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FG to roll out 5 million LPG cylinders nationwide

By Friday Omosola



The Federal Government (FG) has unveiled plans to roll out five million liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders to homes across Nigeria by the year 2030.

Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), Ekperikpe Ekpo, made this known during the launch of the North West phase of the grassroots LPG Penetration Scheme in Sokoto.

According to the Minister, the initiative is a significant move towards expanding clean energy access nationwide, aligning with the government's broader energy transition goals.

The LPG rollout had already commenced in other regions, including the South West, South South, North

East, and the Federal Capital Territory.

"With the full backing of President Bola Tinubu, we are determined to distribute five million LPG cylinders by 2030. This will allow us to transition one million households each year to safer, more environmentally friendly cooking options," Mr Ekpo said.

He emphasised that the project extends beyond simply providing gas; it is about improving public health, creating economic opportunities, and protecting the environment.

Mr Ekpo further explained that switching to LPG would help reduce household air pollution, limit deforestation, and create employment opportunities for women and young people within the LPG supply chain.

The programme is also expected to boost local cylinder production and strengthen distribution networks.

The Minister expressed his appreciation to the Sokoto State Governor, Ahmad Sokoto, for his support, and acknowledged the Sultan of Sokoto for his steadfast commitment to community wellbeing.

He also praised the Decade of Gas Secretariat for their effective leadership in driving the project, and commended BUA Group, the primary sponsor of the LPG distribution, for their critical role in extending access to underserved areas and encouraging strong public-private partnerships.

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
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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
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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
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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
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CENTRESPREAD STRIP COLOUR	191,668.50
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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
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4X3	N/A
4X2	17,737.50
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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
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(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

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Tinubu conferred knight commander of the order of Saint Lucia

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Government of Saint Lucia has bestowed one of its most prestigious national honours, the Knight Commander of the Order of Saint Lucia (KCOSL), on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of Nigeria.

In a formal announcement shared via the official X (formerly Twitter) account of the Office of the Prime Minister, it was confirmed that the Governor General of Saint Lucia, acting on the advice of the Government, conferred the honour in recognition of President Tinubu's "exceptional leadership on the African continent, his commitment to advancing South-South cooperation, and his efforts at rekindling cultural, historical, and diplomatic ties with the Caribbean."

President Tinubu, who is currently undertaking a historic state visit to Saint Lucia as part of a broader diplomatic tour across the Caribbean

and South America, joins a select group of African leaders to have received the KCOSL. The visit marks a significant moment in the strengthening of ties between Africa and the Caribbean.

According to the statement, the Knight Commander rank is typically reserved for individuals who have rendered distinguished service of national or international importance to the island nation.

The Order of Saint Lucia, established in 1985, is the country's premier system of national honours, with the Grand Cross being the only grade higher than that of Knight Commander.

This high-level recognition coincides with Nigeria's ongoing foreign policy reorientation under President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, which emphasises international re-

engagement and cultural diplomacy.

The initiative seeks to reposition Africa's largest democracy as a central player on the global stage, especially in regions with deep historical and cultural connections to the African continent.

President Tinubu's honour underscores the growing resonance of Nigeria's diplomatic outreach and the potential for enhanced cooperation between Africa and the Caribbean in areas ranging from trade and education to climate change and cultural exchange.

The conferment ceremony, attended by senior Saint Lucian officials and members of the diplomatic corps, is expected to be a highlight of President Tinubu's visit. Further engagements in the region are anticipated as the Nigerian leader continues his diplomatic tour.

Saraki: No victor, no vanquished after PDP's 100th NEC meeting

By Gbenga Olaleye



Former Senate President Bukola Saraki has declared that there is “no victor and no vanquished” within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), following the successful conclusion of the party’s 100th National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting.

Despite disruptions on the eve of the meeting—reportedly involving personnel from the Nigeria Police Force—the PDP proceeded with its scheduled NEC gathering at the party’s National Secretariat in Abuja, marking what Saraki described as a critical turning point in the party’s ongoing efforts to foster unity and chart a cohesive path forward.

In a statement personally signed after the meeting, Saraki praised the party’s leadership for choosing the path of reconciliation and progress amid internal challenges.

“This evening, our great party, the

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), successfully concluded the 100th edition of its NEC meeting. It was a symbolic gathering, as the meeting could have either been the breaking point, going by events of the last 48 hours, or the junction to cross the Rubicon and march forward into greater heights. Our esteemed leaders chose the latter,” Saraki stated.

He stressed that the outcome of the NEC session demonstrated that the PDP, Nigeria’s foremost opposition party, remains a vital pillar of democratic resilience in the country.

“Today, there was no victor and no vanquished. The winner today is the PDP. Another winner is Nigeria’s democracy because, without a vibrant opposition, democracy dies,” Saraki added.

He also commended party leaders and members across Nigeria’s 774

local government areas for backing unity and consensus. According to him, the decision to “jettison our differences” and “rebuild trust” shows the party’s readiness to reposition itself as the country’s most viable alternative for governance.

Highlighting the spirit of compromise that characterised the meeting, Saraki expressed confidence in the PDP’s capacity to regain national relevance.

“We all agreed on the need for unity as a way of sending a signal to the entire nation that the PDP can only wax stronger... The spirit of give and take dominated our frank discussions,” he noted.

As the PDP eyes the future, party insiders say the 100th NEC meeting has revitalised hopes of a more structured and united opposition ahead of future electoral cycles.

David Mark, Rauf Aregbesola appointed interim leaders of ADC

By Friday Omosola

In a significant move in the lead-up to the 2027 Nigerian general elections, former Senate President Senator David Mark and ex-Osun State Governor Rauf Aregbesola have been appointed as the interim Chairman and Secretary, respectively, of the African Democratic Congress (ADC).

The appointments are part of efforts to create a unified opposition platform to challenge President Bola Tinubu's administration.

Multiple reliable sources who were present at the closed-door meeting in Abuja on Tuesday night disclosed that the leadership of the opposition coalition reached a consensus to elect Mark and Aregbesola to these pivotal roles.

These sources, who requested anonymity due to the confidential nature of the meeting, revealed that the ADC will unveil its newly constituted leadership in a formal ceremony scheduled for Wednesday in Abuja.

Further details from the sources confirmed that the former Minister of Sports, Bolaji Abdullahi, has been appointed as the interim National Publicity Secretary of the ADC, rounding off the leadership structure.

The ADC's new leadership is poised to play a key role in the growing coalition aimed at presenting a formidable challenge to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the upcoming elections.

President Tinubu's administration has faced a combination of accomplishments and criticisms, with opposition leaders from several parties consistently branding the government's performance as unsatisfactory.

Notably, many major opposition parties, including the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Labour Party (LP), New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), and Social Democratic Party (SDP), have been embroiled in internal crises, which has complicated their efforts to form a united opposition.



In response, a group of prominent opposition figures, including ex-Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Labour Party leader Peter Obi, former Rivers State Governor Rotimi Amaechi, and ex-Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai, convened in Abuja on March 20, 2025, to establish a new coalition aimed at challenging the APC. This coalition has since sparked a nationwide conversation on the potential of a united opposition, with various reactions from both political analysts and the general public.

After months of speculation and deliberation over which political platform the coalition would adopt, it was exclusively reported on May 19, 2025, that the group had settled on the ADC as its political vehicle. Subsequent reports confirmed that Senator Mark was selected as the interim chairman of the ADC-led coalition, with a formal unveiling set for Wednesday.

Sources further revealed that Aregbesola, who initially rejected the role of National Secretary, eventually relented after persistent persuasion from coalition stakeholders.

One insider shared, "Aregbesola

initially turned down the offer, but after much discussion, he has now accepted to serve in this crucial position."

Additionally, it was disclosed that the current ADC National Chairman, Ralph Nwosu, has stepped aside to allow the new interim leadership under Mark and Aregbesola to take charge of the party's affairs.

In confirmation of the development, Kola Ologbondiyan, a former aide to Senator Mark and former PDP National Publicity Secretary, took to his verified Twitter account to announce that the ADC had officially been adopted as the platform for the opposition coalition.

"African Democratic Congress (ADC) has been adopted as the political party for the coalition. The party has elected Sen. David Mark as the Interim National Chairman and Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola as the Interim National Secretary," Ologbondiyan tweeted.

The unveiling of the new ADC leadership is expected to mark a pivotal moment in the opposition's strategy for the 2027 elections, and many are watching closely to see how this newly formed alliance will influence the political landscape ahead of the polls.

Governor Alia assures NYSC members of security in Benue

By Gbenga Olaleye



Governor Hyacinth Alia of Benue State has given firm assurances of safety for members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) deployed to the state, promising that every necessary measure is being taken to protect them throughout their service year.

Speaking on Tuesday at the closing ceremony of the 2025 Batch A Stream II orientation camp in Wannune, Tarka Local Government Area, Governor Alia reaffirmed his administration's commitment to ensuring the welfare and security of corps members.

"We have deployed additional security personnel to vulnerable areas in the state to enhance safety and ensure that corps members carry out their assignments without fear," he said.

Governor Alia acknowledged the state's security challenges, including

recent unprovoked attacks on communities, but stressed that his government remains proactive and determined to end the violence.

"We will not rest on our oars. We are working closely with security agencies and relevant stakeholders to strengthen interventions and provide lasting solutions to the crisis," the governor added.

