



**Tinubu to attend West Africa economic summit in Abuja**

**Pg 4**

**Ondo govt approves death penalty for kidnappers**

**Pg 13**



# The New Daily Prime

f @new daily prime x @prime\_daili149 @ @new\_daily\_prime

...your prime source for excellence in journalism

## Akpabio predicts defection of Rivers, Bayelsa govs to APC

● Senate President expresses confidence in South-South

**Pg 5**



**Popular gospel singer, Shola Allyson, joins Sony Music**

**Pg 15**



**Starmer defends activist linked to military aircraft sabotage**

**Pg 20**

**Trump to get nomination for Nobel Peace Prize from Pakistan amid mixed reactions**

**Pg 21**



**UK court to hear Shell oil spill case from Nigerian communities in 2027**

**Pg 25**

# FG moves to end malnutrition as Shettima inaugurates nutrition 774 strategic board

By Friday Omosola

**T**he Federal Government (FG) has taken a major step to tackle Nigeria's growing malnutrition crisis with the inauguration of the Strategic Board of the Nutrition 774 Initiative by Vice President Kashim Shettima.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony held yesterday at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, Mr Shettima described the newly formed board as a 'war room' tasked with winning the battle against malnutrition across the country's 774 local government areas.

"This Strategic Board is not a ceremonial committee; it is a war room, assembled to win the battle against malnutrition in every corner of this country," he declared.

He emphasised the urgency of the assignment, warning that malnutrition is a national emergency with dire implications for public health, productivity, and national security.

"This is not a tea-drinking exercise. This is a national call to duty. A race against time. A mission to save lives and safeguard our future," the Mr Shettima said, urging board members to treat their appointments with utmost seriousness.

The Nutrition 774 Initiative, according to Mr Shettima, is a bold response by the Tinubu administration to what he called 'a quiet emergency' affecting families, schools, health centres, and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps nationwide.

"A nation that neglects the physiological needs of its people, particularly the most vulnerable, flirts with instability," he warned.

"A malnourished population is an unproductive one, and an unproductive population drags down the wheels of progress."

Mr Shettima said the initiative aims to harmonise fragmented nutrition efforts, reduce duplication, and foster a unified



framework for action and measurable impact.

More so, the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Atiku Bagudu, lauded Shettima's leadership on the issue, saying: "There are issues that ministries and the entire MDAs ought to deal with, but you have elevated them under your supervision. It's commendable, and we pray that God continues to protect and reward you."

Mr Bagudu linked Mr Shettima's commitment to his personal experience of conflict and food insecurity in Borno State, noting that his leadership on nutrition and food security stems from 'a reckoning with history.'

Also speaking, the Minister of Women Affairs, Hajiya Sulaiman-Ibrahim, called for the economic empowerment of women and households headed by children, particularly in areas affected by conflict.

"In homes headed by eleven-year-olds because both parents have been lost, how do they feed? This is an economic issue, and we have to come out strongly. As part of this plan, I would like you to address the economic empowerment of women," she said.

The Chairman of the House Committee on Nutrition and Food Security, Chike Okafor, assured that the National

Assembly is fully backing the Nutrition 774 initiative, pledging legislative support to ensure its success.

"This initiative is about taking solutions to the grassroots. You have all the legislative support necessary, and we will ensure everything needed is done," Okafor said.

Earlier, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Public Health (Office of the Vice President), Uju Anwuka, described the malnutrition crisis as a threat to human capital development, saying the initiative aligns with President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

"By addressing malnutrition, the initiative will strengthen educational outcomes, productivity, and health equity across Nigeria," she said, adding that strong leadership, strategic partnerships, and community involvement will be key to achieving its objectives.

The Nutrition 774 Initiative is expected to mobilise national, state, and local efforts to combat malnutrition and improve the health and productivity of Nigerians—particularly the most vulnerable.

# THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

## PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

## PRODUCT COLOUR

## EFFECTIVE FROM DECEMBER 1, 2024

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

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

## POLITICAL COLOUR

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

## POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

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

## CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

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

## SPECIAL POSITIONS

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

## PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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

## PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

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

## ALLURE RATE

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

## PICTURE & CAPTION

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

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

2,000.00  
3,750.00  
4,250.00

## CONTACT US

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

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

**ALL RATES ARE VAT INCLUSIVE**



# Tinubu to attend West Africa economic summit in Abuja

By **Gbenga Olaleye**



**P**resident Bola Ahmed Tinubu is set to attend the West Africa Economic Summit (WAES) today, Saturday, 21 June 2025, at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre in Abuja.

The summit, now in its second and final day, precedes the 67th Ordinary Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), scheduled for Sunday, 22 June 2025, at the State House Conference Centre, Abuja.

The Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, disclosed in a statement titled 'President Tinubu To Advance Economic Integration At The West Africa Economic Summit' that the initiative, under President Tinubu's leadership as Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, marks the first of its kind aimed at deepening regional economic integration.

"WAES strongly focuses on enhancing trade and investment cooperation across the subregion," Onanuga noted.

President Tinubu has extended invitations to Member States of the Alliance of Sahelian States and Mauritania, signalling his commitment to inclusive dialogue and regional cooperation.

Confirmed participants include the Presidents of Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, The Gambia, Benin, Togo, and Guinea-Bissau.

The summit is expected to deliver tangible outcomes that will accelerate West Africa's integration agenda, which is crucial for sustainable peace, security, and prosperity in the region.

Ministers of Finance, Trade, Infrastructure, and Foreign Affairs from ECOWAS member states, along with representatives from key regional

economic institutions such as the West African Monetary Agency, West African Monetary Institute, ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development, West African Economic and Monetary Union, and the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat, are also in attendance.

Private sector leaders, development partners, and policy experts form part of the broad spectrum of participants.

Ahead of the summit, President Tinubu deployed a delegation of Special Envoys to deliver formal invitations to Heads of State and Government across the region.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, led the team, accompanied by the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Sola Enikanolaiye.



# Akpabio predicts defection of Rivers, Bayelsa govs to APC

By Damilola Olufemi



Senate President Godswill Akpabio has hinted that Governors Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers State and Douye Diri of Bayelsa may soon join the All Progressives Congress (APC), signalling a potential political realignment in the South-South region.

Akpabio made the statement on Saturday during a reception held at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo, Akwa Ibom, to formally welcome Governor Umo Eno into the APC. Eno had earlier announced his defection from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on June 6.

The event attracted key figures in the ruling party, including Vice President Kashim Shettima, APC National Chairman Abdullahi Ganduje, as well as several governors and senators elected on the party's platform.

Describing the occasion as more than a political crossover, Akpabio called it a "reunification of Akwa Ibom with

Nigeria," asserting that recent defections by governors like Eno and Delta State's Sheriff Oborevwori indicate a growing shift of the South-South towards the APC.

"It was a little bit of a surprise when we (South-South) attempted to go different ways in 2023," Akpabio said. "Today, Governor Otu is no longer an orphan. Thank you for being here to welcome your brothers, and you will welcome more brothers."

Acknowledging Oborevwori's alignment with the ruling party, Akpabio continued, "Governor Sheriff of Delta, thank you for joining the progressives' family and moving the South-South in the progressives' direction."

He went on to suggest that the next wave of defections could come from Rivers and Bayelsa. "Governor Umo Eno, after you, who knows? Rivers State will tumble. After Rivers, Bayelsa will join," he predicted.

Akpabio also celebrated the APC's recent electoral gain in Edo State. "Of course, we have won the election in Edo State. We produced our amiable senator, Monday Okpebholo," he said.

Akpabio expresses confidence in South-South

Looking ahead to 2027, the Senate President expressed confidence that the entire South-South region would rally behind President Bola Tinubu in his re-election bid.

"Come 2027, South-South will go one way; the South-South will vote for President Bola Tinubu," he declared.

He concluded with a bold forecast, saying, "I see you becoming the first re-elected governor in 2027. I see the president getting 99.9% votes in 2027."

