueness of every artist’s path.

Meet Idrees Rasheed, bold new face of Yoruba content creation

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

At The New Daily Prime, we had the privilege of conducting an exclusive interview with the fast-rising food content creator, Idrees Rasheed. As part of our commitment to bringing readers accurate and firsthand information, we sat down with Rasheed, popularly known as Balogun, who shared valuable insights into his background and creative journey. Truth be told, Idrees Rasheed's jovial personality shines through not just in his content but also in his everyday interactions.

Idrees Rasheed's family background

As we all know, a person's background plays a major role in shaping their path to success. For Idrees Rasheed, his roots are deeply grounded in a strong sense of community and collective action. Until 2018, he lived with his family in Lagos. He grew up in a household of seven, but with the constant presence of his father's apprentices, the number in the home often swelled to between fifteen and twenty people.

Idrees is one of six children; he has two sisters and three brothers. Cooking was a daily necessity, given the size of the household. As a boy, he initially felt that the kitchen wasn't a space meant for him, but his father insisted that he assist his mother with meal preparation. It was in that kitchen, watching his mother cook a variety of soups, that Idrees developed a particular interest in making morsels.

He proudly refers to himself as a "don" when it comes to making amala, regardless of the quantity. Interestingly, although he spent time in the kitchen, he notes that he didn't learn to cook in a structured way from his mother; it was more a matter of natural exposure that gradually sparked his culinary passion.

How Idrees, the chef, came to play

According to Idrees Rasheed, his background in communal cooking truly came into play after he relocated to the United States in 2018 with his sister. Like many immigrants starting afresh, survival was the first goal. He began working at a local restaurant as a dishwasher, adjusting to life in what he calls "a new man's land." At home, his sister did most of the cooking,



and by simply observing her prepare meals daily, he unknowingly continued his culinary education.

As the saying goes, when opportunity knocks, open the door wide. When the salad chef at his workplace left unexpectedly, Idrees seized the moment and pitched himself for the role. His boss gave him a chance, and he dove in headfirst, learning on the job. In no time, he became a skilled appetizer chef, confidently preparing calamari and a variety of appetizers.

For anyone who watches Idrees Rasheed's food content today, one standout feature is his impressive knife skills. He credits this finesse to over four years of hands-on experience in commercial kitchens. As his culinary journey progressed, he moved to another restaurant where he specialized as a pasta chef, further expanding his repertoire.

Today, Idrees works full-time as a remote database administrator. The flexibility of this role allows him to continue pursuing his passion for cooking and experimenting with new dishes in his spare time. It's a rare blend of tech and taste, and Idrees is making it work in his unique way.

His content creation journey

"I have always loved being in front of the camera and wanted the world to know about me," Idrees Rasheed shared.

His journey into content creation began

during the 2020 lockdown, when he started casually experimenting with the camera, just for fun, with no serious intentions at the time. However, things took a more meaningful turn in 2023 when the late content creator, Afobaje, inspired him. Known for his unique Yoruba voiceovers and culturally rich storytelling, Afobaje became a role model for Idrees.

Although they never met in person, their brief interaction left a lasting impression. Afobaje had responded to one of Idrees' comments on a post just days before his untimely death. Idrees recalled that he was on his way to film a wedding vlog when the news of Afobaje's passing broke. The loss hit him hard and served as a turning point, pushing him to take content creation more seriously, both as a form of expression and as a tribute to a creator he deeply admired.

Following the initial spark in content creation, Idrees turned to his sister for advice: should he produce his videos using Yoruba or English voiceovers? Her response was pragmatic—she suggested using English to avoid limiting his target audience. Unsure of which direction to take, Idrees decided to try both, recording his content in both languages to see which resonated more.

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In 2024, during a visit to Nigeria, he spent time with his cousins and shared his concerns about content limitations. At the time, he was leaning towards lifestyle content but feared running out of ideas. One cousin gave him a liberating piece of advice: “You can post anything you want.” That simple encouragement became a turning point.

Shortly after, Idrees recorded a cooking video where he grilled fish and narrated it in both English and Yoruba. When he showed both versions to his sister, the same one who had earlier advised against Yoruba, she surprisingly chose the Yoruba version as her favorite. Idrees was stunned. “It was this same sister who told me Yoruba might limit my audience,” he recalled with a laugh.

He posted the Yoruba version on TikTok—and to his surprise, it went viral. The video attracted a wave of followers and engagement. Describing his content journey as “swift and fast,” Idrees said everything seemed to happen all at once.