He urged the newly posted corps members to proceed to their places of primary assignment (PPA) with confidence, encouraging them to fully embrace the NYSC mandate of national integration and selfless service.

In a strong warning, Governor Alia also directed government agencies and private organisations in Benue to desist from rejecting corps members,

stating that the state's non-rejection policy remains fully in force.

"Any organisation that defies this directive will be sanctioned accordingly," he warned.

In her remarks, Mrs Veronica Garba, the NYSC Coordinator in Benue State, congratulated the corps members on successfully completing their orientation.

"I commend your resilience and good conduct throughout your stay in camp. I expect you to take that same positive spirit to your various places of primary assignment," she said.

She also encouraged them to demonstrate commitment, respect for local customs, and a willingness to contribute meaningfully to their host communities.

Oyebanji pledges enhanced business environment to attract investment

By Friday Omosola



Governor Biodun Oyebanji of Ekiti State has reassured investors and business operators of his administration's unwavering commitment to cultivating a more attractive business climate within the state.

This assurance was given during a Technical Session and a statewide town hall meeting organised by the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) in collaboration with the Ekiti State Development and Promotion Agency (EKDIPA) yesterday.

Mr Oyebanji, speaking through the Commissioner of Finance, Akin Oyebo, affirmed that his government is actively promoting economic growth through strategic reforms and robust private sector partnerships.

He reiterated a dedication to policies and initiatives designed to position the state as a prime investment destination in Nigeria by dismantling barriers, upgrading infrastructure, and implementing investor-friendly regulations.

Describing the town hall meeting as vital for aligning state-level reforms with national efforts to enhance Nigeria's business climate, Mr Oyebanji emphasised that improving the business environment is a core component of his

administration's developmental agenda.

He highlighted several key reforms already undertaken to improve the ease of doing business in Ekiti.

These include waiving business fees for initial registrations, establishing a functional One-Stop Shop within the Investment Promotion Agency to streamline investment processes, and ratifying a transition law to guarantee the continuation of projects across changes in government.

Other initiatives include providing continuous post-investment support to aid business operations and ensure sustained success for investors.

The governor also noted significant advancements in power supply and other critical infrastructure aimed at fostering investor prosperity in the state.

Commending PEBEC for organising the town hall tour to reinforce state ownership of reform initiatives and deepen the implementation of the State Action on Business Enabling Reforms (SABER), Mr Oyebanji stressed his administration's dedication to implementing sustainable reforms that will draw investment, generate employment, and boost economic growth.

Representing the Director-General of PEBEC, Senior Reform Leader Suzana Abdul-Kabdir praised the Ekiti State government for its efforts in enhancing business ease.

She explained that the town hall meeting's purpose was to assess progress, identify challenges, and engage stakeholders on strategies to maintain reform momentum.

Abdul-Kabdir further elaborated that PEBEC's core mandate is to eliminate obstacles to doing business in Nigeria and foster an environment conducive to economic growth and investment.

Similarly, Lolade Olutona, Director-General of the Ekiti State Development and Promotion Agency (EKDIPA), lauded Mr Oyebanji's commitment to creating an enabling business environment.

She affirmed EKDIPA's dedication to attracting more investors, driving economic growth, and supporting the government's vision for a thriving, business-friendly state.

Olutona highlighted EKDIPA's efforts in spearheading investment-focused reforms, including regular engagement with business owners to resolve operational challenges and ensure their long-term sustainability.

Students protest renaming of Ibadan Polytechnic after ex-gov Olunloyo

By Damilola Olufemi



Students of The Polytechnic Ibadan took to the streets on Tuesday to protest the recent renaming of their institution after former Oyo State Governor, Dr. Omololu Olunloyo.

The demonstrators stormed the Oyo State Government Secretariat in large numbers, wielding placards and demanding that Governor Seyi Makinde reverse the decision and retain the institution's original name.

Chanting solidarity songs, the students insisted that the name The Polytechnic Ibadan carries historical significance and global recognition, and should not be altered.

During the protest, the President of the Students' Union Government (SUG), Olamide Oladipupo, led the charge, appealing to the state government to preserve what he described as the enduring legacy of the institution.

"We're not against honouring Baba Olunloyo, but this school's name is a legacy on its own and should be left

unchanged," Oladipupo said.

The Executive Assistant to the Governor on Security, Sunday Odukoya, addressed the crowd and urged the students to remain peaceful while the government considers their grievances.

Makinde renames Polytechnic after Olunloyo

The protest follows Governor Makinde's announcement on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the funeral service of the late Olunloyo, held at Obafemi Awolowo Stadium in Ibadan, where he declared the renaming of the polytechnic.

"Today, we will be giving Baba another honour to immortalise him. He was the first Principal of The Polytechnic, Ibadan. That institution will now be named Omololu Olunloyo Polytechnic, Ibadan," Makinde had stated during the ceremony.

Dr. Olunloyo, who passed away on April 6, 2025, served as governor of Oyo State from October to December 1983 and was

the founding principal of the institution now at the centre of controversy.

Makinde described the late statesman as a "scholar, statesman, technocrat, lover of culture, and a man of deep conviction," noting that his contributions to education and governance deserved lasting recognition.

Despite those sentiments, many students and alumni argue that changing the institution's name erodes its identity.

Similar controversies have erupted across the country over renaming higher institutions. The federal government's decision to rename the University of Abuja after General Yakubu Gowon and the earlier proposed renaming of the University of Lagos after Moshood Abiola were both met with widespread opposition and calls for reversal.

As pressure mounts, students of The Polytechnic Ibadan say their protest will continue until the state government reconsiders its position.

Coroner's inquest looms as Ondo govt confirms petitions on Akeredolu's death

By Damilola Olufemi



The Ondo State Government says it is preparing to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of former Governor Rotimi Akeredolu.

Speaking on Monday, the state's Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Olukayode Ajulo, revealed that his ministry has received several petitions requesting a coroner's inquest into the former governor's death.

Ajulo said the petitions, submitted by professional groups and residents of Akeredolu's hometown in Owo, raised concerns about alleged inconsistencies and unanswered questions regarding his demise.

He noted that the state's coroner law grants citizens the right to seek clarity in cases where there may be suspicions of foul play.

"It is not out of place for citizens to demand its invocation when there are legitimate concerns," Ajulo stated.

He emphasised that all procedures would follow the rule of law and that the ministry was committed to ensuring transparency and justice.

"We have received petitions from groups both within and outside the state. Let me be clear: due process will be followed. The law is there to serve the people and ensure that truth and justice prevail," he said.

Ajulo assured the public that no assumptions would be made and no one would be treated unfairly during the investigation. He stressed that the process would not be swayed by political pressure or public sentiment.

"If invitations or arrests need to be made, the process will not deviate from doing the needful," he added.

According to him, key decisions such as whether to examine the late governor's remains or summon witnesses will rest entirely with the coroner, in line with legal provisions.

Ajulo urged all parties involved to approach the matter with decorum and respect for the late governor's memory.

"No one is above the law, and no one is beneath its protection. Where the law provides a remedy, the government of Governor Aiyedatiwa will not be found wanting," he said.

Akeredolu, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria

(SAN) and former president of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), passed away on December 27, 2023.

Akeredolu's widow slams Aiyedatiwa

Betty Anyanwu-Akeredolu, the former First Lady of Ondo State, has criticised Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa for ordering the demolition of the memorial park dedicated to the victims of the tragic June 5, 2022, attack on St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Owo.

The park, a project initiated by the late Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, was built to honour the memory of 41 worshippers who lost their lives in the brutal assault.

Despite its significance, the memorial was torn down on June 21, 2025, under the directive of Mr Aiyedatiwa's administration.

Authorities explained that the decision followed pressure from the Olowo of Owo and his council, who argued that the memorial's proximity to the palace was culturally offensive and an 'abomination.'

Lagos begins full enforcement of single-use plastics ban

By Damilola Olufemi

The Lagos State Government has declared the full enforcement of a statewide ban on Single-Use Plastics (SUPs), effective from Monday, July 1, 2025.

Commissioner for the Environment and Water Resources, Mr. Tokunbo Wahab, disclosed during a press briefing at the ministry's headquarters in Alausa, Ikeja. He said that anyone found violating the ban would be prosecuted under existing environmental laws.

According to Wahab, the government had allowed an 18-month grace period for residents, producers, and vendors to shift to more environmentally friendly alternatives before moving to full enforcement.

"The decision to ban Single-Use Plastics in Lagos was not arbitrary. It was an existential one, influenced by multiple factors," Wahab said. He pointed out that Lagos, with a land area of just 3,575 square kilometres—Nigeria's smallest—hosts about 10% of the country's population. "That alone is a recipe for environmental crisis," he



warned.

Wahab also recalled the earlier ban on styrofoam in 2024, noting that the government had been transparent about phasing out all SUPs within a year. "We did not just wake up whimsically and choose to ban styrofoam food packs in 2024. We had always stated that within the next 12 months, all single-use plastics would follow. Now, nearly 18 months later, we believe ample time has been

given for all to transition. Enforcement starts July 1, and heaven will not fall," he said.

Items covered by single-use plastics Ban:

- Styrofoam Food Packs: Banned for being non-biodegradable and damaging to the environment.
- Plastic Straws: Phased out to cut down plastic waste and encourage eco-friendly alternatives.
- Disposable plastic cups and cutlery: Targeted due to their major contribution to plastic pollution.
- Lightweight nylon bags: Outlawed because they are neither reusable nor biodegradable, worsening environmental degradation.