Currently, the APC controls four of the six states in the South-South, with Rivers and Bayelsa still under PDP leadership.

# COAS vows justice over killings in Benue, Plateau

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant General Olufemi Oluyede, has assured Nigerians that the military is resolutely committed to bringing to justice those responsible for the recent surge in violence across Benue, Plateau, and other troubled regions.

Speaking on Saturday during the Nigerian Army Headquarters' Second Quarter 2025 Media Chat held in Akure, the COAS reiterated the army's determination to restore peace, particularly in the volatile North-Central states.

The event, organised by the Department of Civil-Military Affairs, was themed 'Military-Media Collaboration: Panacea for Enhanced National Security and Development'.

Represented by Major General Obinna Onubogu, General Officer Commanding (GOC) 2 Division, Nigerian Army, Ibadan, Oluyede emphasised that the



military is fully deployed and acting under presidential directives to tackle the security challenges head-on.

"In Benue especially, expect more elaborate and strategic security arrangements in the coming weeks aimed at ending the violence," he stated.

Oluyede appealed to community leaders and residents to provide timely and reliable intelligence, highlighting that

delayed or inaccurate information often hampers military operations.

"Nigeria is vast, and the army isn't as large in numbers as people may assume. We depend heavily on the support of the people," he said.

He also called on the media to exercise caution by verifying facts before publication, especially amid the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation on social media platforms.

"Sensationalism only worsens public anxiety and undermines national efforts," Oluyede warned.

The COAS's message underscores the critical need for unity between the military, local communities, and the press in combating insecurity and fostering lasting peace in Nigeria.

# Why NNPCCL spokesperson, Femi Soneye, resigned

By Damilola Olufemi

The Chief Corporate Communications Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), Femi Soneye, has officially resigned from his position.

In a statement released personally on Saturday, Soneye explained that his decision to leave was driven by a desire to focus on family and personal ventures.

"I wish to inform you that I have stepped aside from my role as Chief Corporate Communications Officer of NNPC Ltd. This decision will allow me to devote more time to my family and attend to personal responsibilities that now require my closer presence," he said.

Reflecting on his nearly two years at the helm of NNPCCL's communications team, Soneye expressed deep appreciation to his colleagues and stakeholders for their support.

"I extend my heartfelt gratitude to you all for the unwavering support, professionalism, and genuine commitment you've shown in helping to shape and amplify the NNPC Ltd story



over the past 20 months," he said.

He acknowledged the collective effort in strengthening the company's communications image, saying, "Your role in building a vibrant and effective communications presence for our national energy company has been nothing short of invaluable."

Soneye said it had been a privilege to contribute to the ongoing transformation of NNPCCL. "It has been a profound honour to serve both the Company and our

country... I am deeply grateful for the trust reposed in me, the opportunities granted, and the incredible professionals both within and outside the organisation with whom I have worked."

Soneye pledges support for NNPCCL

He pledged continued support for NNPCCL. "I remain a steadfast supporter and ambassador of NNPC Ltd wherever I go," he wrote, urging his colleagues to maintain their commitment. "I enjoin you, dear colleagues, to continue your robust, balanced, and constructive reportage in support of the Company's noble mission and strategic role in Nigeria's energy future."

Before his appointment, he was the publisher of Per Second News, an online news medium. He replaced Mr Garba Muhammad.

In a statement on its X/Twitter handle, the national oil company described Soneye as a seasoned and respected journalist, stressing that he would help deepen the company's strategic communications.



# Gov Sani demands arrest of killers of Kaduna indigenes in Plateau

By Oluwaotosin Ologun



**K**aduna State Governor, Uba Sani, has condemned the killing of 12 Kaduna State citizens in the Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The victims were said to be travelling from Zaria in Kaduna State for a wedding in Quan Pan Local Government Area of Plateau State when the mob at Mangun district intercepted them.

The travellers were killed instantly, while several others sustained various degrees of injuries during the attack.

Expressing shock and sadness over such an act of savagery, Governor Sani, in a statement, called on security agencies to immediately arrest and prosecute those behind the attack.

He vowed that the Kaduna State Government would not leave a stone unturned until the criminals were hunted down and brought to justice.

The governor said, “We must put a stop to the nefarious activities of non-state actors. There is no justification for anybody to attack any citizen of Nigeria in any part of the country. This madness must stop. Enough is enough”.

Governor Sani, therefore, appealed to his Plateau State counterpart, Caleb Mutfwang, to use the unfortunate incident to make a bold statement by taking full charge of the situation and directing the operations of security agencies until the murderers are brought to justice.

The governor promised to personally follow up on the progress made in the investigations and field operations in search of the criminals to send a clear signal that impunity will no longer be tolerated.

He, however, called on the citizens of Kaduna State to remain calm, stating that all hands are on deck to ensure that

the victims get justice.

Sani also consoled the families of the victims over the loss of their loved ones.

He said, “We have made remarkable progress in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Kaduna State. The Kaduna Peace Model is a pointer to the fact that with political will, commitment, and sincerity of purpose, a toxic environment can be turned into an ‘oasis of peace’.

“The situation in Plateau State is not irredeemable. The bloodshed must stop. Our deepest condolences to the families of our citizens who lost their precious lives in Mangu Local Government. I am in touch with the families of the victims. We shall do all in our power to lessen their pains. We shall also ensure that the injured victims receive adequate medical attention. May the gentle souls of our departed citizens rest in perfect peace”.



# Lagos First Lady leads anti-drug campaign at LASU, urges youth engagement

By Friday Omosola

**L**agos State First Lady, Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, led a high-profile campaign against drug abuse and illicit substance use at Lagos State University (LASU), Ojo, in commemoration of the 2025 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The sensitisation event, organised by the Office of the First Lady, brought together key stakeholders including the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), LASU's War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) team, Lagos State Ministries of Health and Youth and Social Development, and other advocacy groups.

Mrs Sanwo-Olu was joined by the wife of the Deputy Governor, Oluremi Hamzat; the Vice Chancellor of LASU, Prof. Ibiyemi Olatunji-Bello; and other prominent figures for an awareness walk from LASU's main gate to the Buba Marwa Auditorium, symbolising collective commitment to ending drug abuse in schools and communities.

Addressing the gathering, she reaffirmed her dedication to combating substance abuse, especially among youths.

She encouraged LASU students to join the institution's WADA group, become peer advocates, and promote a drug-free lifestyle.

"To the students of LASU, I invite you to join the LASU WADA Group. Help us spread this message, protect your peers, and become the voice that inspires a shift in mindset," she urged.

Mrs Sanwo-Olu also called on LASU Radio and other campus media to help amplify anti-drug messages, adding that the state government, under Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, remained committed to addressing drug-related challenges through relevant ministries and the Inter-Ministerial Drug Abuse Control



Committee.

However, Mrs Hamzat described drug abuse as a global crisis needing urgent attention, while advocating mental health support and an end to the stigmatisation of those struggling with addiction.

"Addiction is often a symptom of deeper mental health issues that go undiagnosed for too long. We must stop stigmatising and start supporting," she said.

More so, Chairman of the Lagos State House of Assembly Committee on Youth and Social Development, Abiodun Orekoya, lauded the First Lady's efforts and assured that the Assembly would continue to support policies aimed at reducing drug abuse.

Also, Prof. Olatunji-Bello expressed appreciation to the First Lady for choosing LASU as the campaign venue, affirming the university's commitment to supporting awareness and prevention initiatives that safeguard student well-being.

"At LASU, we are deeply committed to not only academic excellence but also the holistic well-being of our students," she

stated.

NDLEA Lagos Commander, Abubakar Lima Wali, stressed the need for collective action in the fight against drug abuse.

He called for increased grassroots advocacy, school-based preventive education, and support for rehabilitation programmes.

Chairperson of the WADA Committee, Olubukonla Nwonah, thanked the First Lady for her leadership and acknowledged LASU's hospitality and stakeholder collaboration.