Riding on the momentum, Idrees doubled down on food content. On September 9—his birthday—he decided to cook what he described as an “iyalaya egusi” (a bold, rich version of Nigeria’s famous melon seed soup) packed with every imaginable ingredient. He posted the video on TikTok and Instagram, and once again, it exploded online. That moment became a major turning point in his career.

Among those who shared his video was popular influencer Tunde Ednut, along with several lifestyle blogs. While the post garnered widespread attention, it also drew mixed reactions. Some people praised his creativity, while others criticized his method of cooking. But Idrees stayed unfazed. “I didn’t respond to the negative comments,” he said. “I just continued doing my thing.”

The balance between Balogun’s military career and his content creation journey “Balogun” is the name Idrees adopted for himself when he began basic military training in October last year. In preparation for his time away, he recorded a large batch of cooking videos in advance, which his sister helped upload while he was in training. At that time, his content was gaining serious traction online. His sister played a vital role in maintaining the momentum, posting videos and even responding to comments so accurately that many viewers didn’t realize it wasn’t Idrees himself behind the screen.

According to Idrees, his military service is not full-time active duty, but a reserved role that

requires him to report for drills at least once a month. While he rarely talks about this aspect of his life publicly—citing the regimented nature of the service—it’s a significant part of his identity.

Still, Balogun, as he is now widely known, is more than just a man in uniform. He is a tech-savvy professional working remotely as a database administrator, who also happens to be carving a unique space for himself in the content creation world. With discipline from the military, precision from tech, and flair from the kitchen, Idrees Rasheed—aka Balogun—is a blend of structure and creativity, tradition and innovation.

The inspiration behind Balogun’s voiceovers “My dad doesn’t speak English, neither does my mum,” Balogun says, reflecting on the linguistic and cultural roots that continue to shape his identity.

Raised in a traditional Yoruba-speaking household, Balogun, born Idrees Rasheed, grew up in an environment where the native language was the default mode of communication. Even after relocating to the United States, his fluency in Yoruba remained impeccable. This linguistic foundation would later become a defining element of his brand, especially through his expressive and culturally rich voiceovers.

Balogun is also a passionate fan of evergreen music. He prefers the soulful sounds of the older generation to the fast-paced rhythms of modern hip-hop. To him, contemporary songs are often too brief to offer real depth. He is drawn to the authenticity and substance of classic tracks, qualities he feels are often missing in today’s music.

However, after relocating abroad, Balogun began experimenting with different sounds, including Pasuma’s fuji. To his surprise, he found joy and simplicity in it. In his own words: “Saheed Osupa is like further mathematics—I can understand it, but Pasuma is simple maths and fun to listen to.” That contrast gave him a broader appreciation for both styles.

Today, Balogun seamlessly weaves his love of music into his content. He often takes a snippet from a song he enjoys and creates a relatable, engaging response for his audience. His ability to connect culture, nostalgia, and humor gives his content a lively, authentic tone, making it resonate deeply with viewers across generations.

The joy of content creation for Idrees Balogun emphasized that content creation has opened doors he never imagined. It has brought him widespread visibility, overwhelming love, and genuine support from fans and fellow creatives alike. His family, he noted, has been his strongest pillar, constantly encouraging and expressing pride in his journey.

His growing influence hasn’t gone unnoticed. Members of Davido’s team have personally

reached out to commend his exceptional work in food content creation. Most notably, Davido himself recently followed Balogun on Instagram, making him one of the most high-profile supporters of the fast-rising chef and content creator.

Among his notable admirers is Eti Oba, one of Nigeria’s most respected and widely followed content creators. The endorsement, according to Balogun, is deeply meaningful. “It brings me so much joy to know that other content creators appreciate and support my work,” he shared.

With growing popularity comes recognition both online and in real life. Balogun recounted moments when strangers approached him in public just to applaud his efforts and encourage him to keep going.

Despite all this attention, he candidly noted that he has yet to receive direct financial support or ambassadorial deals. Still, the momentum is undeniable. With his reach expanding daily and his authenticity resonating across audiences, it seems only a matter of time before major opportunities come calling. As many would say, fame may have arrived, but fortune is just around the corner.

Idrees Rasheed, a.k.a Balogun, moving forward “I don’t want people to see me only as a food content creator... I don’t want to be boxed in. There’s so much more I can do beyond food.”