The commissioner urged business operators, including food sellers and market traders, to align with the government's vision for a greener Lagos.

He emphasised that the measure is part of a wider effort to improve public health, reduce flooding, and safeguard the state's delicate ecosystem.

PDP govs under pressure to defect – Ologbondiyan

By Gbenga Olaleye

Kola Ologbondiyan, a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has alleged that governors elected on the PDP platform are facing sustained harassment aimed at forcing them to defect to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

Ologbondiyan made the claim during an appearance on Channels Television's Sunrise Daily on Tuesday, in response to the recent political developments involving President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, suspended Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara, and Nyesom Wike, Minister of the Federal Capital Territory.

His comments come amid a deepening crisis within the PDP, and just days after President Tinubu held a closed-door meeting with Fubara and Wike, appearing to resolve their long-running feud. The trio were later seen smiling in a photograph that has since circulated widely online.

Recalling past events, Ologbondiyan noted that President Tinubu had previously declared a state of emergency in Rivers State in March, suspending

Governor Fubara, Deputy Governor Ngozi Odu, and the State House of Assembly, following a prolonged political conflict.

More recently, two PDP governors—Sheriff Oborevwori of Delta State and Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom—have left the party to join the APC, both citing internal crises within the PDP as justification for their move.

However, Ologbondiyan rejected the idea that internal discord alone was fuelling defections, instead asserting that PDP governors are under pressure from outside forces.

"They are being humiliated, and whether they can openly say it or not, they are being forced to abandon their party and join the All Progressives Congress and President Asiawaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu's political party," he said.

He also conceded that the resolution of the Rivers State conflict—brokered by the President—represented a setback for the



PDP, but called for the party to refocus its energy on unity and resilience ahead of the 2027 general elections.

"I will be honest, and I think the PDP did all it could, some on a negative side, others on a positive side... The takeaway is that our governors are being harassed," he said.

Ologbondiyan urged the PDP leadership to look beyond the Rivers State episode and concentrate on shielding its remaining governors from further pressure to defect.

Court denies bail to CBEX operators in alleged \$1bn fraud case

By Friday Omosola



The Federal High Court in Abuja has refused the bail applications of three promoters of Crypto Bridge Exchange (CBEX) over their alleged involvement in a \$1 billion fraud.

Presiding judge, Justice Emeka Nwite, delivered the ruling, stating that the evidence against the defendants was substantial.

The defendants, identified as Adefowora Abiodun Olanipekun, Avwersuo Otorudo, and Chukwuemeka Ehirim, are accused of obtaining over \$1 billion fraudulently, an amount said to exceed the combined budgets of several Nigerian states.

Justice Nwite emphasised that the formal charge against the defendants had only been filed before the hearing of their bail applications and was awaiting assignment to a trial judge.

“Given the foregoing and taking cognisance of the nature of the case, and particularly that a charge has been filed

against the applicants, I hold that the interest of justice would be better served by allowing the court where the charge is pending to handle both the arraignment and the bail application simultaneously. Therefore, the bail application is refused,” the judge ruled.

The development follows an earlier order granted by Justice Nwite on 24 April, which permitted the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to arrest and detain six CBEX operators linked to the alleged fraud.

The suspects include Adefowora Abiodun, Adefowora Oluwanisola, Emmanuel Uko, Seyi Oloyede, Avwersuo Otorudo, and Chukwuebuka Ehirim.

The EFCC applied for the detention order through an ex parte motion, arguing that the suspects needed to be held pending the conclusion of investigations and potential prosecution.

During the hearing, defence lawyers urged the court to vary its previous order,

which allowed the EFCC to detain the suspects, and requested bail pending the conclusion of the investigations and possible arraignment.

However, EFCC counsel, Fadila Yusuf, opposed the bail request, arguing that the defendants had already been formally charged.

She further noted that the magnitude of the alleged fraud surpassed the budgets of at least ten Nigerian states combined.

Ms Yusuf also told the court that the commission continued to receive fresh petitions from victims.

While the defence team argued that the first defendant, Abiodun, was unwell and required urgent medical attention, Justice Nwite ruled that the affidavit evidence presented did not prove that the EFCC was incapable of facilitating access to necessary healthcare.

The case is expected to proceed to trial following the formal arraignment of the defendants.

Country rep, varsity VC warn against repeat of 1994 Rwanda genocide

By Alade Adisa

The Rwandan Ambassador to Nigeria, Amb. Christophe Bazivamo; and the Vice Chancellor of Babcock University, Ilisan Remo, Prof. Ademola Tayo, have said incidents like the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda must not be allowed to occur anywhere in the world.

They have therefore charged political and community leaders to strive and promote peaceful co-existence among diverse groups in their communities and countries.

They spoke at an occasion held at Babcock University, Ilisan Remo, to commemorate the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

“It is both a solemn honour and a profound responsibility to stand before you today as we gather to commemorate Kwibuka31—the 31st commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. I am deeply grateful to the leadership and students of Babcock University for opening your hearts and your campus to this important outreach.

“Kwibuka, a Kinyarwanda word meaning ‘to remember’, is more than a commemoration. It is a time for reflection, a call for truth, and an invitation to responsibility. We remember the lives lost. We honour the courage of the survivors. And we renew our pledge—never again. For the people of Rwanda, the 7th of April marks the beginning of a season of mourning. But this is not a mourning that incapacitates; rather, it ignites purpose and spurs action, so that no nation, no people, ever again endure the horrors of genocide,” Bazivamo said.

He added, “It is crucial to understand that the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi did not erupt spontaneously. It was the tragic culmination of decades



of ethnically motivated discrimination, nurtured over time by colonial systems and later sustained by post-independence regimes. Under colonial rule, our coloniser, Belgium, introduced policies of social engineering introduced racial classifications and imposed hierarchies that systematically fractured Rwandan society.

“Today, we are also witnessing their high-level politicians’ alarming hate speeches, dehumanising propaganda, and calls for extermination—similar to the language used before 1994 in Rwanda. Thousands have been displaced, and yet, the international response remains dangerously muted. “We must not forget that Rwanda warned the world once before. The cost of ignoring hate is too great to bear again. This is not just Rwanda’s fight; it demands the urgent and concerted attention of the entire international community.”

Tributes paid to Rwandan genocide victims

Prof. Tayo, while paying tributes to the victims of the genocide, noted,

“We recognise that our diversity is strength, not a weakness. We acknowledge that the differences that once fueled hatred and division can be bridged through understanding, empathy, and compassion.

“Rwanda has made steady progress ever since, towards unity and economic transformation. As we come together to mark this occasion, I urge us all to focus on what unites us rather than what separates us. Let us reject the forces of division that seek to tear us apart based on racial, ethnic, gender, or other differences. We must strive for a world where such atrocities never happen again: a world where humanity is valued above all else; a world where we can live in peace, harmony, and mutual respect.”

The event had as its theme, “Remember, unite, renew,” and there was a candlelight procession in memory of the victims, while trees were planted at the front of the Senate Building of the university by the Rwandan envoy, the management of the university and Rwandan students in BU, among others.

Cost of printing materials is rising as students go to school without textbooks

By Alade Adisa

With the current economic situation in the country, though most families prioritise the education of their children, getting basic items for school children—especially the books they need to write in or read—has become difficult for many, due to the high cost of printing materials. This has ultimately led to the high cost of books.

Checks by New Daily Prime show that most students now go to school with empty bags of basic items. Some have just a few exercise books to take notes.

Books—whether textbooks or notebooks—have gone beyond the reach of many parents and guardians who are supposed to provide such items for their children and wards.

While students are short-changed and not given the best by hapless parents and guardians, those expected to provide the items are also reeling under heavy financial burdens and commitments that make things difficult for them.

High cost of paper, printing

Stakeholders in the sector—including students, teachers, parents, authors, publishers, booksellers, and printers—are having a tough time.

A 70-gramme bond paper that sold for ₦11,500 per ream in 2022 now costs ₦34,500 per ream (500 sheets). A 300-gramme card cover has jumped to ₦35,750 per pack (100 sheets) from ₦15,000 two years ago. Printing of Plate (CTP) now costs ₦13,000 per set, while the impression cost has increased from ₦8,000 to ₦13,000 per set (four colours).

To buttress the provisions of the 1999 Constitution, which states that Nigerian children are entitled to free basic education, federal and state governments are supposed to provide free primary and junior secondary school education. The policy, expected to be implemented by the Universal



Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in conjunction with State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs), should provide beneficiaries with textbooks in English, Mathematics, Yoruba/Igbo/Hausa, Basic Science, and Computer Science.

Unfortunately, that has not been the case in most states across the federation.

For instance, in Lagos State, the last supply of such books was done over eight years ago. The few remaining books in those schools are not only in shreds but also grossly inadequate.

Parents' view

The National President of the National Parent-Teacher Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN), Alhaji Haruna Danjuma, stated that all stakeholders, including parents, have responsibilities, but he charged the government to live up to its own.

“The truth is that the free basic education policy is not working in most states now, as it has been years since some states did anything in that regard. A state that refuses to pay counterpart funding to draw grants from UBEC or even misapplies what is given will

surely not bother about supplying such books.

If the government cannot fulfil its promise, let them go back to the National Assembly and say they cannot afford to implement the policy again,” he said.