As part of the campaign activities, Mrs Sanwo-Olu unveiled an anti-drug signpost and commissioned a symbolic mural at the LASU Students Arcade.

She was also presented with a recognition plaque by the university in appreciation of her role in championing the anti-drug cause.

Several LASU staff and students were decorated as WADA Ambassadors, tasked with spreading the message of drug-free living beyond the university.

# APC chieftain slams El-Rufai, accuses him of hypocrisy, division

By Gbenga Olaleye



A prominent chieftain of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in Kaduna State, Mallam Suleiman Salisu, has voiced strong disapproval over the conduct of certain former public officials who, despite their “woeful” records in office, now openly criticise the current administration.

Speaking in Kaduna, Salisu expressed “great concern” regarding the recent comments made by former Kaduna State Governor, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, accusing him of hypocrisy and stirring disunity during his tenure.

According to Salisu, El-Rufai, who governed the state for eight years, bears responsibility for the divisions currently plaguing Kaduna.

“Does it mean that Nigerians have forgotten in a hurry what the immediate former governor did while in office for good eight years?” he asked.

“Go to the southern part of Kaduna metropolis, largely inhabited by Christians – El-Rufai completely neglected them. No infrastructure, no roads, no basic amenities, as if they are not part of the state capital.”

Salisu also pointed to the alarming insecurity that characterised much of El-Rufai’s tenure, particularly the widespread kidnappings and killings. “Are you talking of going to Birnin Gwari, Kafanchan or Abuja? How many lives were lost? How many Nigerians were kidnapped?” he questioned, citing the ongoing violence in areas such as Zangon Kataf Local Government and Atyap Chieftdom.

He lamented that despite what he described as a poor track record, El-Rufai has now taken to public platforms portraying himself as a saint.

“Today, the former governor is

everywhere speaking as a saint, condemning the present administration. And Nigerians believe these are the type of politicians fit to lead the country? What real solutions does El-Rufai have to offer?” he asked.

Salisu called on Nigerians to be more discerning and not be swayed by what he termed as the antics of “selfish politicians” who, after leaving office, contribute little but criticism.

“Nigerians must wake up from their slumber and sincerely seek out leaders who can truly salvage the country from its current state,” he urged.

“The challenges we face are serious enough to make us reflect and choose reasonable leaders who can lift us from this quagmire.”

The remarks come amidst growing political tension in the state and rising criticism of the federal government’s handling of national affairs.

# Keyamo mocks new ADA coalition, labels it 'pedestrian joke'

By Gbenga Olaleye



Nigeria's Minister of Aviation, Festus Keyamo, has ridiculed the formation of the All Democratic Alliance (ADA), dismissing it as an overhyped political effort lacking genuine coalition strength.

In a statement posted on his official X (formerly Twitter) account on Friday, Keyamo criticised the political buzz surrounding the registration application submitted by ADA to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The ADA, reportedly backed by the Nigerian National Coalition Group (NNCG), counts among its key supporters former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and ex-Kaduna State Governor Nasir el-Rufai.

The party's application, dated 19

June, was signed by its National Chairman, Akin Ricketts, and Pro Tem National Secretary, Abdullahi Musa Elayo.

Reacting, Keyamo dismissed the development as an unremarkable attempt to gain attention.

"This is just a simple application for party registration. There is nothing like a 'coalition' here," he wrote.

"It is an unnecessary hype the promoters have been struggling to create all along."

The Aviation Minister argued that unlike the grand political alliance that led to the formation of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2013, ADA lacks both scale and substance.

"If they are thinking of recreating what the APC did in 2013, then this is nothing but a pedestrian joke—a complete mockery of that seismic political coalition."

He further accused ADA's promoters of launching psychological warfare against Nigerians, claiming the effort was a "weak attempt at mass appeal" and lacking support from any major political party.

"In the end, it is simply a group of individuals exercising their constitutional right to register a party. Nothing more," Keyamo added.

The ADA's formation has stirred political speculation ahead of the 2027 general elections, but Keyamo's remarks signal the ruling party's dismissive stance on what some are calling a potential third force.



# Makinde defends N63.4bn govt house renovation, cites dollar-naira fluctuation

By Damilola Olufemi



Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, has defended the controversial ₦63.4 billion earmarked for the renovation of the Government House, attributing the high cost to Nigeria's volatile exchange rate and broader economic instability.

The figure, which has sparked criticism and debate among citizens and stakeholders, was addressed by the governor during a special session of the State House of Assembly to commemorate its second anniversary.

Governor Makinde explained that the project's cost is a reflection of the current naira-dollar exchange rate, noting that fluctuations in the currency market have significantly impacted financial planning across the board.

He said, "Our economy is bearing the brunt of a weak naira. When we assumed office, monthly repayment on our foreign debt stood at ₦700 million. Today, we are repaying ₦3 billion monthly."

He pointed out that a major portion of the state's foreign debt, currently above

₦300 billion, stems from a \$200 million World Bank loan inherited from the previous administration under late Governor Abiola Ajimobi. According to Makinde, the loan was secured when the exchange rate was around ₦350 to a dollar, translating then to roughly ₦70 billion.

"But due to the depreciation of the naira, that same loan now requires far more in repayment terms," he said.

Makinde speaks further

Lamenting the limited influence of state governments in national monetary policy, Makinde added, "As a sub-national, Oyo State does not influence exchange rate decisions. Yet, we bear the consequences in our fiscal planning."

Amid the economic constraints, the governor also unveiled plans to bolster state security with the procurement of two aircraft for aerial surveillance.

"These aircraft will not only strengthen our security framework, but also mark the 50th anniversary of Oyo State's creation from the old Western Region,"

he said, describing the initiative as part of a broader strategy to protect lives and property.

During the plenary, Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, Adebayo Ogundoyin, commended the cooperation between the executive and legislative branches, saying it has been central to the state's progress so far.

"Our achievements are the result of strong collaboration and shared purpose," he said. "The next two years will come with tougher demands, and we must rise to meet them with renewed commitment."

Ogundoyin also announced the recruitment of 181 new staff into the Assembly, emphasising that the process will be transparent and based strictly on merit.

He reaffirmed the Assembly's dedication to enacting impactful laws and conducting effective oversight, saying, "We will continue to ensure that the voices of our people remain at the heart of everything we do."

# Alao-Akala Estate dispute: Daughter wants ex-governor's body exhumed

By Alade Adisa

The dispute over how to share the vast estate left behind by former Oyo State Governor, Adebayo Alao-Akala, has escalated, as one of his daughters, Oluwatoyin Alao-Aderinto, is seeking the approval of the court to get the corpse of the deceased exhumed and a Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) test conducted on seven persons claiming to be the deceased's children.

She has therefore filed an application to that effect before an Oyo State High Court sitting in Ibadan.

The court is presided over by Justice Taiwo.

In the case marked I/443/2024, Mrs Alao-Aderinto, through her counsel, Oladipo Olosope, is praying the court to direct that the DNA tests be carried out on herself, Olamide, Adebukola, Olamipo, Olamiju, a serving member of the House of Representatives, Tabitha and Olamikunle, as listed in the motion on notice filed before the court.

She wants the test to be conducted at a court approved, accredited laboratory to determine their true biological relationship with the late governor.

As part of the application, Mrs Alao-Aderinto is also seeking an order of court, directing the exhumation of Otunba Alao-Akala's remains from the mausoleum built in his Ogbomoso country home for the purpose of carrying out the paternity test.

The results of the tests, she pleaded, should be filed under a sealed envelope and delivered directly to the presiding judge for pronouncement in open court.

The fresh application brought before the court is a new twist in what has become a messy and prolonged family feud over the vast estate of the late politician, who died intestate on January 12, 2022.

The crisis, which has been brewing silently since his burial, became public



in October 2022 when one Kemi Alao-Akala and Olamide Alabi, believed to be one of the deceased's daughters, obtained a Letter of Administration from the Oyo State Probate Registry without the knowledge or consent of Mrs Alao-Aderinto, the first child.