These were the words of Idrees Rasheed, aka Balogun, as he reflected on the future of his creative journey.

From our conversation, it became clear that Idrees is a vibrant wellspring of creativity, determined not to be limited to a single niche. While his food content may have put him on the map, he is eager to explore other storytelling formats and concepts. “I can do a lot of amazing things,” he said confidently, “except dancing,” he added with a laugh.

For Balogun, content creation is not just about trends or virality; it’s about being in the right mental space and walking in God’s purpose. Though many have suggested he explore large-scale food events like a cookathon, that’s not where he sees his path. Instead, he envisions expanding his creative brand with one constant: the Yoruba language. He believes his authentic use of Yoruba is a unique strength that will continue to set him apart and elevate his work.

As he evolves as a creator, Idrees promises to deliver more diverse, compelling, and jaw-dropping content. His goal? To remain consistent, stay grounded, and keep surprising his audience, one culturally rich story at a time.

Saint Lucia Senate President embraces Nigerian roots, urges renewed ties during Tinubu's visit

By Friday Omosola

The President of Saint Lucia's Senate, Alvina Reynolds, on Monday underscored the profound ancestral connections between Nigeria and Saint Lucia, referencing a 1815 British census that indicated a majority of the island's enslaved population originated from Nigeria.

Addressing a joint session of the Lucian bicameral parliament, where she welcomed Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, Reynolds revealed that out of 16,282 enslaved people in Saint Lucia that year, 3,488 were African-born, with 34% from Nigeria, 11% from Nigeria-Cameroon, and 22% from the Congo.

She further noted that most of the 12,794 individuals born in Saint Lucia had forebears from Senegambia and Nigeria.

Reynolds described Mr Tinubu's presence as a 'historic' moment for the Parliament and the people of Saint Lucia, recognising the transatlantic slave trade's enduring legacy in forging an 'unbreakable historical and cultural link' between Africa and the Caribbean over more than 350 years.

She hailed Mr Tinubu's arrival as the 'rekindling of a mission to reunite us with our homeland and for our people to work together.'

The Senate President also paid homage to Sir Darnley Alexander, a distinguished Saint Lucian who served as Nigeria's Chief Justice from 1975 to 1979, becoming the only non-Nigerian to hold that post in Nigeria's post-independence history.

She highlighted the continued service of Nigerian Catholic priests in Saint Lucia, including Father Festus, as part of this ongoing mission.

Reynolds remarked on the auspicious timing of President Tinubu's address, coinciding with World Parliament Day, an occasion for reflection on the essential role of parliamentary representation.

She lauded Mr Tinubu's historical defence of democracy and good governance in Nigeria, considering it an honour to have him and OECS Heads of Government observe the day.

In his response, Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre characterised the state visit as a moment of 'freedom and celebration, symbolising the enduring spiritual and



cultural bond between the Caribbean and Africa.

He acknowledged the deep ancestral and emotional ties linking Saint Lucians to West Africa, humorously describing Saint Lucia as 'a small fragment of Africa' where the 'genetic Nigerian connection cannot be erased.'

"Our people have been separated, but nothing has ever been able to separate us spiritually and culturally from West Africa, where some of our ancestors came from and for whom our hearts continually yearn," Pierre stated.

He noted that Saint Lucians have built their homes 'in the service of all humanity, especially Africa, in whose direction we continually watch, wait, hope and pray for our future redemption.'

Drawing a size comparison, the Prime Minister quipped that Saint Lucia's population is smaller than Lagos State's Eti-Osa Local Government but affirmed the island's pride as a sovereign nation 'with a heart and spirit deeply connected to the world, Nigeria, and West Africa.'

He commended the invaluable contributions of the Nigerian community to Saint Lucian society, particularly in healthcare, religion, cuisine, tourism, and social development, welcoming their input with gratitude.

Pierre highlighted literary and historical ties, referencing Nobel laureates Wole Soyinka and Derek Walcott, and the legacy

of Sir Darnley Alexander.

He observed that Mr Tinubu's visit occurred exactly 27 years after Nelson Mandela's visit, equating the period to Mandela's time in prison, thus making the day one of 'freedom and celebration.'

Expressing optimism for enhanced Africa-Caribbean cooperation following the inaugural Africa-CARICOM Summit in 2021, the Prime Minister conveyed Saint Lucia's readiness for the second summit in Addis Ababa this September.