Teachers' perspective

The Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) wants the government to give the needed attention to the education sector. The Lagos State Chairman of the NUT, Comrade Akintoye Hassan, opined:

“Education is a sector that must not be toyed with. A country's level of development is hinged on how its education sector fares. It is unfortunate that most parents, because of the current situation of the national economy, cannot afford to provide the needed textbooks and other items for their children. States must also live up to expectations regarding their obligations in the implementation of the free basic education policy.”

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2Face opens up on split from Annie, says 'We gave it our best'

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian music legend Innocent Ujah Idibia, widely known as 2Face or 2Baba, has spoken publicly about the emotional struggles he faced during his marriage to Nollywood actress Annie Macaulay-Idibia.

In a deeply personal revelation, the "African Queen" singer compared his experience to being in captivity, saying he felt trapped and even feared for his life during the union.

The award-winning artiste made these claims during a yet-to-be-released episode of the +234 Mzansi Podcast, co-hosted by popular Nigerian comedians Nedu and Acapella, alongside South African media personality Kifilwe.

"I was living in bondage", 2Face speaks out

In a clip from the upcoming podcast episode, 2Face didn't hold back his emotions as he reflected on his now-ended marriage. When asked about the situation with his estranged wife Annie, he gave a blunt and striking response.

"This thing wey dem call 'living in bondage' is real," he said. "There were some people who were ready to kill me."

His words sparked immediate reactions on social media, with fans and industry observers expressing concern and curiosity about what might have happened behind closed doors.

A marriage that seemed strong on the surface

2Face and Annie's relationship had long been admired in the public eye. The couple officially tied the knot in May 2012 after many years of on-and-off dating. Together, they have two daughters, Isabella and Olivia.

While their love story once seemed inspiring, the marriage faced several storms, many of which played out in the media. There were reports of arguments, infidelity claims, and emotional



outbursts from both sides over the years. Still, many believed they had weathered the storm until things finally fell apart earlier this year.

Separation confirmed in January 2025

On January 26, 2025, 2Face announced his separation from Annie in a cryptic and controversial post shared on his social media pages. The message shocked fans, especially as it came without much explanation. In the post, he hinted that he had made peace with his decision and was moving forward with his life.

Just days after the announcement, 2Face began appearing in public with his new partner, Natasha Osawuru. Natasha is a rising political figure and currently serves as a member of the Edo State House of Assembly. Their public outings and social media posts suggest that the singer has quickly embraced a new chapter in his personal life.

Reactions pour in from fans and critics

Following his revelations on the podcast, fans have been divided. Some have praised 2Face for finally speaking his truth, while others have criticized him for airing personal matters in public. Annie, on the other hand, has remained silent on the issue since the separation announcement. She has not released any official statement in response to her ex-husband's recent

comments.

Social media has been buzzing with opinions, with some users expressing sympathy for both parties. Others called for more discretion, especially when children are involved.

What lies ahead for 2Face

Despite the personal turmoil, 2Face appears focused on his music and personal growth. He has continued performing at shows and recently hinted at an upcoming project. His relationship with Natasha Osawuru has also become a topic of interest in the entertainment and political scenes.

As one of Africa's most celebrated musicians, 2Face's influence goes beyond music. His latest revelation sheds light on the often-hidden struggles celebrities face in their private lives, and it raises important conversations about emotional well-being, toxic relationships, and the pressures of living in the spotlight.

Conclusion

2Face Idibia's bold comments about his former marriage mark a new chapter in his life, one marked by reflection, change, and perhaps healing. While the full details of his experience remain unclear, one thing is certain: the singer is ready to move on from what he described as a dark and dangerous time.

Grammys celebrate Afrobeats rise, highlight Wizkid, 2Baba, Rema in top 10 songs

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The Recording Academy, organisers of the prestigious Grammy Awards, has officially recognised the global influence of Afrobeats, naming it one of the most dynamic music genres to emerge in the past decade.

In a recent feature published on the Academy's platforms, the Grammys spotlighted the genre's explosive growth, particularly from the mid-2010s to its present global reach. The Academy highlighted the contributions of Nigerian stars Wizkid, 2Baba, and Rema as central figures in the genre's evolution.

"Afrobeats keeps evolving", Recording academy

Tracing the genre's journey, the Recording Academy wrote:

"From its popularisation in the mid-2010s to current global, chart-topping dominance by the likes of @wizkidayo, @burnaboy, and @heisrema, the sound of Afrobeats is constantly shifting."

The statement marks one of the most high-profile acknowledgments of the genre's growing presence in global music markets.

Top 10 Afrobeats songs of all time revealed

To honour the genre, the Academy also unveiled a list of what it described as the "Top 10 Afrobeats Songs of All Time." The selection mixes early classics with recent hits that have shaped and defined the sound of Afrobeats both locally and internationally.

The list includes:

- African Queen – 2Baba (2004)
- Do Me – P-Square (2007)
- Bumper 2 Bumper – Wande Coal (2009)
- Pon Pon Pon – Dagrín (2009)
- Azonto – Fuse ODG ft. Tiffany



Owusu (2014)

- Mad Over You – Runtown (2016)
- Maradona – Niniola (2017)
- Sungba – Asake (2022)
- Calm Down – Rema (2022) (Note: This may have been meant by "Ozeba" as no known song by Rema bears that title)
- Ozeba – Rema (2024)

This list highlights songs that have played major roles in shaping Afrobeats and pushing it to international stages.

Mixed reactions trail Grammy list

While many music lovers welcomed the spotlight on Afrobeats, reactions to the list have been mixed. Some fans applauded the Recording Academy for recognising both the trailblazers and new-generation artists who have kept the genre alive and evolving.

However, the selection has also drawn criticism. Social media users quickly pointed out the absence of major figures like Davido, whose contributions to the genre are widely acknowledged.

"Leaving Davido out of a top 10 Afrobeats list feels incomplete," one fan wrote on X (formerly Twitter). Another

user added, "You can't talk about global Afrobeats without mentioning songs like If or Fall. The impact was massive."

Calls for transparency in selection criteria

The list has also sparked debate over what standards were used to determine the top 10 songs. Some argued that the list seems to favour commercial success, while others believe historical and cultural impact should have weighed more heavily.

"Are they going by chart performance, streaming numbers, or influence on the sound?" asked a music analyst. "Because if it's about cultural influence, there are plenty more deserving tracks that shaped Afrobeats as we know it."

Afrobeats continues to soar

Despite the debate, the Grammy's recognition signals a major milestone in Afrobeats' global journey. The genre, which blends West African rhythms with elements of hip hop, dancehall, and R&B, continues to win fans worldwide and influence artists across continents.

From sold-out arenas in Europe and America to viral dance trends on social media, Afrobeats is not just a sound, it's a movement. And now, with official recognition from one of music's biggest platforms, its place on the world stage appears firmly secured.

“Benue is the most underdeveloped state I’ve seen,” says Verydarkman

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Controversial Nigerian social media figure, Verydarkman, has sparked widespread debate after making strong remarks about the state of development in Benue State.

In a video that quickly went viral, the activist described Benue as the “most underdeveloped state” he has ever visited.

The comment came shortly after his recent trip to the state, where he claimed that the level of infrastructure and general development was alarmingly low. Speaking passionately, he stated, “Benue is still in the year 1940. It is the most underdeveloped state I have ever been to.”

His words have since triggered strong reactions across social media platforms, drawing both support and criticism from Nigerians at home and abroad.

“No development, no safety”, Verydarkman

Verydarkman didn’t stop at highlighting poor development. He went further to criticise the level of insecurity in the state, blaming it for the lack of progress and investment.

According to him, the road networks in many parts of Benue are in terrible condition, making it difficult for investors to access rural and urban communities. He also expressed fear over the safety of the people, pointing out that insecurity discourages both development projects and business ventures.

“Investors can’t come because of bad roads and insecurity,” he said in the video.

The influencer explained that he is currently funding a water project in Yelwata, a community in Benue State, where a borehole is being drilled. However, he noted that work on the project has been stalled due to safety concerns.

“I’m currently drilling a borehole in Yelwata, but the people can’t continue the work because they are afraid of being killed,” he lamented.

Mixed reactions trailed his statement



Following his remarks, many Nigerians took to social media to express their views. Some users agreed with Verydarkman’s observations, claiming that Benue has long suffered from government neglect and underinvestment. They applauded him for speaking up and using his platform to draw attention to the region’s struggles.

Others, however, criticised him for being too harsh and for portraying the state in a negative light. Some argued that while Benue has its challenges, calling it the “most underdeveloped” was an unfair generalisation.

In response to the backlash, some of his supporters pointed out that his comments reflect the realities that locals face daily, poor infrastructure, insecurity, and lack of basic amenities.

A call for urgent government action

Verydarkman’s comments have reignited conversations around the development status of Benue State and the need for urgent government intervention. His viral video has not only drawn attention to the community of Yelwata but also raised broader concerns about neglect in many parts of Nigeria.

Several users on X (formerly Twitter) have called on the Benue State government to respond and address the

issues raised. Some have urged the state governor, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia, to prioritise road repairs, improve security, and invest more in basic infrastructure.

Observers note that while Verydarkman’s tone may have been blunt, his message highlights a serious problem affecting millions of Nigerians in rural communities.

Influencer or advocate?

While he is known for his blunt style and online controversies, Verydarkman has increasingly used his platform to support social causes. From exposing corruption to highlighting humanitarian issues, he has built a reputation as a digital crusader of sorts.