This singular act, she contends, is a deliberate and unlawful exclusion that contravenes applicable laws guiding intestate succession in Nigeria.

In her affidavit and accompanying exhibit filed in support of her motion, she accused the duo of manipulating facts to claim sole control over the estate, despite the presence of other biological children and heirs.

The estate in question is said to be massive, including several properties in Ibadan, Lagos, Abuja, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

There is also a five star hotel in Ghana, vehicles and multiple bank accounts containing hundreds of millions of naira, dollars and pounds sterling.

Mrs Alao-Aderinto's position on her deceased father's estate stems from her strong resolve at ensuring that every individual, including nuclear and

extended family members, aides of the former governor, who served him meritoriously without blemish and yet to identified children among many others are catered for, as against the winner takes it all approach adopted by the duo of the defendants.

The said administrators listed only seven individuals as legal heirs, but Mrs Alao-Aderinto position, as articulated by her counsel, is that there is no consensus on the paternity of these persons and that the inclusion of some and exclusion of others in the administration of the deceased's estate raises troubling questions of authenticity and equity.

It is on this basis she seeks judicial intervention through scientific means.

It will be recalled that in an August 2023 letter made public, counsel to Mrs Alao-Aderinto, Olosope, warned that the exclusion of the claimant who is the first daughter of the late Alao-Akala, violated both moral norms and legal rights, stressing that unless resolved, the dispute could further polarise the family and damage the late governor's political legacy.



# Ondo govt approves death penalty for kidnappers

By Friday Omosola

**T**he Ondo State Government has approved the death penalty for convicted kidnappers as part of sweeping new measures to address rising insecurity and enhance public safety.

The state's Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Olukayode Ajulo, announced the development during a press briefing following the State Executive Council meeting presided over by Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa in Akure.

Mr Ajulo said the Council resolved to commence the process of amending existing laws on kidnapping to prescribe capital punishment for offenders.

He stressed that kidnapping and cultism had become serious threats to public order, and a stronger legal framework was needed to deter such crimes.

He added that proposals would be forwarded to the Ondo State House of Assembly for necessary legislative action.

In a related development, the Council also approved the construction of two major dual carriageway roads and the installation of 6,000 solar-powered streetlights across the three senatorial districts of the state.

Special Adviser to the governor on infrastructure, lands, and housing, Abiola Olawoye, said the road projects include a 24.75-kilometre dual carriageway from Ugbeyin Junction through Okitipupa Market, OAUSTECH, and Ugbonla Junction to Igbokoda Jetty.

The second project is a 6.7-kilometre dual carriageway connecting Supare Junction to Akungba-Ikare Road in Akoko.



Both roads will feature 9.3-metre wide dual carriageways, 1.2-metre medians, solar streetlights, reinforced concrete drains, walkways, utility corridors, and modern traffic control systems.

They are also designed to withstand heavy vehicular movement.

Mr Olawoye also disclosed that 2,000 standalone solar streetlights would be installed in each of the state's three senatorial districts—Ondo North, Ondo Central, and Ondo South—as part of efforts to improve lighting and safety at night.

In the health sector, Special Adviser to the governor on health, Professor Simidele Odimayo, revealed that the government had adopted a new research-based approach to combat Lassa fever.

He said the strategy had already yielded results in testing, referrals, and surveillance.

Meanwhile, in the area of traditional institutions, Special Adviser on union matters and special duties, Bola Taiwo, announced the appointment of warrant chiefs to begin the process of selecting a new Olu-Oke of Okeigbo in Ile-Oluji/Okeigbo Local Government Area.

This followed a court ruling that nullified the appointment of the late Babajide Lawrence Oluwole prior to his death.

The Council also approved a change in the title of the Yasere of Ilepete (Ugbo) chieftaincy to Yasere of Oriretan in Ilaje Local Government Area, following concerns raised by stakeholders.

Mr Taiwo reaffirmed Mr Aiyedatiwa administration's commitment to strengthening traditional institutions, describing them as vital to grassroots governance and community development.



# 'I was tomboy before my ex-husband changed me', Tiwa Savage reveals

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian music sensation Tiwa Savage has opened up about her surprising transformation from a tomboy into one of Afrobeats' most stylish and talked-about female stars.

She revealed that before she became famous, she had no interest in being a "sexy diva" and never saw herself as one.

According to the singer, her journey into stardom began with a major shift in her appearance and image, a change driven by her ex-husband and former manager, Tunji Balogun, popularly known as Teebillz.

How Teebillz rebranded her image Speaking during an episode of the Afrobeats Intelligence podcast hosted by Joey Akan, Tiwa shared how Teebillz played a key role in shaping her brand and public persona.

"I used to wear baggy jeans and T-shirts in the studio. I was just a songwriter then," she said. "When I met Teebillz in L.A., I was nothing like what people see now. He saw something different and thought there was a gap in the market."

She explained that Teebillz convinced her to rebrand completely. He encouraged her to start going to the gym, lose weight, wax her eyebrows, wear wigs, and embrace a more glamorous and bolder image.

"He literally changed my whole appearance," she recalled. "He wanted to give people the African Rihanna or Beyoncé. And I said, okay, let's do it."

Early backlash and cultural resistance The mother of one also revealed that while the new image brought attention, it also drew heavy criticism when she returned to Nigeria to pursue a singing career.

"My fashion sense attracted a lot of backlash," she said. "I would go to



events and wait backstage, and they wouldn't call me up. Sometimes, they said the governor's wife didn't want me to perform because of my dressing. Or I'd be told not to wear anything skimpy."

At one point, her music video for Love Me was banned from Nigerian television. The criticism and rejection were so overwhelming that she temporarily left the country and returned to Los Angeles.

Her breakthrough moment Despite these challenges, Tiwa Savage did not give up. She recalled a moment when music executive Bizzle Osikoya reached out to encourage her.

"He told me that ladies were beginning to love me, and that gave me the strength to return to Nigeria and keep pushing," she said.

But the road wasn't smooth. She said she approached all the top record labels at the time, including Storm Records, Mo'Hits, and EME, which belonged to Banky W, but they all turned her down.

Pushing back against the doubts Tiwa Savage also addressed the criticism she received around the time of her 2024 single Wanted. She said the

video was intentionally daring because people believed she had lost her appeal after getting married.

"At the time, the media was saying, 'She's not going to be desirable anymore. Her time is gone. There are new faces now,'" she recalled. "So I wanted to do something bold. I wanted to prove that I was still here."

Although she described the move as rebellious, Tiwa insisted that she never aimed to be sexy solely for attention. "That's not who I naturally am," she said. "I'm a tomboy at heart. But I had to evolve."

A bold reinvention that paid off Tiwa Savage's story is a testament to how reinvention, even when controversial, can play a powerful role in an artist's journey. From being a behind-the-scenes songwriter in the U.S. to becoming a global face of Nigerian music, her rise was not just about talent but also about strategic branding, perseverance, and breaking cultural barriers.

Today, Tiwa stands as a trailblazer in the Afrobeats scene, not just for her music but also for challenging norms and reshaping how female artists are perceived in the industry.

# Popular gospel singer, Shola Allyson, joins Sony Music

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**P**opular Nigerian gospel singer, Shola Allyson, has officially signed a deal with Sony Music Publishing Nigeria, becoming the latest music star to join the global entertainment brand.

The announcement was made on Friday evening, with Sony Music Publishing taking to Instagram to welcome the singer into its fold. The label described her as “legendary,” expressing excitement over the new partnership.

“We are happy to announce that the legendary Shola Allyson is joining the SMP (Sony Music Publishing) family,” the company posted.

Singer confirms the big news

Shortly after Sony Music’s post, Shola Allyson also confirmed the news in a video shared on her Instagram page. She appeared joyful as she spoke to her fans and followers.

“Hello, everyone, my name is Shola Allyson,” she began. “I’m so excited, grateful, happy, and filled with all the good feelings to announce my new signing with Sony Music Publishing Nigeria.”