He outlined key cooperation areas including tourism, air connectivity, creative industries, sports, banking, fintech, renewable energy, and medical collaboration.

He noted that despite Saint Lucia hosting over a million tourists annually, few are Nigerian due to a lack of direct air links, emphasising that establishing such links would boost tourism, trade, investment, and cultural exchange.

Pierre highlighted the popularity of Nigerian Afrobeats, Nollywood films, and authors like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie among Saint Lucian youth, seeing them as new vehicles for reconnecting with Africa.

He proposed concrete partnerships in creative industries and sports, especially football and cricket, and encouraged Nigerian investors and fintech companies to explore opportunities in Saint Lucia's banking sector.

Britain's last remaining oil refinery faces closure

By Fatimah Idera



One of Britain's last remaining oil refineries is at serious risk of closure following the financial collapse of its parent company, State Oil. The company, which also owns the Prax Group and operates about 200 petrol stations across the UK, has entered administration after suffering escalating losses at its Lindsey Oil Refinery in Lincolnshire.

The refinery, one of just five major facilities still operating in Britain, accounts for around 10% of the country's refining capacity. It employs approximately 440 workers and produces a broad range of fuels, including petrol, diesel, aviation fuel, and bitumen.

The closure threat comes amid broader concerns about the future of the UK's oil and gas sector, particularly in light of the Labour government's decision to ban new drilling in the North Sea. Earlier this year, the Grangemouth refinery in

Scotland also shut down, intensifying fears of industry decline.

On Monday, the Official Receiver was appointed to oversee the safe operation of the Lindsey site, while corporate advisory firm Teneo was brought in to manage the administration process for the wider State Oil group. A government statement is expected shortly, as it is customary for the state to intervene in the management of hazardous industrial sites when insolvency occurs.

Union leaders have called for urgent government action. Unite, which represents hundreds of Lindsey workers, warned that the refinery's collapse could have severe consequences for energy security and local employment. General Secretary Sharon Graham said: "The Lindsey oil refinery is strategically important, and the Government must intervene immediately to protect workers and fuel supplies."

Accounts show that Lindsey's losses nearly doubled to £53 million in the year to February 2023. In contrast, Prax's petrol station network and North Sea oil and gas assets remain profitable. Administrators are now racing to find buyers for these parts of the business.

Teneo said it is assessing all available options, including a potential sale of Prax's upstream and retail operations, which are not part of the insolvency proceedings. Clare Boardman, joint administrator, acknowledged the challenges ahead: "We appreciate this is a very difficult and uncertain time for the employees and everyone involved. We will be on site to support them throughout the process."

The future of the Lindsey refinery and its workers now hinges on whether a buyer can be found or the government steps in with a rescue plan.

NHS to prevent future letby-style scandals through AI

By Fatimah Idera

The NHS is set to deploy artificial intelligence in a pioneering effort to prevent tragedies like the Lucy Letby and Harold Shipman scandals by identifying warning signs of unsafe care before harm occurs.

As part of a new 10-Year Health Plan, an advanced early warning system powered by AI will analyse healthcare data in real time, flagging alarming trends that could indicate abuse, preventable deaths, or serious clinical failures. Once irregular patterns are detected, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will launch urgent inspections without waiting for complaints or whistleblower reports.

The initiative comes in response to historic failures within the health service, including Letby's crimes at the Countess of Chester Hospital, where she was convicted of murdering seven babies and the unchecked killing spree of GP Harold Shipman, who is believed to have murdered hundreds of patients. A Whitehall source said, "This is an early warning system where there is no room for human error. In the past, patterns were missed. That must never happen again."

The AI system will launch in maternity wards across NHS trusts from November, scanning data for unusual spikes in stillbirths, neonatal deaths, and brain injuries. The move follows public outcry over scandals in Shrewsbury, Telford, and East Kent, where years of failings went unnoticed, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of babies.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting, who has launched a national investigation into avoidable baby deaths, said patient safety will be central to the NHS reform. "Even a single lapse that puts a patient at risk is one too many. By embracing AI, we'll detect danger sooner and act before tragedy strikes," he said.



The system, built on the NHS Federated Data Platform recently awarded to US tech firm Palantir, will track performance across trusts and spot worrying trends. Officials insist all data will be handled securely, in line with privacy rules. However, Palantir's role may raise concerns among privacy advocates due to its background in intelligence work and its founder's links to US political figures.