His recent efforts in Yelwata, including funding a borehole project, have earned him praise in some quarters. Many believe that more public figures should follow his example by supporting development efforts in rural communities rather than waiting for government action alone.

As his video continues to trend, one thing is clear: Verydarkman’s words have sparked a renewed focus on the state of infrastructure and safety in Benue State and may yet pressure those in power to act.

Yul Edochie criticizes new method of choosing traditional rulers

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian actor and filmmaker, Yul Edochie, has sparked public discussion after urging the Igbo people to return to their ancestral roots when selecting traditional rulers.

In a strongly worded message shared via Instagram, the controversial actor expressed deep concern over what he described as the increasing abandonment of Igbo cultural practices.

Edochie stressed that traditional rulers should not be chosen through elections or political appointments, but rather by sacred and time-honoured customs handed down from their ancestors. He warned that allowing government involvement in the selection of monarchs only weakens the spiritual and moral authority of such leaders.

‘Rulers must be chosen by the deity’

According to Edochie, a true traditional ruler must be a core traditionalist, chosen not by men but by the deity of the land. He insisted that such a person must take a sacred oath to protect truth, promote peace, foster unity, and reject evil in all its forms.

“A traditional ruler must be selected by the deity of the land,” he wrote. “Then he will swear before the deity to uphold truth, unity, and peace, and shun evil. Any day he goes against the oath, the deity will strike him down.”

Edochie explained that this spiritual bond ensures that the ruler remains accountable to the people and to a higher power. He argued that when a ruler understands that divine punishment awaits those who break their oath, they are more likely to lead with integrity and courage.

Cultural erosion and social breakdown

In his post, the actor voiced concern over the rapid erosion of cultural values among the Igbo. He blamed this cultural drift for the rise in crime and



social instability across many communities.

“We have now embraced too many of the white man’s ways and destroyed our society with it,” he said. “That’s why there’s so much crime in our communities today.”

He described this shift toward foreign practices as a dangerous trend that has stripped Igbo society of its spiritual foundations. According to him, traditions that once guided moral conduct and ensured accountability have been replaced with systems that encourage corruption and lawlessness.

Call for a cultural reawakening

Edochie called on Ndi Igbo people of Igbo descent to retrace their steps and restore the cultural systems that once held their communities together. He said reclaiming these ancestral practices is the only way to revive the strength, dignity, and spiritual power of the Igbo nation.

“It’s time to retrace our steps and bring back our glory,” he said. “Ndi Igbo, stop messing up our tradition. A traditional ruler must be selected traditionally, not by election or the

government.”

He emphasised that traditional methods are not just symbolic, but necessary for ensuring that leaders are deeply rooted in the customs, values, and spiritual beliefs of the people they serve.

Mixed reactions trail the statement

While many followers praised Edochie for standing up in defence of Igbo heritage, others felt his message lacked practical solutions. Some critics argued that blending modern governance with tradition is inevitable in today’s world. However, Edochie remained firm in his position, insisting that sacred traditions must be protected at all costs.

As debates around cultural preservation continue across Nigeria, Edochie’s message has added to the growing calls for indigenous communities to hold firmly to their roots.

With his message, the actor has once again shown that he is not afraid to wade into controversial waters, this time, by defending tradition in an age of change.

“You should return to South Africa,” Trump reportedly told Elon Musk

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

In a dramatic escalation of their ongoing feud, U.S. President Donald Trump has publicly lashed out at billionaire Elon Musk, telling the tech magnate to “return to South Africa” in a fiery Truth Social post. The outburst comes amid Musk’s vocal opposition to Trump’s latest tax and spending bill, igniting a fresh round of hostilities between the two high-profile figures.

Musk, the CEO of Tesla, SpaceX, and X (formerly Twitter), had condemned the Trump-backed legislation as a betrayal of fiscal responsibility. “Those who campaigned on cutting spending but voted for this should hang their heads in shame,” Musk wrote. “They will lose their primary next year if it’s the last thing I do on this Earth.”

The post was followed by threats to publicly expose lawmakers who supported the bill. Trump responded within hours, accusing Musk of surviving on “government handouts” and suggesting he should “head back home to South Africa.”

“Elon may get more subsidy than any human being in history,” Trump wrote, adding, “Without subsidies, Elon would probably have to close up shop and return to South Africa. No more Rocket launches, Satellites, or Electric Car Production, and our Country would save a FORTUNE.”

Trump also mocked Musk’s leadership of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), claiming the billionaire had exaggerated his cost-saving achievements. Musk had boasted of slashing federal bureaucracy by firing over 120,000 civil servants while saving billions.

Once a major backer of Trump’s 2024 campaign—contributing over \$250 million—Musk has recently turned critical. He labelled the recent legislation “destructive” and “insane,” even posting and later deleting explosive claims linking Trump to Epstein files. “They went too far,” Musk later said in a walk-back tweet. “I regret some of my posts about President Trump.”

Trump, in an interview with the New York Post, said: “I thought it was very



nice that he did that,” acknowledging Musk’s apology.

But the fallout has broader implications. Musk’s statement has raised new scrutiny around his fraught relationship with South Africa, his country of birth. Despite being born into wealth in Pretoria, Musk has had a tense relationship with South African authorities, often accusing President Cyril Ramaphosa’s government of fostering laws that discriminate against non-Black citizens.

In recent years, Musk has used X to criticise South Africa’s race-based policies and called for international intervention. His remarks have drawn criticism from South African officials and civil rights groups, who accuse him of misrepresenting the country’s transformation agenda.

Musk, now an American citizen, left South Africa in the late 1980s, first moving to Canada and later the U.S. He earned degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and began a career that would eventually see him become the world’s wealthiest person, with a net worth exceeding \$424 billion as of May 2025.

Over three decades, Musk has founded or led companies at the forefront of tech and engineering, including Tesla, SpaceX, Neuralink, the Boring Company, and

most recently, AI. He also played a central role in OpenAI’s early days before exiting and later criticising the company for its direction.

His acquisition of Twitter in 2022 and its rebranding to X in 2023 brought global attention, particularly as hate speech and misinformation surged under his leadership. As senior advisor to Trump in early 2025 and de facto head of DOGE, Musk’s politics took a hard-right turn, aligning him with far-right causes globally.

The latest fallout with Trump has fractured what once appeared to be a powerful political and economic alliance. While Trump still praises Musk’s innovation, the increasingly personal tone of their exchanges signals a deepening rift.

As the U.S. edges closer to another election cycle, observers say the public spat between two of the world’s most influential figures could reshape narratives on tech, governance, and billionaire influence in politics.

Meanwhile, back in South Africa, officials have yet to respond to Trump’s comments. But analysts warn that the feud—fuelled by Musk’s complicated ties to his homeland—could cast a new diplomatic shadow between Pretoria and Washington.

UK deputy PM proposes paternity leave from first day of employment

By **Fatimah Idera**



Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner has announced a sweeping review of the UK's parental leave system, with proposals that could see paternity leave and unpaid parental leave become legal rights from the first day of employment.

The 18-month review, led by the Department for Business and Trade, will assess the current framework, which entitles mothers to up to 39 weeks of leave on reduced pay, while fathers are limited to just two weeks of paid paternity leave. Ministers believe the current arrangements may be outdated and could be limiting productivity.

As part of the review, the Government will consider reforms such as allowing fathers to take paternity leave after a period of shared parental leave, something not currently permitted. Officials are also exploring ways to increase uptake, as one in three new fathers do not take their entitled leave and shared parental leave remains underused.

Ms Rayner said the Government is committed to building a parental leave system that works for modern families:

“Those early years are the most special time for families, but too many struggle

to balance their work and home lives. Supporting working parents isn't just the right thing to do, it's vital for our economy,” she said.

“Through our Plan to Make Work Pay, we're already improving the parental leave system with new day-one rights. This ambitious review will leave no stone unturned as we deliver for working families.”

Family advocates welcome paternity leave

The review has been welcomed by campaigners and family advocates who have long argued that the UK's approach to paternity leave is outdated and unequal.

George Gabriel, co-founder of The Dad Shift, said, “The Government's review of parental leave is the best chance in a generation to improve the system and make sure it works for working families. When the last Labour government introduced paternity leave, it was groundbreaking, but that offer, unchanged since, is now the least generous in Europe.”

Campaigners argue that unequal leave policies can harm both parents and children, and that reform could benefit

not just families, but also businesses and the wider economy.

The parental leave review comes at a time when the UK faces warnings over its lagging productivity. The Office for Budget Responsibility is expected to revise down Britain's productivity forecast this summer, adding urgency to efforts to support working families and boost labour market performance.

Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall, who is also leading controversial welfare reforms, said modernising parental leave could play a crucial role in supporting families and the economy.

“Every parent should have the chance to spend time with their children during those precious early years,” she said.

“This review delivers on our Plan for Change to support families and give children the best start in life. By listening to parents and employers across the country, we'll build a system that works for today's working families.”

The findings of the review are expected to inform long-term legislative reforms that could reshape parental leave rights across the UK.

Trump ends US sanctions on Syria in major foreign policy shift

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Donald Trump has formally lifted US sanctions on Syria, marking a dramatic shift in American foreign policy and reigniting debates over justice, peace, and accountability in the war-ravaged country. In a move that stunned analysts and sparked cautious optimism across the Middle East, the US president signed an executive order in May that dismantled most of the sanctions imposed on Syria since 2004.