The gospel singer expressed her hope for even greater success through this new phase in her music journey. She said she was ready for fresh challenges, bigger opportunities, and more meaningful collaborations.

“I’m looking forward to greater things happening. I know that great things have happened before, and I’m looking forward to greater opportunities and new collaborations,” she added.

A big step for Shola Allyson’s career  
Shola Allyson is a well-respected figure in Nigeria’s gospel music scene. Known for her soulful voice and inspiring lyrics, she has released several albums that touched millions of listeners across the country and beyond.

Her partnership with Sony Music



Publishing Nigeria marks a significant milestone in her career. It not only opens the door to global exposure but also brings with it the chance to work with more international artists, songwriters, and producers.

Music analysts see this deal as a sign of growth in Nigeria’s gospel music industry, especially in the area of artist development and international representation.

Sony expands its roster

Shola Allyson’s signing comes just one week after another veteran Nigerian musician, Bright Chimezie, joined Sony Music Publishing Nigeria. Chimezie, a highlife music legend, was also warmly welcomed by the label, which is rapidly expanding its roster of Nigerian artists.

The back-to-back announcements reflect Sony’s commitment to promoting local talents on a global stage. By signing iconic names in Nigerian music, the company is positioning itself as a leading force in Africa’s music publishing space.

Reactions from fans and industry stakeholders

News of the deal was met with excitement on social media. Fans flooded Allyson’s page with congratulatory messages,

calling the move “well-deserved” and “long overdue.”

Industry stakeholders also praised the development. Some noted that gospel music, often overlooked in mainstream record deals, is finally getting the recognition it deserves.

A music manager based in Lagos said, “This is big. Gospel music has often been seen as a niche market, but artists like Shola Allyson have proven that their reach is global. Sony is making a smart move by investing in that space.”

Looking ahead

With this signing, Shola Allyson joins a list of Nigerian artists gaining global recognition through partnerships with major music companies. Her fans are now eagerly waiting to see what comes next, new albums, tours, or possible international collaborations.

The singer has yet to release details about upcoming projects under the new deal, but her message suggests that something major could be on the way.

For now, both she and Sony Music Publishing Nigeria are celebrating what appears to be a new beginning, filled with promise and purpose.

# 'Genuine friendship rare in music industry', says Ruger

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**A**frobeats sensation Ruger has spoken out about the scarcity of genuine friendships in Nigeria's music industry.

In a candid interview on The Stanley Agu Show, the singer, born Michael Adebayo Olayinka, revealed that most relationships in the industry are built around business and personal gain, rather than genuine support or loyalty.

Ruger shares hard-earned lessons

Ruger did not hold back during his recent appearance on the show. He reflected on some of the hard truths he has learned since rising to fame. One major lesson, he said, is that artists in the music scene rarely have sincere friends.

According to him, at best, an artist may be lucky to have just one or two friends who genuinely care. He noted that these rare individuals stand by you not just during the good times, but also when things go wrong.

"One thing I wish I had known earlier is that no one is your friend in the [music] industry," Ruger said.

"The most you can have is maybe two genuine friends that stand by you and want to see you grow. Even when things are bad, they're with you, making sure you're okay. That's all, man."

"Everything is business," He says

Ruger further explained that most relationships in the music world are driven by business interests. He believes that many people connect with others in the industry only when they see a benefit.

"Everything is business," he continued. "Nobody cares. They move around with you because you can offer something at that time. The moment you can't offer anything, a lot of them will switch."

He emphasised that it's important for



new artists to understand this reality early in their careers so they can protect themselves emotionally and mentally.

Read Also: Tiwa Savage: Nigerian music industry has dangerous sharks

Loyalty comes at a cost

The Bounce crooner explained that fame attracts attention, but not all of it is genuine. Many people appear friendly, he said, only because they want to gain something, be it access, fame, or influence.

He described a cycle where upcoming artists may be surrounded by many people in their early success, only for most of them to disappear when challenges arise. Ruger noted that this often leaves artists feeling isolated and betrayed.

"It's painful when you realise that the people who once called you 'brother' or 'family' are nowhere to be found when you face tough times," he said.

Advice to young artists

Ruger used the platform to advise younger artists who are just entering the music scene. He urged them to stay alert and avoid placing too much trust in everyone they meet in the industry. According to him, keeping a small

circle and staying focused on the music is key to survival.

"Be careful who you trust. Not everyone clapping for you wants to see you win," he warned. "Focus on your craft and don't rely too much on others for emotional support."

A personal reality

Ruger's comments reflect the often-hidden side of fame, one where competition, ego, and business deals overshadow personal relationships. While the Nigerian music industry continues to grow rapidly, so do the pressures on artists to perform, remain relevant, and manage public expectations.

For Ruger, the journey has not only been about music but also about learning who truly stands with him through thick and thin.

In closing, he reminded fans and fellow artists that while success is sweet, navigating the entertainment industry requires wisdom, strength, and a strong sense of self.

"Just remember," he said, "in this industry, the most genuine friends you can have might be two... or one... or even none."



# 'Lack of sex reduces beauty', actress Kudirat Ogunro sparks debate

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular Nigerian actress Kudirat Ogunro has stirred controversy with her recent statement suggesting that a lack of sexual activity can reduce a woman's beauty.

Ogunro, known for her outspoken views on social media, made this claim in a post shared on her Instagram page. In the post, she advised women to take their sexual life seriously if they wish to maintain their physical attractiveness.

The post, accompanied by a sultry photo of herself, quickly drew public attention and sparked heated discussions online.

"Lack of sex reduces a woman's beauty", Kudirat Ogunro

In her exact words, the actress wrote:

"Lack of sex reduces a woman's beauty, please adjust. I have said my own."

Her post was direct and unapologetic. It instantly went viral, drawing comments from fans and critics alike.

While some of her followers supported her view, others questioned the logic behind such a claim. Many social media users found the statement too general and argued that beauty depends on multiple factors, not just one's sex life.

Reactions pour in from all corners

As expected, Kudirat Ogunro's statement ignited a storm of reactions across various platforms. On Instagram, some users applauded her for speaking openly about what they described as a "natural truth."

One user wrote:

"You're right. Sex does make a woman glow. It's good for the skin and confidence."

Others disagreed strongly, saying her post was misleading and reinforced harmful stereotypes.

Another user commented:

"That's not true. Some women are not sexually active and are still very beautiful. Confidence, health, and peace of mind matter more."



Critics say beauty is more than just sex  
Many critics of Kudirat Ogunro's statement argued that reducing a woman's beauty to her sex life sends the wrong message, especially to young girls. They pointed out that a woman's glow or confidence can come from various sources, including good skincare, healthy living, exercise, self-love, and mental peace.

Some health and wellness enthusiasts also joined the conversation. They stressed that while intimacy can contribute to emotional and physical wellness, it should not be portrayed as the only path to beauty.

Ogunro stands by her words

Despite the backlash, Kudirat Ogunro has not withdrawn or edited her statement. The post remains on her Instagram page, drawing thousands of likes and comments.

The actress, who is no stranger to controversy, seems to embrace her bold persona and often uses her platform to share personal views, no matter how divisive they might be.

This is not the first time she has made headlines for a bold opinion. Her fans often describe her as unfiltered, daring,

and unapologetically real.

Public figures and the influence of words  
Ogunro's statement once again raises the issue of how public figures influence conversations on sensitive topics like sex, beauty, and self-worth. Critics say celebrities must be more thoughtful about the messages they send, especially on platforms with wide audiences.

Others, however, defend her right to express personal opinions freely, whether or not they align with public sentiment.

The bigger conversation

This incident adds to ongoing debates about societal pressures on women to look a certain way or live a certain lifestyle. It also highlights how social media has become a battleground for opinions, where a single post can spark nationwide discussions.

While Kudirat Ogunro's opinion may not sit well with everyone, one thing is clear, she has once again succeeded in getting people talking. Whether for attention, expression, or truth-telling, her words have struck a chord in the online community.