The AI platform aims to catch failures that standard inspections may miss. It will compare data across similar services and look for anomalies such as unexpected spikes in harm or disparities in care outcomes. CQC chief executive Sir Julian Hartley said the watchdog will act faster using data on care inequalities and safety trends to trigger inspections.

"This will enable us to act earlier and conduct more inspections, giving the public quicker access to information about care quality," Hartley said.

The initiative is one part of a broader digital transformation, which also includes shifting care from hospitals into communities and moving the NHS from treating illness to focusing

on prevention. The plan also proposes measures such as ordering supermarkets to cut 100 calories from the average shopping basket as part of a national effort to tackle obesity.

NHS co-national medical director defends strategy

Despite strong support from NHS leadership, concerns remain among frontline staff. Professor Nicola Ranger, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, warned that technology can not replace adequate staffing. "One nurse caring for 10 or more patients is not safe. Inspections may come too late. Investment must begin with staffing," she said.

Professor Meghana Pandit, NHS co-national medical director for secondary care, defended the strategy, saying it would dramatically accelerate the detection and response to safety risks. "This will turbo-charge our ability to act quickly and improve patient care," she said.

With the rollout of AI and digital tools, ministers hope to transform the way the NHS responds to danger, detecting threats before they escalate and making future Letby-style tragedies far less likely.

Starmer set to offer new benefits concessions to appease rebels

By Fatimah Idera



Sir Keir Starmer is preparing to make further concessions to Labour rebels in a last-ditch effort to secure support for his controversial welfare reforms ahead of a crunch Commons vote on Tuesday.

On Monday, the government will publish the terms of reference for its planned review into disability benefits, a move ministers hope will reassure sceptical MPs and shore up support for the Bill. The review, to be led by Welfare Minister Stephen Timms, will include representation from disability rights groups, and is being pitched as a key opportunity for those affected to shape future policy on Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

The Prime Minister was forced to scale back plans for sweeping welfare cuts last week, pledging that existing PIP claimants would not lose their benefits. But despite this retreat, a significant number of Labour backbenchers remain unconvinced and are threatening to vote against the legislation.

Speaking on Sunday, Health Secretary Wes Streeting signalled further movement was possible, noting that ministers would listen to disability campaigners during the review process. Asked on the BBC whether the involvement of rights groups could lead

to more concessions, he replied: "There is a review on PIP, and we've got to listen."

While some high-profile rebels, including former transport secretary Louise Haigh, have since agreed to back the proposals, party insiders say the leadership remains concerned about the risk of defeat. "They are worried they still might lose the vote because many Labour MPs remain unconvinced," a source said to the media

A government source confirmed that more detail will be shared on Monday: "We are publishing the terms of reference tomorrow. We understand MPs still have some concerns. They want clarification and reassurance, and we think we'll be able to provide that."

However, the fallout from the proposals has already weakened Starmer's authority. Senior Labour MPs have voiced frustration over what they describe as a lack of consultation and poor communication from Downing Street. Some suggest the episode has damaged the Prime Minister's credibility just weeks into office.

Graham Stringer MP said: "The proposals are not welfare reform. They are cuts on disabled people who need money. I think any PM who can't get a Bill through the Commons as he originally intended has their authority

diminished."

Resigned frontbencher Vicky Foxcroft echoed that sentiment that Labour whips had long warned No 10 that the welfare cuts were unpopular among MPs. "The Prime Minister needs to be in listening mode more," she said, noting that the climbdown may still not be enough to win her support.

Ms. Haigh also criticised the handling of the policy rollout, describing it as rushed and short-sighted, but acknowledged that recent steps pointed to a willingness to change course. "Now that mistakes have been acknowledged," she said, "we're hopeful this is a real opportunity to reset and learn serious lessons."

Despite rumours of discontent within the party and speculation about future leadership ambitions, Mr Streeting dismissed suggestions he was on manoeuvres, branding them mischief-making. He insisted: "We have got in Keir Starmer a Prime Minister who is delivering real change."

Still, many MPs remain uneasy. One senior labour figure warned: "A Prime Minister can't announce a series of policy reversals in a matter of weeks without losing political capital. That's where we now are."

UN says climate crisis poses serious threat to basic human rights

By Damilola Olufemi

As a blistering heatwave swept through southern Europe, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, on Monday issued a stark warning that the escalating climate crisis poses a serious threat to basic human rights, including the right to life.