The decision follows growing regional pressure, particularly from Saudi Arabia and Turkey, to support Syria's reintegration into global diplomatic and economic frameworks. These efforts have been amplified by the recent political transition that saw former Islamist guerrilla Ahmed al-Sharaa replace Bashar al-Assad, ending the Assad family's five-decade-long authoritarian rule.

Speaking from the White House, Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt defended the administration's rationale: "This is in an effort to promote and support the country's path to stability and peace." The executive order ended the "national emergency" that had severely restricted Syria's state-run institutions, including its central bank.

Brad Smith, the US Treasury official overseeing sanctions policy, stated that lifting the restrictions would "end the country's isolation from the international financial system, setting the stage for global commerce and galvanising investments from its neighbours in the region, as well as from the United States."

According to the order, Syria has been "transformed" since Assad's ouster, citing "positive actions taken by the new Syrian government under President Ahmed al-Sharaa." Sanctions on the former regime remain in place, with Bashar al-Assad, who fled to Russia late last year, still designated for international sanctions.

This development has drawn mixed reactions. Israel expressed interest in normalising relations with Syria and Lebanon under the wider umbrella of the Abraham Accords, a diplomatic initiative that has already reshaped



relations between Israel and several Arab states. "We see a real opportunity for long-term peace," an Israeli spokesperson said on Monday.

However, critics warn that Syria's internal stability remains fragile. Despite claims of progress under the new administration, sectarian violence continues. On June 22, at least 25 people were killed and dozens wounded in a suspected Islamist attack on a Greek Orthodox church in Damascus. Rights groups say attacks on religious and ethnic minorities have risen since Assad's fall.

Until Trump's surprise announcement during a diplomatic visit to Saudi Arabia, the US had maintained a hardline stance, demanding reforms on human rights and minority protections before any easing of sanctions. Syria remains classified as a state sponsor of terrorism, a designation unlikely to be lifted in the near future.

The backdrop to these developments is one of the 21st century's most devastating conflicts. The Syrian war, which began in 2011, originated from peaceful protests inspired by the Arab Spring. Syrians, demanding democratic reforms and civil liberties, were met with brutal crackdowns by the Assad

regime—live ammunition, mass arrests, and torture became commonplace.

Syria's demographic makeup—predominantly Sunni Muslim with an Alawite-dominated ruling elite—added a sectarian edge to the unrest. The regime's refusal to cede power or reform led to military defections and the formation of opposition groups like the Free Syrian Army. Over time, the conflict escalated into a multifaceted civil war involving regional and international powers, including the US, Russia, Iran, and Turkey.

For over a decade, sanctions targeted Syria's financial system, oil exports, and high-ranking officials in an attempt to weaken Assad's grip. While these measures isolated the regime, they also contributed to widespread economic hardship.

Trump's decision now aims to shift gears. While some see this as a gamble, others view it as a pragmatic step toward stability. Whether Ahmed al-Sharaa can usher Syria into a new era of peace, inclusivity, and economic recovery remains uncertain—but the lifting of sanctions is undoubtedly a significant turning point.

UK court convicts nonagenarian Headley for 1967 rape, murder case

By **Fatimah Idera**



A 92-year-old man has been found guilty of raping and murdering a 75-year-old woman in 1967, in what is believed to be the UK's oldest cold case ever brought to trial.

Ryland Headley was convicted at Bristol Crown Court for the rape and killing of Louisa Dunne, a mother of two, at her home in the Easton area of Bristol on 28 June 1967. Dunne, born in 1892, was found dead by concerned neighbours who noticed her absence from her regular spot on her doorstep. Inside her home, they discovered her body with visible injuries, signs of sexual assault, and evidence of a violent struggle.

At the time, investigators collected physical evidence, including semen and a palm print, but lacked the forensic tools to identify a suspect. The original investigation was extensive: more than 19,000 palm print samples were collected, over 8,000 house-to-house inquiries were made, and thousands of statements were recorded. Despite these efforts, Headley, then in his 30s, was not questioned, as he lived just beyond the area canvassed.

Decades later, in 2024, Avon and Somerset Police re-examined the case. Advances in DNA technology revealed a match from the semen recovered from Dunne's clothing, providing evidence deemed a billion times more likely to belong to Headley than anyone else. His palm print, taken upon his arrest, also matched the one found at the scene 57 years earlier.

Detective Inspector Dave Marchant, who led the review, praised the combination of original evidence and modern forensic science, saying, "This investigation was a blend of new and old forensic techniques and we were able to utilise that original investigative material."

Headley apprehended in November

Headley, arrested in Ipswich in November 2024, declined to give evidence at trial. Prosecutors were permitted to inform the jury of two previous rape convictions from the 1970s, both involving elderly women attacked in their homes under circumstances similar to Dunne's case. Prosecutor Anna Vigars KC argued

these offences revealed Headley's pattern of behaviour breaking into homes at night, targeting elderly women living alone, and using violence to commit rape.

Louisa Dunne's granddaughter, who was contacted by police nearly six decades after the crime, recalled her disbelief: "I said, 'have they caught him?'" It came out instinctively. And she said, "we have a suspect." She described the conviction as a long-awaited relief: "I accepted that some murders just never get solved. The poor woman, it must have been terrifying."

The Crown Prosecution Service confirmed it was unaware of any UK cold case that had taken longer to reach trial. DI Marchant said the result underlines the importance of reviewing historic cases: "You should never give up. At the time we re-instigated it in 2024, there was a chance a suspect could still be alive, and he was."

Police are now reviewing other unsolved crimes to determine if Headley could be linked to further offences.

Musk vows to unseat lawmakers over Trump budget bill

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**



Tech billionaire Elon Musk has reignited his feud with US President Donald Trump, vowing to unseat lawmakers who support the administration's controversial budget bill, which he claims would add a staggering \$3.3 trillion to the national deficit.

Taking to his social media platform, X, the Tesla and SpaceX CEO condemned what he described as "insane spending" and issued a stark warning to members of Congress.

"Every member of Congress who campaigned on reducing government spending and then immediately voted for the biggest debt increase in history should hang their head in shame! And they will lose their primary next year if it is the last thing I do on this Earth," Musk wrote.

Just hours later, he escalated his rhetoric further, declaring that if the bill passes, "the America Party will be formed the next day".

Musk, who once held sway within Trump's inner circle and headed the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), has accused the president's landmark budget of undermining efforts to streamline government operations. Despite DOGE's claims of saving \$190 billion through rapid and often chaotic programme cuts, a report by the Partnership for Public Service (PSP), a nonpartisan organisation focusing on the federal workforce, estimates the initiative may have cost taxpayers an additional \$135 billion.

Though Musk had previously maintained a relatively low profile regarding the bill following a dramatic fallout with Trump, he returned to the debate over the weekend with renewed vigour.

Musk decries bipartisan support of bill

In a further social media tirade, Musk lambasted the bipartisan support for the bill, calling the political establishment "the PORKY

PIG PARTY!!" and once again floated the idea of launching a new political force. "Time for a new political party that cares about the people," he wrote.

Musk's fury is not only directed at the bill's deficit implications. He has also decried the legislation's removal of subsidies for electric vehicles, arguing that it "gives handouts to industries of the past while severely damaging industries of the future".

Despite previously aligning with Trump on cuts to social welfare, environmental protections, and global aid, Musk has rejected the president's so-called "big, beautiful bill".

The Senate version of the budget is projected to add \$3.3 trillion to the deficit over the next decade, according to estimates by the Congressional Budget Office, while the House version would contribute \$2.4 trillion.

Court rules Albanian criminal with 50 convictions allowed to remain in UK

By **Fatimah Idera**

In a latest UK immigration development, an Albanian man with nearly 50 criminal convictions has been granted permission to remain in the UK after a judge ruled that his offences were not “serious enough” to justify deportation. However, the Home Office has labelled the man a serious threat to the country.

Zenel Beshi, described the man as a serious and prolific offender, previously served a six-year prison sentence in Italy for robbery, theft, and false imprisonment. Italian authorities also recorded 44 separate burglary and theft offences linked to him. However, despite this extensive record, the UK’s upper Immigration Tribunal ruled that Beshi’s crimes did not meet the threshold of very extreme offending that causes deep public revulsion.

The Home Office had argued that Beshi posed a “genuine, present and sufficiently serious threat” to public safety and should be deported. They also accused him of failing to disclose his criminal history upon arriving in Britain in August 2020, three years after his Italian sentencing.

Home Office rejects application

Beshi applied for residency under the European Economic Area (EEA) scheme, citing his relationship with an EEA national. Although his initial application was rejected due to insufficient evidence, he successfully appealed and was issued a residency card. He later applied to remain in the UK under the EU Settlement Scheme, but the Home Office rejected the application in July 2022, citing his undisclosed convictions and initiating deportation proceedings.

However, Beshi appealed, and a psychologist’s assessment, submitted during the case, described him as being at low risk of reoffending. A first-tier tribunal sided with Beshi, prompting Home Secretary Yvette Cooper to challenge the decision,



claiming the court had misinterpreted the legal requirements for deportation.

Despite this, Judge Leonie Hirst of the Upper Tribunal upheld the earlier ruling. She concluded that while Beshi’s criminal past was serious, it did not reach the extreme level necessary for expulsion under current legal standards. She also said that whether Beshi had disclosed his convictions was of little relevance to the case’s final outcome.