# Illbliss recounts: 'Lagos radio host told me I'd fail rapping in Igbo,'

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**V**eteran Nigerian rapper Tobechukwu Ejiofor, better known by his stage name Illbliss, has shared a painful experience he faced during the early days of his music career in Lagos.

The award-winning lyricist, popularly known for his hit track *Aiye Po Gan*, revealed that a radio presenter once discouraged him from pursuing a music career in the city because he chose to rap in his native Igbo language.

He made the revelation during a recent appearance on the *Real Shareholders* podcast. In a heartfelt moment on the show, Illbliss recalled the harsh words he received from the presenter, who doubted the potential of Igbo rap music thriving in Lagos, Nigeria's entertainment capital.

"You can't make it here"

Illbliss, speaking on how tribalism affects the music industry, said he had just released a song titled *Igbo Boy* when the incident happened. According to him, the track celebrated Igbo culture and identity, with no intention to provoke or divide.

But the reaction he got from a well-known radio personality shocked him.

"When I came to Lagos, I made a record titled *Igbo Boy*," Illbliss recounted. "Then, a radio presenter called me and said, 'What are you trying to do? You can't make it here. You've come here with an agenda. Omo-Igbo.'"

The rapper said the presenter didn't stop there. He switched to Yoruba and continued, "When you can't beat them, you join them. The music is good, but it won't go far."

**Music, identity, and division**

Illbliss said he was stunned by the presenter's remarks. The moment left him deeply discouraged, not just as a musician but also as a Nigerian who believed in unity through art.

"The song wasn't even offensive," he explained. "It was about how Igbo people enjoy life and celebrate their culture. Just



looking at that guy made me feel terrible. I realised that no matter how much we pretend to be one Nigeria, the tribal divisions are real and difficult to deal with."

According to Illbliss, the experience served as a painful reminder of the cultural bias that often exists beneath the surface of the country's entertainment industry.

**The struggles of regional artists**

The rapper's story highlights a larger problem faced by many Nigerian artists who create music in indigenous languages other than Yoruba or Pidgin English, both widely spoken in Lagos and the South-West.

Many regional acts from the Southeast and other parts of the country often face silent resistance when they attempt to break into the mainstream music scene in Lagos. This, according to observers, is due to a deep-rooted preference for certain languages and styles.

Despite these challenges, Illbliss persevered. Today, he is one of Nigeria's most respected rappers, known for his lyrical depth and commitment to promoting Igbo identity through his music.

**Turning pain into purpose**

Rather than allowing the experience to

derail his dreams, Illbliss used it as fuel to push forward. He continued creating music in his style, staying true to his roots and defying the odds.

His story has inspired many upcoming artists from minority ethnic groups who now see him as a symbol of resistance against tribal bias in the industry.

Over the years, Illbliss has built a loyal fan base, not just among Igbo listeners, but across Nigeria and beyond. His success, despite the early rejection, stands as proof that talent and authenticity can break boundaries.

**A call for inclusiveness**

Illbliss's experience has once again opened up conversations about the need for greater inclusion and respect for all Nigerian cultures within the entertainment space.

He believes music should unite, not divide.

"We must do better," he said. "Our diversity should be our strength, not our weakness."

As he continues to use his platform to speak out on social issues, Illbliss remains a powerful voice, not only in music but in the fight for cultural acceptance and national unity.



# Brazil: Eight killed as hot-air balloon catches fire and crashes

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**I**n Brazil, at least eight people have died and several others have been injured after a hot-air balloon carrying over 20 passengers caught fire mid-air and crashed in the southern state of Santa Catarina on Saturday morning.

The tragedy unfolded near the tourist town of Praia Grande, in a region famed for its dramatic canyons and dubbed the “Brazilian Cappadocia” due to its popularity with hot-air balloon enthusiasts. The balloon was one of approximately 30 that took flight around 7 a.m. local time.

Dramatic footage shared on social media captured the horrifying final moments of the multi-coloured balloon as it plunged from the sky in flames. Onlookers can be heard gasping in disbelief as passengers are seen falling from the burning basket. “My God!” one witness exclaims as the balloon descends rapidly.

Santa Catarina’s governor, Jorginho Mello, confirmed the accident on X (formerly Twitter), stating: “There were 21 people on board, eight fatalities, 13 survivors.” Some reports indicated the balloon may have been carrying as many as 22 people.

Brazil’s eyewitness speaks

Eyewitnesses described scenes of panic and horror as passengers desperately attempted to escape the blaze. “When the balloon started to catch fire, people hurled themselves out,” one witness told local newspaper *Jornal Razão*. “It was a desperate scene. Some threw themselves out [of the balloon], and others were trapped in the fire.”

According to *Jornal Razão*, the balloon’s pilot, who survived the crash, said the fire began inside the basket after a reserve torch ignited.

Upon noticing the flames, the pilot attempted an emergency descent and urged passengers to jump as the balloon neared the ground. While some were able to escape with injuries, others were not so fortunate.

“The atmosphere in the area of the tragedy is one of utter disaster,” a reporter at the crash site wrote.

Emergency services responded quickly to the scene, and an investigation into the cause of the fire is underway. Authorities have not yet released the identities of the victims, and officials say a full inquiry will determine whether safety protocols were followed.

The crash has cast a shadow over one of Brazil’s most scenic regions, popular with tourists for its breathtaking aerial views and natural beauty.



# Starmer defends activist linked to military aircraft sabotage By Fatimah Idera

The United Kingdom Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, has defended an anti-war protester accused of attempting to sabotage US military aircraft by drawing renewed attention following a similar incident at an RAF base.

On Friday, pro-Palestinian activists allegedly gained access to RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire. In footage posted by Palestine Action, two individuals were seen on the base, with one appearing to spray paint into the engine of an Airbus Voyager air-to-air refuelling tanker.

The incident prompted the scrutiny of Sir Keir's legal record, particularly his role in a 2003 case involving anti-war activists who broke into RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. The group, known as the Fairford Five, had attempted to disrupt the operations of US bombers scheduled to fly missions to Iraq.

At the time, Starmer was a prominent human rights barrister. He represented Josh Richards, who was found near a cut fence at the base in possession of a homemade incendiary mixture. Richards claimed he intended to damage aircraft to prevent what he believed were imminent war crimes.

Starmer argued that while the actions broke the law, they were morally justified in the context of trying to stop unlawful acts of war. "Even if the argument leads to anarchy," he reportedly told the court, "it should be heard." Richards was ultimately cleared after the jury failed to reach a verdict.

Parallels have been drawn between that case and Friday's protest at Brize Norton. Critics, including senior conservatives, seized on the revelation. Business Secretary Kemi Badenoch tweeted:

"Worth noting that Keir Starmer defended an activist who broke into an RAF base to set fire to aircraft. Starmer claimed his client was legally justified because it might stop a war crime. If



he'd won that argument in 2004, what happened at Brize Norton would be perfectly legal."

In response, Downing Street pointed to the legal profession's cab rank rule, which obliges barristers to accept any case within their area of competence. Labour also defended Starmer's record, citing remarks by Lord Wolfson, the shadow attorney general: "Don't judge a surgeon by their patients, a journalist by their interviewees or a lawyer by their clients."

The Fairford case led to six trials. Of the five accused, two were convicted of damaging US military equipment, two were acquitted, and Richards' trial resulted in no verdict.

Starmer argues...

At the time, Starmer also argued that courts should be allowed to examine the legality of the Iraq War, despite its backing by Parliament. He said the government's resolution in support of military action did not preclude legal challenges.

In contrast, Starmer today condemned the Brize Norton protest as disgraceful, stating: "Our Armed Forces represent

the very best of Britain and put their lives on the line for us every day. It is our responsibility to support those who defend us."

This is not the first time Starmer has faced political criticism for cases taken during his legal career. In 2001, he defended the right of a protester to deface a US flag outside a Norfolk air base, calling flag burning "a form of protest activity renowned the world over."