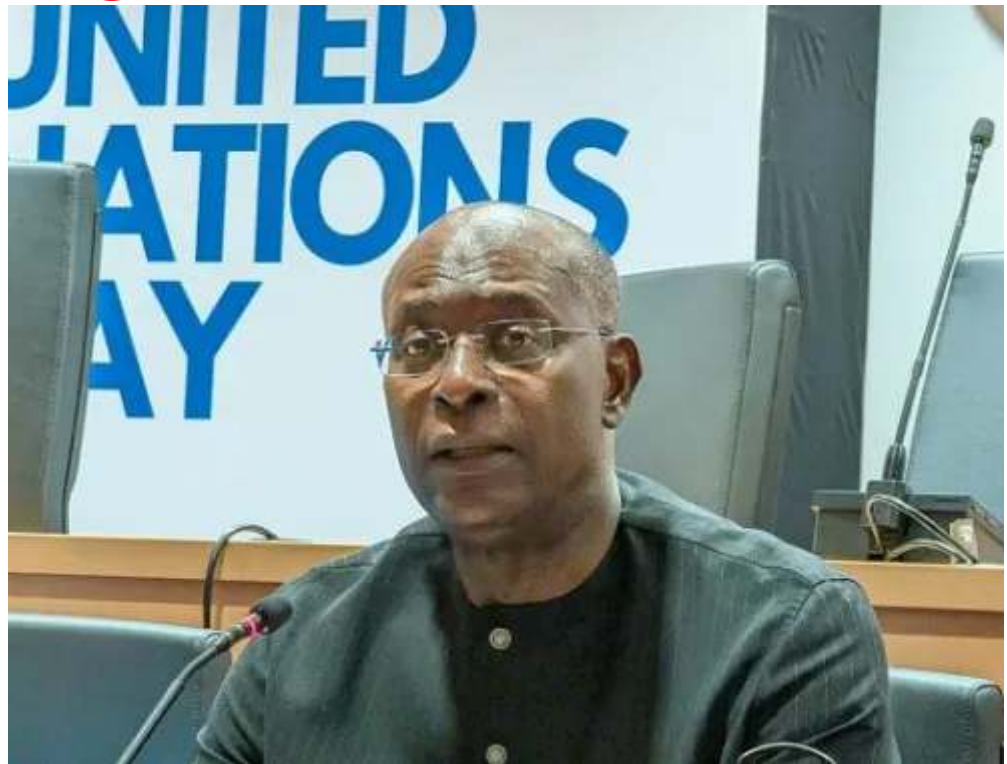
According to the UN on its website, no corner of the globe is immune to the devastating consequences of climate change.

“Rising temperatures are fueling environmental degradation, natural disasters, weather extremes, food and water insecurity, economic disruption, conflict, and terrorism. Sea levels are rising, the Arctic is melting, coral reefs are dying, oceans are acidifying, and forests are burning. It is clear that business as usual is not good enough. As the infinite cost of climate change reaches irreversible highs, now is the time for bold collective action,”

Speaking at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Türk didn’t hold back in his criticism of the fossil fuel industry. “The climate crisis is a human rights crisis,” he declared. “Rising temperatures, rising seas, floods, droughts, and wildfires threaten our rights to life, to health, to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and much more.”

He called out fossil fuel companies for spreading misinformation and engaging in greenwashing while continuing to profit from practices that exacerbate climate change. “Fossil fuel corporations perpetuate misinformation and disinformation, and peddle false solutions... that distract from continued damage,” he said.

The extreme temperatures hitting parts of Europe, he noted, should serve as a wake-up call to intensify



climate adaptation efforts. In Paris, for example, temperatures soared to 35°C, driving people to seek relief in the shade or cool off with ice cream, as captured in images of the sweltering capital.

Türk stressed that if the global shift away from fossil fuels is poorly managed, it risks deepening inequality. “Without a just transition, the rich and powerful will benefit while the poor and vulnerable will be left behind,” he warned.

UN commissioner speaks on financial strain on developing nations

He also criticised the current state of corporate accountability, calling it “utterly inadequate,” and demanded consequences for those profiting from environmental degradation. “We must ensure that those who have caused and benefited from planetary harm pay for it,” he said.

Another key concern raised by Türk was the financial strain on

developing nations. He pointed out that much of the international funding for climate action comes as loans, worsening debt burdens. “Some 3.3 billion people now live in countries that spend more on debt interest than on education or health, with a clear impact on the enjoyment of human rights,” he said. “In many emerging economies, debt repayments outweigh climate investments.”