Judge Hirst praised the reasoning of the lower tribunal, stating its findings were detailed, clear and well-structured, and rejected arguments that the burden of proof had been misapplied. “The evidence before the First-tier Tribunal did not on any view indicate that [Beshi’s] offending was of the type causing deep public revulsion,” she wrote.

The case has triggered a political backlash. Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp called the ruling out of touch and accused the courts of failing to protect the public. “This man is a danger to British citizens,”

he said. “Judges should prioritise law-abiding people, not foreign criminals. If I become Home Secretary, this will change.”

Current Home Secretary Yvette Cooper is seeking reforms that would make it harder for foreign criminals to remain in the UK on human rights grounds and would require courts to place greater weight on public safety when considering such cases.

A Home Office spokesperson said the government “does not agree with this judgment” and is considering options to appeal. “Foreign nationals who commit crime should be in no doubt that we will do everything to ensure they are not free on Britain’s streets,” they said. “It is in the public interest that they are removed swiftly.”

The case comes amid broader concerns over burglary in the UK, with nearly 270,000 incidents reported annually and a prosecution rate of just one in 25. Studies show that 13% of victims end up moving home due to the trauma of the crime.

20 bodies found in Sinaloa amid escalating cartel war

By **Fatimah Idera**



Mexican authorities have discovered 20 bodies in the state of Sinaloa amid escalating violence between rival factions of the powerful Sinaloa drug cartel, with growing signs of a dangerous alliance forming between cartel groups.

On Monday, the state prosecutor's office confirmed that four of the victims had been decapitated and found hanging from a bridge near Culiacán, the state capital. A further 16 bodies, one also decapitated, were found inside a van parked beneath the bridge. The severed heads were located in a nearby bag.

This gruesome discovery comes after the deadliest month yet in a spiralling conflict between two splinter groups of the Sinaloa cartel. There is increasing evidence that the Jalisco New Generation cartel, historically a major rival, has now entered the fray.

Sinaloa founding member detained
The cartel war erupted on 9 September 2024, six weeks after a dramatic arrest in El Paso, Texas. Ismael "El Mayo"

Zambada, a founding member of the Sinaloa cartel, was detained alongside a son of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán. According to reports, El Mayo believed he was betrayed by El Chapo's son, sparking the internecine battle.

Now, a faction loyal to El Mayo's son, known as La Mayiza, is in violent conflict with Los Chapitos, the two remaining sons of El Chapo still at large in Mexico. A message left near the bodies identified the perpetrators as members of La Mayiza.

Despite deploying thousands of soldiers to the region, the Mexican government has failed to contain the violence. The past two months have been the most brutal in the conflict, with nearly 3,000 people killed or reported missing.

In a move that could alter the course of the war, Los Chapitos have reportedly allied with their former adversaries, the Jalisco cartel. The US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) warned of this potential pact in a recent intelligence report, suggesting the new coalition

could dramatically reshape Mexico's criminal landscape and global drug trade routes.

The Chapitos have been identified by US authorities as key figures in fentanyl trafficking, the synthetic opioid at the heart of a spiralling overdose crisis in the United States. The Trump administration has intensified pressure on Mexico to clamp down on fentanyl smuggling, particularly in Sinaloa, resulting in more laboratory busts, arrests, and seizures.

US Customs and Border Protection reports a near 30% drop in fentanyl seizures at the US-Mexico border compared with the same period last year.

In response to the ongoing crisis, President Trump's administration has designated major cartels as foreign terrorist organisations, floated the prospect of military intervention in Mexico, and imposed sanctions on three mid-sized Mexican banks allegedly involved in laundering cartel funds.

Diddy's trial nears end as defence rejects criminal enterprise claims

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



The prosecution has painted a damning picture of Sean “Diddy” Combs, labelling him the orchestrator of a criminal enterprise fuelled by power, violence, and intimidation. In a dramatic summation, prosecutors described the music mogul as a man who “refused to take no for an answer” and used fear to get his way.

“The defendant was a very powerful man,” one prosecutor told the jury. “But he became more powerful and more dangerous because of the support of his inner circle and his businesses, the enterprise.”

Diddy is facing a raft of serious allegations, including sex trafficking and racketeering, in a federal case that has gripped the public’s attention. The trial, now entering its final stages, has heard extensive testimony from former associates, alleged victims, and law enforcement officials.

On Friday, Diddy’s defence team delivered its closing argument, vehemently rejecting the government’s case as “false” and “exaggerated”. Lead defence counsel Marc Agnifilo urged the jury to see through what he characterised as a narrative built on flawed testimony and financial motivations.

Agnifilo particularly challenged the credibility of Ventura, the prosecution’s key witness. He depicted her not as a victim of sex trafficking, but as a woman with agency who willingly engaged in sexual relationships with Combs. He reminded the jury that Ventura had already received a \$20 million settlement from Combs in 2023 following a civil suit, and is also expected to receive an additional \$10 million from the owner of the hotel in Los Angeles where the alleged assault occurred in 2016.

“If you had to pick a winner in this whole thing, it’s hard not to pick Cassie,” Agnifilo remarked. “This isn’t about a crime, this is about money.”

Diddy remains an active presence in court

While Diddy chose not to take the stand, he has remained an active presence in court, frequently conferring with his legal team and reacting openly during witness testimony. Earlier this month, the judge admonished him for attempting to influence the jury through sustained eye contact and vigorous nodding during cross-examination, warning that such behaviour could see him removed from the courtroom.

With both sides having delivered their final arguments, the case now rests in the hands of the jury. A verdict is expected within the coming days.

Nissan to cut hundreds of jobs in UK

By **Fatimah Idera**



Nissan has announced plans to cut around 250 jobs at its Sunderland factory, the UK's largest car manufacturing site, as the company grapples with falling profits and weaker-than-expected demand for electric vehicles (EVs).

The Japanese carmaker said the job reductions, around 4% of the plant's 6,000-strong workforce, will be carried out through a voluntary redundancy scheme. The cuts will affect office staff and shop floor supervisors, but not manufacturing workers.

The Sunderland factory, opened in 1986 and known for producing models like the Nissan Bluebird, remains the company's only manufacturing site in Europe and is also the largest employer in the city.

The decision to reduce headcount comes as part of a broader cost-

cutting drive. It is aiming to save ¥400bn (£2bn) following a sharp decline in profits, driven largely by sluggish EV sales in Europe, falling demand in China, price competition in the US, and rising costs for energy and labour.

In its most recent financial results, Nissan reported an 88% drop in annual profits, its worst performance in 25 years. In response, the company has unveiled a global restructuring plan that could see up to 20,000 jobs cut across its 133,500-strong workforce worldwide.

A Nissan spokesperson confirmed the job cuts in Sunderland and said consultations have begun with affected staff.

"This week, we are beginning discussions with some of our team in Sunderland about the opportunity to

voluntarily leave Nissan, with support from the company. This will support the plant's efficiency as we aim to become a leaner, more resilient business."

Despite the cutbacks, the company reaffirmed its commitment to its UK operations.

In 2023, Nissan pledged £2bn in upgrades to the Sunderland plant to support its transition to EV production, as part of its goal to phase out petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030.

The plant is set to begin production of the next-generation electric Leaf later this year, with an electric version of the Juke model scheduled for launch in 2026.

"Our Sunderland plant remains at the forefront of our electrification strategy," the spokesperson added.

Alexander-Arnold shines as Real edge Juventus 1-0

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Trent Alexander-Arnold delivered a moment of brilliance to set up Gonzalo García's winning goal as Real Madrid edged past Juventus 1-0 to reach the quarter-finals of the FIFA Club World Cup at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami.

In a closely contested match in front of 62,149 fans, it was Alexander-Arnold's superb second-half cross that separated the two European giants. The England international, making his fourth consecutive start under Xabi Alonso, swung in a pinpoint delivery which García powered into the top corner with a well-timed header in the 54th minute.

The goal marked García's third of the tournament and continued his breakout run in a Madrid shirt. The 21-year-old striker, a product of the club's youth system, is rapidly earning comparisons with Real Madrid legend Raúl González. His movement, composure, and end product have been vital to Madrid's progress so far, and once again, he rose to the occasion.

Real Madrid lined up in Alonso's now-familiar 5-3-2 formation, which emphasizes control and wide play. Though effective in possession, the system left the Spanish side exposed in

the opening stages. Juventus could have taken the lead when Kenan Yildiz released Randal Kolo Muani through on goal. The Frenchman had only Thibaut Courtois to beat but chipped his shot onto the roof of the net.

The Serie A side continued to look dangerous, with Yildiz testing Courtois from range and Michele Di Gregorio keeping Juventus in the game with a string of brilliant saves. Di Gregorio was arguably the standout performer for the Italians, producing stops to deny Jude Bellingham and Federico Valverde in the first half, and thwarting García and Dean Huijsen early in the second.

Despite the chances, it was Real Madrid who found the breakthrough, with Alexander-Arnold's delivery once again showing why he is regarded as one of the finest crossers in the game. The 25-year-old, who joined Madrid from Liverpool this summer, registered his first assist for the club and reminded fans of his creative pedigree—having racked up 92 assists in his time at Anfield.

Madrid's control improved after the goal, with Arda Güler pulling the strings in midfield alongside Valverde and Bellingham. The trio helped Real see out the match with maturity, limiting

Juventus to half-chances as the game wore on.

Juventus boss Igor Tudor will be left frustrated by his side's inability to take their chances, especially in a first half where they were the better team. Kolo Muani's miss and Yildiz's deflected strike were key moments, and the lack of a clinical touch proved costly.