He also previously secured the release of convicted arsonist Paul Stellato, who had terrorised a family after arguing his detention was unlawful. Stellato later received compensation and was ultimately jailed for life in 2018 after attempting to purchase hand grenades.

A Conservative Party spokesperson commented:

"There is a reason our PM was chosen to represent people who think nothing of setting fire to RAF jets – as a lawyer, he made a career out of representing these sorts of criminals and anti-British activists. Starmer can act like a statesman now, but we all know that deep down he's still the Leftie liberal."

# Trump to get nomination for Nobel Peace Prize from Pakistan amid mixed reactions

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Pakistan has announced plans to recommend U.S. President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize, citing his role in de-escalating a recent armed conflict between nuclear rivals India and Pakistan.

The announcement, made Saturday, praised the U.S. president for his “strategic foresight and stellar statesmanship,” with Pakistani officials crediting his diplomatic intervention for halting a four-day exchange of hostilities earlier this year. A government statement called the ceasefire a “testament to his role as a genuine peacemaker.”

While heads of state and governments are eligible to nominate individuals for the Nobel Peace Prize, there has been no immediate reaction from the White House or the U.S. president himself. India, however, rejected the notion of third-party mediation, insisting that the ceasefire was reached independently between its military and Pakistan’s.

Indian Foreign Secretary speaks to Trump

India’s foreign secretary, Vikram Misri, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had made it “absolutely clear” to the 79-year-old president during a recent phone call that no external actor was involved in the ceasefire agreement. “Hostilities ceased only after Pakistan requested it,” he added.

Trump, meanwhile, has been vocal about his global peacemaking efforts. In a social media post Friday, he listed a series of international conflicts he claims to have helped resolve, including India and Pakistan, the Abraham Accords between Israel and several Muslim-majority countries, and more recently, tensions between Russia and Ukraine. “No, I won’t get a Nobel Peace Prize no matter what I do... but the people know, and that’s all that matters to me,” he wrote.

The announcement of Pakistan’s nomination comes shortly after a historic lunch meeting between Trump and Pakistan’s army chief, Field

Marshal Asim Munir, marking the first White House invitation extended to a top Pakistani military leader under a civilian government in Islamabad.

Some Pakistani officials defended the decision to back Trump for the prestigious prize. “Trump is good for Pakistan,” said Mushahid Hussain, a former chair of the Senate Defence Committee. “If this panders to Trump’s ego, so be it. All the European leaders have been sucking up to him big time.”

But the move has drawn sharp criticism from within Pakistan, especially given Trump’s vocal support for Israel’s military campaign in Gaza and his hardline stance on Iran.

“Israel’s sugar daddy in Gaza and cheerleader of its attacks on Iran isn’t a candidate for any prize,” said Talat Hussain, a prominent Pakistani political commentator, on X.

The Nobel Committee has not yet commented on Pakistan’s proposed nomination.

# MoD hit by record surge in lost security passes

By Fatimah Idera



**M**inistry of Defence staff have lost a record number of security passes, with more than 15,000 reported missing over the past five years and a further 1,000 recorded as stolen, newly released figures reveal.

80 security passes go missing every week. On average, nearly 80 security passes go missing every week, prompting security experts to warn of potential risks if the passes were to fall into the wrong hands. The revelations come just days after pro-Palestinian activists infiltrated RAF Brize Norton and damaged two military aircraft, reigniting concerns about security at defence sites.

Figures obtained through Freedom of Information requests show the number of lost passes has nearly doubled in four years, rising from 2,043 in 2020 to more than 3,830 in 2024. Over the same period, the number of stolen passes tripled from 82 to 278. While there was a drop in lost passes during the pandemic, the total surged again as staff returned to offices.

The missing passes grant access to secure areas within key defence buildings. Although MoD procedures require all lost

or stolen passes to be reported and deactivated, experts warn that the sheer volume indicates broader issues in internal security culture.

“This highlights a worrying lack of responsibility,” said Col Philip Ingram, a former army intelligence officer. “There should be consequences when passes are lost. If staff are careless with this, what else might they be misplacing?”

John O’Connell of the TaxPayers’ Alliance called the situation “ludicrous,” adding: “These are people in the very department meant to keep Britain safe.”

Admiral Lord West of Spithead, a former First Sea Lord, has previously warned that lost security passes present not just a security risk, but a potential terrorism risk. “It’s not something that should be taken lightly,” he said.

To reduce risks, many organisations have shifted to “exchange badging,” a system where staff carry a blank, unmarked card outside of secure locations, which is then swapped for a named access pass once inside. Security experts say this limits exposure if the outer card is lost.

The incident at RAF Brize Norton on Friday, in which Palestine Action activists breached the perimeter and sprayed paint into the engines of two Airbus Voyager refuelling aircraft, has intensified scrutiny of MoD site security. The breach has led to calls from political figures, including Nigel Farage and Shadow Home Secretary Robert Jenrick to have Palestine Action designated a terrorist organisation.

A Ministry of Defence spokesperson said: “We treat all breaches of security very seriously. Every incident is subjected to a risk assessment, and proportionate action is taken accordingly.”

The issue follows past high-profile lapses, including a 2021 breach in which sensitive MoD documents were found at a bus stop in Kent.

As public and political pressure mounts, the MoD is likely to face calls for tighter internal controls, greater accountability, and enhanced training for staff handling secure materials.



# Labour voters say immigration puts most pressure on NHS

By Fatimah Idera



Immigration is now seen as the biggest burden on the NHS by Labour voters, according to a new poll, highlighting growing dissatisfaction within the party's support base.

A survey of 2,000 people who backed Labour in the 2024 general election found that 24% believe high levels of immigration are putting the greatest strain on the health service and more than those who cited the ageing population or the mental health crisis. The poll, conducted by Merlin Strategy on behalf of the Adam Smith Institute, found 22% blamed mental health pressures, 13% pointed to a lack of social care, 12% cited junk food and obesity, and 10% blamed vaping.

The results come amid growing concern inside Labour ranks over the Government's handling of immigration and healthcare. Sir Keir Starmer acknowledged in a major speech last month that years of record net migration have stretched public

services, including the NHS.

The poll also revealed increasing voter discontent: one in five Labour voters said they would now consider switching to Reform UK, while 28% said they regret voting Labour at all. Reform, led by Nigel Farage, has surged in the polls with promises to crack down on illegal Channel crossings and freeze most forms of migration.

Maxwell Marlow, Director of Public Affairs at the Adam Smith Institute, said: "The British public clearly feels the effects of mass immigration on healthcare. If the Government doesn't act quickly perhaps by requiring migrants to purchase private health cover for most visas voter dissatisfaction will only grow."

Further research from Merlin Strategy, including a focus group in Runcorn and Helsby formerly a safe Labour seat lost to Reform by just six votes in a recent by-election suggested a broader frustration with

Starmer's leadership. Participants described the Government as "afraid of upsetting people, I don't think they give a toss about us."

Only 51% of Labour voters felt the Government was addressing issues that mattered to them, and just 40% said they approved of Nigel Farage though 41% still disapproved.

Scarlett Maguire, Director of Merlin Strategy, noted: "Labour voters are clear: they want meaningful action on healthcare, immigration, and the cost of living. The Government needs to show it understands these priorities."

Some voters also criticised Starmer's focus on banning disposable vapes and phasing out smoking, questioning the relevance of such measures. One participant asked: "How is that really relatable to the working person? It just feels like something shiny for the media."

# Universal DNA screening planned for all newborns on the NHS

By Fatimah Idera

Every baby born in the UK will have their entire DNA mapped under a revolutionary NHS programme aimed at predicting and preventing disease before symptoms even appear.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting unveiled the initiative as part of a wider 10-year health plan expected to launch in early July. At the heart of the strategy is a shift away from treating illness after it arises, toward using cutting-edge genomic science and digital technology to prevent disease entirely.