Türk argued that international human rights law could be a powerful force in driving climate action, referencing recent landmark rulings from global courts that have clarified state obligations regarding environmental protection.

In a symbolic gesture acknowledging the heat in Geneva — where temperatures were expected to reach 33°C — the president of the Human Rights Council relaxed the usual dress code, removing his tie during the session.

Israel escalates Gaza offensive despite ceasefire talks resuming in Washington

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Israel has ramped up its offensive in Gaza, with airstrikes killing around 60 Palestinians and fresh evacuation orders forcing tens of thousands to flee northern areas of the devastated enclave. The escalation came as a senior adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in Washington for renewed ceasefire talks.

Ron Dermer, Israel's strategic affairs minister and a close ally of Netanyahu, is set to meet US officials to discuss indirect negotiations with Hamas, the aftermath of Israel's military campaign against Iran, and broader regional diplomacy.

A spokesperson for the Israeli government stated on Monday that Netanyahu is working to end the war "as soon as possible" through the release of hostages and the defeat of Hamas. Of the 251 hostages initially taken on 7 October 2023, more than half are believed to have died.

New evacuation orders were issued in and around Gaza City, warning of impending military operations and instructing civilians to head south. However, the southern coastal areas are already overcrowded, with limited access to water, medical care and shelter. Approximately 80% of Gaza is now

either under evacuation orders or controlled by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF).

The IDF said it was preparing to advance further into central Gaza City to target Hamas militants. Tanks and infantry pushed into the Zeitoun neighbourhood on Monday, while airstrikes hit several areas in the north, including four schools where families had sought refuge. Hundreds were told to evacuate before the bombings.

"Explosions never stopped; they bombed schools and homes. It felt like earthquakes," said Salah, 60, a resident of Gaza City. "In the news, we hear a ceasefire is near; on the ground, we see death and we hear explosions."

Later that day, an Israeli airstrike targeted a crowded seaside café in Gaza City, killing at least 22 people, including women, children, and a journalist. The IDF claimed it was targeting command and control centres used by militants and said steps were taken to minimise harm to civilians.

Though a new ceasefire may be under consideration, both Israel and Hamas have so far maintained incompatible positions. Hamas insists on a permanent end to the war and refuses to disarm,

while Israel has vowed to continue operations until Hamas is fully dismantled and its leaders leave Gaza.

The intensification of Israeli attacks aligns with a pattern observed throughout the conflict, where military offensives have coincided with key negotiation moments. Analysts suggest this tactic may be aimed at gaining territorial leverage to use as a bargaining tool during talks.

Israel's Zamir speaks on ceasefire

Israel's Chief of Staff, Eyal Zamir, said on Friday that the current offensive, launched in May after the collapse of a two-month ceasefire in March, was close to achieving its objectives. Netanyahu, having solidified his political standing domestically, is now better positioned to withstand pressure from far-right coalition members opposed to any deal.

However, calls for an end to the conflict are growing louder. Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid told parliament on Monday: "There is no longer any benefit for the state of Israel from continuing the war in Gaza. Only damage on the security, political and economic level. The army has no more objectives in Gaza."

Europe scorched by vicious heatwave

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Southern Europe is sweltering under a punishing heatwave, with temperatures reaching a blistering 46°C in parts of Spain and nearly all of mainland France placed under weather alert.

The extreme heat, intensified by fossil fuel-driven climate change, has enveloped Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Greece in the season's first major heatwave, sparking health warnings, wildfires, and widespread disruption.

In Turkey, more than 50,000 people have been evacuated from their homes due to raging forest fires, according to the country's interior ministry and disaster management agency. Across Europe, authorities have scrambled emergency services to combat the growing threat of wildfires and heat-related health risks.

At a development conference in Seville on Monday, UN Secretary-General António Guterres issued a stark warning: "Extreme heat is no longer a rare event, it has become the new normal." In his home country of Portugal, a sweltering 46.6°C was recorded in Mora, east of Lisbon, potentially a new record for June, pending official confirmation.

Spain's heatwave

Spain has borne the brunt of the heatwave. On Saturday, a June temperature record of 46°C was set in El Granado, Andalucía, breaking the previous high of 45.2°C recorded in Seville in 1965. Sunday marked the hottest 29 June in Spanish history, according to the national meteorological agency Aemet, with the brutal heat expected to continue until Thursday.