The win makes it three victories in a row for Alonso's Real Madrid, who look increasingly confident under the former midfielder's guidance. The Spanish giants now advance to the quarter-finals, where they will face either Borussia Dortmund or Monterrey in what promises to be another thrilling encounter.

For Madrid, the victory represents more than just progression. It signals the rising influence of their next generation. García continues to grow in stature, Güler dazzles with every touch, and Alexander-Arnold has slotted in seamlessly on the right, combining experience with flair.

With Xabi Alonso at the helm and young stars stepping up, Real Madrid look like strong contenders for Club World Cup glory—and their fans have every reason to believe that the best is yet to come.

Arsenal sign Kepa from Chelsea in £5m deal

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Arsenal have completed the signing of Spanish goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga from Chelsea for a reported fee of £5 million, marking the end of the 30-year-old's eventful six-year stint at Stamford Bridge. Kepa has signed a three-year contract with the Gunners and is expected to compete for the number one shirt alongside fellow Spaniard David Raya.

The deal brings a new chapter for Kepa, who arrives at the Emirates Stadium after a season-long loan at Bournemouth, where he featured in 35 matches across all competitions. He now joins Mikel Arteta's Arsenal, a team pushing for Premier League and European glory after consecutive top-four finishes.

In his first interview as an Arsenal player, Kepa expressed excitement about his new challenge. "I'm really, really happy to be here, really excited and looking forward to what is coming," he said. "The ambition that is shown in this club, when I talk with Mikel and Inaki [Cana, Arsenal's goalkeeping coach], how much they show me their desire to win... I think we are so close to winning and, hopefully, altogether, we can achieve it."

Kepa's journey to North London has been shaped by both triumphs and challenges. Still the most expensive goalkeeper in football history, he was signed by Chelsea in 2018 for £71 million from Athletic Bilbao after Thibaut Courtois forced a move to Real Madrid and Chelsea failed to secure Alisson Becker, who joined Liverpool instead. The Blues were left with few alternatives and paid Kepa's full release clause to get the deal over the line.

Despite a promising start, Kepa's form at Chelsea proved inconsistent, leading



to questions over the enormous fee and his suitability for the top level. His struggles were most visible during the 2019 Carabao Cup final, when he infamously refused to be substituted in extra time, creating headlines worldwide.

However, Kepa gradually restored his reputation through loan spells, first at Real Madrid—where he won La Liga and the Champions League during the 2023–24 season—and then at Bournemouth, where he became a reliable presence between the posts. His time at Chelsea also included appearances in Champions League, Europa League, and Club World Cup-winning squads, highlighting his experience on the biggest stages.

For Arsenal, the move adds depth and competition in goal. With Aaron Ramsdale's future uncertain and David Raya having impressed since joining from Brentford, Kepa's arrival gives Arteta more options, especially in a season where the Gunners will again juggle domestic and European commitments.

Kepa's signing also brings clarity to Arsenal's goalkeeping setup. Brazilian goalkeeper Neto, who was on loan

from Bournemouth last season, has returned to his parent club after the Gunners opted not to make the deal permanent. Kepa, with over 300 career appearances and a wealth of experience in high-pressure situations, is seen as a safer long-term option.

His ability to play out from the back and comfort under pressure aligns well with Arteta's tactical philosophy. Arsenal's coaching staff, particularly Inaki Cana, played a significant role in convincing Kepa to join, with both parties confident that he can rejuvenate his career in North London.

As the Gunners continue to reinforce their squad, Kepa's arrival is part of a wider summer reshuffle. Reports suggest Arsenal are also closing in on Real Sociedad midfielder Martín Zubimendi, with a £51 million deal nearing completion following a successful medical.

For Kepa, the move represents both a fresh start and an opportunity to reclaim his place among Spain's elite goalkeepers ahead of Euro 2028. For Arsenal, it's a calculated gamble on a proven talent looking to write a new chapter at one of England's most ambitious clubs.

Semenyo commits to Bournemouth until 2030

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Bournemouth winger Antoine Semenyo has pledged his future to the club by signing a new contract extending his stay at Vitality Stadium until the summer of 2030. The 25-year-old Ghanaian forward's commitment comes after an impressive rise since joining the Cherries from Bristol City in January 2023.

Semenyo's new deal underlines his importance to Bournemouth's plans as they prepare for another Premier League campaign. Having already signed a long-term contract 12 months ago, this extension offers both the club and player added stability amid increased attention from some of England's biggest clubs.

Since arriving in Dorset, Semenyo has become a vital figure in the squad. He has made 89 appearances and scored 22 goals for Bournemouth, with 13 of those goals coming in the 2024-25 season, his most productive campaign yet. His performances helped propel the Cherries to a respectable ninth-place finish in the Premier League, their highest in recent years.

Reflecting on his new deal, Semenyo said, "I've grown so much at the club, both on and off the pitch, and I'm really happy to have signed ahead of returning for pre-season. From the fans to the staff and my teammates, I can't speak highly enough of the people around the club. It's a great place to be, and I'm excited to get back to Bournemouth and continue the hard work with the new season just around the corner."

The winger's development has caught the eye of several top Premier League clubs. This summer, Semenyo was linked with Manchester United, Liverpool, and Tottenham Hotspur, making his contract renewal a significant boost for Bournemouth manager Andoni Iraola. The club has already seen some key players depart this summer, with Milos Kerkez moving to Liverpool and Dean Huijsen joining Real Madrid, so securing Semenyo's services is vital for



maintaining squad quality.

Andoni Iraola praised Semenyo's decision, emphasizing the player's impact on and off the field. "Antoine is a tremendous talent and a key part of our squad. His commitment to Bournemouth shows his belief in what we're building here. We're delighted to have him with us for the long term as we aim to push higher in the Premier League."

Semenyo's style of play combines pace, power, and a keen eye for goal, making him a constant threat down the flanks. His ability to take on defenders, create chances, and finish clinically has won him admirers from teammates and fans alike.

The winger's journey from the Championship to establishing himself as a Premier League performer in just over two years is a testament to his dedication and professionalism. His career trajectory at Bournemouth highlights the club's emphasis on nurturing talent and competing at the highest level.

Looking ahead, Semenyo's new contract positions him as one of Bournemouth's central figures for the next five years. The

club will be counting on his goals and assists to drive their ambitions of solidifying a top-half finish and possibly challenging for European qualification spots.

For Semenyo, the commitment represents a vote of confidence in Bournemouth's project and a personal desire to continue growing within a familiar environment. As the new Premier League season approaches, both player and club will hope this partnership yields even greater success on the pitch.

With a strong bond between player and club, Semenyo's contract extension sends a clear message: Bournemouth intends to keep their rising stars and build a competitive team capable of challenging the Premier League's established elite.

The coming seasons will be crucial for both Semenyo and Bournemouth as they strive to build on last year's momentum and make their mark in England's top flight. For now, the winger's long-term future is secured, giving fans plenty to look forward to.

Gov AbdulRazaq rewards Kwara United with N5m, land for Federation Cup victory

By Friday Omosola



Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq of Kwara State has hosted the victorious Kwara United Football Club, following their historic triumph in the 2025 President's Federation Cup.

The governor also received the club's U-19 team, which recently emerged as champions of the inaugural National Youth League.

READ ALSO: AbdulRazaq flags off Kwara Agro Input Fair, reaffirms commitment to food security

As part of his appreciation for their achievements, Mr AbdulRazaq gifted each player of the Kwara United senior team ₦5 million and a plot of land at the exclusive Kwara Smart City, praising them for bringing pride to the state.

Kwara United clinched the Federation Cup title after defeating Abakaliki FC in a dramatic penalty shootout, following a 90-minute deadlock.

The team made a grand entrance into

Ilorin on Monday afternoon, welcomed by cheering residents who lined the streets from Eiyenkorin to the banquet hall in the Government Reserved Area (GRA), where the official reception was held.

The event was attended by several dignitaries, including the Chairman of the Kwara House of Assembly Committee on Sports, Hon. Rukayat Shittu; Member representing Shawo/Essa Constituency, Hon. Yusuf Abdulwaheed Gbenga; cabinet members; Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor, Princess Olubukola Babalola; Chairman, Kwara State Sports Commission, Coach Bola Magaji; Chairman, Kwara United FC, Kumbi Titiloye; Chairman, Kwara State Football Association, Malam Abdullahi Musa Thuraya; Head Coach Tunde Sanni; APC Chieftain, Alhaji Yahya Seriki; among others.

"This is the biggest trophy in Nigerian football today, even bigger than the League Cup. It has existed long before the League itself was formed, and today

the trophy is in Kwara. I must congratulate everyone who made this possible," Mr AbdulRazaq said during the reception.

He reflected on the club's transformation since his administration assumed office in 2019, recalling that at the time, the team faced financial challenges, including unpaid salaries.

"Our administration is dedicating this trophy to the memory of Alhaji Yusuf Salami, who spent his personal wealth trying to bring this trophy to Kwara but never succeeded. May Allah grant him Aljannah Firdaus," the governor added.

Mr AbdulRazaq commended the players, Coach Magaji, Kumbi Titiloye, and the entire management team for their dedication to reviving the club's fortunes.

In their separate remarks, Coach Magaji and Kumbi Titiloye expressed gratitude to the governor for his unwavering support and significant investments in the team, which they said had paved the way for the club's recent successes.