Within a decade, every newborn in the UK will undergo whole genome sequencing, a process that decodes the complete genetic makeup of a person. This will allow healthcare professionals to assess a child's risk of developing hundreds of diseases, enabling earlier, more personalised interventions.

Mr Streeting described the plan as "a revolution in medical science" that could allow the NHS to leapfrog deadly diseases, from cancer to Alzheimer's, by catching them before they start.

"Our 10-year plan will build on the founding promise of the NHS, so that it provides care free at the point of risk, not just risk," he said.

"With this new technology, patients will receive personalised care to stop illnesses before symptoms begin, relieving pressure on NHS services and helping people live longer, healthier lives."

Currently, newborns undergo a heel-prick blood test for nine rare but serious conditions. Under the new system, DNA sequencing will vastly expand this scope. Rather than blanket screening or general health MOTs in later life, people will increasingly receive personalised health checks and targeted treatments.

The strategy will also reduce adverse drug reactions by tailoring prescriptions based on an individual's genetic profile.



Over time, medications may be offered preventively, transforming how treatment is delivered.

Health officials say the approach will change the NHS from a reactive to a proactive service, forecasting risks and intervening early rather than responding to illness after it takes hold.

The government has pledged £650 million to accelerate genomics research as part of its wider life sciences strategy. The NHS's £29 billion annual funding boost will also support major changes in service delivery of Expanding virtual hospitals and remote consultations via an Uber-style app, Using smartwatches and wearable tech to monitor patients in real-time, creating neighbourhood health teams that bring services closer to communities, Greater involvement of private providers to deliver local care.

Mr Streeting also cited Japan's efforts to merge genomics with AI to provide personalised health assessments as inspiration for the UK's plan. While the rollout is widely supported by scientists, patient groups, and charities, it is not without controversy. Ethical concerns are growing over the psychological burden of knowing one's future disease

risk from birth.

For instance, genome sequencing could reveal if a child carries the BRCA1 gene, which significantly increases the likelihood of developing breast cancer, information that could shape decisions decades later.

There are also data protection worries. All DNA records will be stored in the National Genomic Research Library, with strict encryption and security protocols. However, the sensitivity and commercial value of this information make it a target. In 2023, genetic testing company 23andMe was fined £2.31 million after failing to prevent a large-scale cyberattack that compromised UK user data.

Despite the risks, NHS leaders believe the benefits far outweigh the concerns. The upcoming health plan is expected to formalise the shift to genomics, digital health, and preventive care as the core of future NHS services.

As Mr Streeting put it: "Much of what's done in a hospital today will be done on the high street, over the phone, or through an app in a decade."



# UK court to hear Shell oil spill case from Nigerian communities in 2027

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Two Nigerian communities, Bille and Ogale, are set to take oil giant Shell and its Nigerian-based subsidiary, now known as Renaissance Africa Energy Company, to trial in the UK High Court in 2027 over long-standing oil pollution claims.

With a combined population of about 50,000, the Niger Delta communities accuse Shell of causing extensive environmental damage through systemic and ongoing oil spills that have polluted their land and drinking water for years. The legal action, which began in 2015, seeks compensation and a full-scale clean-up of the affected areas.

In a ruling on Friday, Mrs Justice May addressed over 20 preliminary issues after a four-week hearing held in London earlier this year. She revealed that approximately 85 oil spills have so far been identified, but emphasised that the case remains “at a very early stage.”

Shell may be held held for spills resulting from third-party interference

Crucially, the judge found that Shell could be held liable for spills resulting from third-party interference, such as pipeline vandalism and oil theft, known locally as “bunkering.” She also ruled that while legal claims typically face a five-year statute of limitations, a new legal claim arises



each day oil remains on contaminated land.

The full trial is scheduled to begin in March 2027 and is expected to last four months.

Reacting to the ruling, King Bebe Okpabi, leader of the Ogale community, expressed cautious optimism. “It has been 10 years now since we started this case. We hope that now Shell will stop these shenanigans and sit down with us to sort this out. People in Ogale are dying; Shell needs to bring a remedy. We thank the judicial system of the UK for this judgment.”

Shell also responded to the judgment, maintaining its stance that it should not be held responsible for damage caused by illegal activities. A company spokesperson

stated:

“For many years, the vast majority of spills in the Niger Delta have been caused by third parties acting unlawfully, such as oil thieves who drill holes in pipelines or saboteurs. This criminality is the cause of the majority of spills in the Bille and Ogale claims, and we maintain that Shell is not liable.”

The spokesperson added that the spills were managed by a joint venture, previously operated by Shell’s former subsidiary, using its “expertise in spill response and clean-up.”

The landmark case is one of the most significant environmental legal battles involving a multinational company and could set a precedent for corporate accountability in the global oil industry.



# Tobi Amusan hits season's best at Paris Diamond League

By New Daily Prime



**W**orld record holder, Tobi Amusan, produced a fantastic performance at the 2025 Diamond League in Paris, clocking a season's best time of 12.24 seconds to finish in second place in the women's 100m hurdles.

## Advertisement

The time marks her second-fastest ever, behind only her world record of 12.12 seconds posted in 2022.

Amusan came storming through the final metres, closing rapidly on Grace Stark of the United States, who had burst out of the blocks with intent and held on to win with a personal best and meeting record of 12.21 seconds—a time that makes her the fifth-fastest woman ever over the 100m hurdles.

Jamaica's Ackera Nugent finished third in a quick 12.30 seconds.

This performance represents the latest milestone in a steady and impressive resurgence for the Nigerian throughout the season.

Amusan's campaign began modestly with a fourth-place finish in Xiamen, China, followed by another fourth in Shaoxing, also in China.

However, the 28-year-old bounced back emphatically with a season-best and meet record 12.45 seconds to claim her first Diamond League win of the year in Rabat, Morocco, in May.

Paris marked her fourth Diamond League outing of the season as she continues to build form and consistency ahead of major championships.

The 2022 world champion faced an

elite field in the French capital, including world medallist Keni Harrison, rising Jamaican star Nugent, Poland's Pia Skrzyszowska, Dutch champion Nadine Visser, Devynne Charlton of the Bahamas, and current Diamond League leader Stark.

Despite the depth of competition, Amusan's upward trajectory in form and her experience at the top level saw her challenge strongly for maximum points as the race to qualify for the Diamond League finals in Zurich intensifies.

Her consistent performances currently place her fourth in the Diamond League standings with 10 points, behind leaders Stark (23), Danielle Williams (15), and Marione Fourie (12) in the overall standings.

# Ill Mbappe out of second Real Madrid Club World Cup clash

By New Daily Prime



**I**ll Real Madrid striker Kylian Mbappe did not travel to Charlotte for the team's Club World Cup match against Pachuca, but could be back for the final group stage game, coach Xabi Alonso said on Saturday.

The French superstar was taken to hospital on Thursday for tests and treatment after suffering gastroenteritis, before later being released.

Mbappe is improving "bit by bit" a club source told AFP, but he did not fly with his teammates for Sunday's match against Mexican side Pachuca.

Real coach Xabi Alonso addressed the striker's condition

during his pre-match press conference.

"He's doing better, he's back from the hospital and is recovering. We're optimistic about having him against Salzburg," he said.

Madrid face Salzburg in the final game of Group H on Thursday in Philadelphia.

The 26-year-old missed the opening game with the same illness as Madrid were held 1-1 by Al-Hilal in Xabi Alonso's debut as coach.

Madrid B-team player Gonzalo Garcia, 21, started in Mbappe's stead and opened the scoring for Real Madrid against their Saudi

Arabian opponents.

Alonso indicated that Gonzalo would again deputise for the Frenchman.

"Gonzalo can do what he did the other day. He scored a goal and had three chances. Looking ahead, we'll see what happens. Having players with that sense of smell is very important. He did very well," he said.

Mbappe finished as the European Golden Shoe winner in his first season at Real Madrid with 31 goals in LaLiga and 43 across all competitions, but Los Blancos finished the season without a major trophy.