Doctors across the continent have voiced concern over the combination of scorching daytime temperatures and persistently hot nights, with minimums of 25°C expected in some regions, which places intense strain on the human body, particularly among older adults and those with chronic illnesses.



Italy has placed 21 of its 27 major cities on the highest level of heat alert, with some hospitals in regions like Tuscany reporting a 20% rise in admissions. Residents have been advised to avoid going outside between 11 am and 6 pm.

In France, Météo-France has issued orange heat alerts for 88% of administrative departments, the first time such widespread warnings have been enacted. "This is unprecedented," said ecology minister Agnès Pannier-Runacher. Authorities have asked businesses to adjust working hours to protect employees, and over 200 schools are partially or fully closed. A wildfire in the south-west burned 400 hectares over the weekend, forcing more than 100 people to evacuate.

Germany, too, is on alert. The weather service has warned of increased wildfire risk, and some municipalities have restricted water usage as temperatures are expected to reach 40°C by midweek. In Brandenburg, which surrounds Berlin, employers have been reminded of their legal obligations to protect workers from extreme heat.

In the UK, temperatures could hit 34°C

in London and the south-east, with the Met Office warning of "uncomfortable" conditions for outdoor workers and festival-goers leaving Glastonbury or attending Wimbledon.

Urban heat is proving especially dangerous. "Populations in urban areas like London are particularly susceptible," said Dr Radhika Khosla of the University of Oxford. "Concrete and asphalt absorb and re-emit the sun's radiation, amplifying its impact. Outdoor workers must take regular breaks, hydrate, and seek shade."

Across Europe, volunteers from the Red Cross and Red Crescent are handing out water, supporting emergency services, and checking in on vulnerable individuals. Fires are also being battled in Greece and Norway.

Heat is already one of the deadliest natural hazards, claiming around 500,000 lives globally each year. Scientists warn that climate change is only intensifying the risk. A persistent heat dome, a weather pattern trapping high-pressure hot air, is driving the current crisis in Europe and simultaneously scorching parts of the US.

Messi reacts to Inter Miami's heavy club world cup defeat

By Gbenga Olaleye

Inter Miami captain Lionel Messi has responded following his team's 4-0 loss to Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) in the Club World Cup Round of 16 on Sunday.

PSG's goals came from a brace by João Neves, an own goal by Tomas Aviles, and a strike from Achraf Hakimi, eliminating Inter Miami from the tournament. PSG will now face Bayern Munich in the quarter-finals.

Messi took to Instagram to reflect on the defeat, urging his team to focus on the Major League Soccer (MLS) season and other upcoming competitions.

"Today the Club World Cup ends for us with defeat against the Champions League winners, where there are players I appreciate and that gave me joy to see them again," Messi wrote.



The Argentina captain also expressed pride in Inter Miami's achievement of reaching the top 16 of the tournament and

looks forward to the challenges ahead.

Messi joined Inter Miami in 2023 after two seasons with PSG.

Alcaraz survives, Sabalenka cruises on Wimbledon's hottest opening day

By New Daily Prime

Carlos Alcaraz survived a major scare in his Wimbledon opener on Monday while Aryna Sabalenka kept her cool to progress on the hottest opening day in the tournament's history.

Temperatures at the All England Club on Monday topped 32 degrees Celsius (89.6 Fahrenheit), surpassing the previous record for the start of the tournament of 29.3 Celsius set in 2001.

Alcaraz dug deep for a 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 7-5, 2-6, 6-1 win over 38-year-old Fabio Fognini in a gruelling clash lasting four hours and 37 minutes on Centre Court.

It was first time since Roger Federer narrowly beat Alejandro Falla in 2010 that a defending champion had been taken to a fifth set in the Wimbledon first round.

Alcaraz shrugged off an inconsistent display including 62 unforced errors as the world number two refused to wilt in



the heat.

"I don't know why it is probably Fabio's last Wimbledon because the level he has shown shows he can still play for three or four more years," said the Spaniard.

"Playing on Centre Court for the first match of any tournament is never easy. Wimbledon is special and different. I just tried to play my best but I would say that I could play better."



During the match the 22-year-old rushed to help a spectator who had collapsed in the stands, handing over a bottle of water as medics came to the woman's aid.

Alcaraz, who has never lost in a Grand Slam first round in 18 appearances, faces British qualifier Oliver Tarvet in the second round.