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Port Harcourt refinery not for sale — NNPC

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Amidst revival, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) said it has officially ruled out the sale of the Port Harcourt Refining Company.

In a statement on Wednesday, the NNPC said its Group Chief Executive Officer, Bayo Ojulari, made the announcement at a company-wide town hall meeting in Abuja on Tuesday.

“The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) Ltd has officially ruled out sale of the Port Harcourt Refining Company, reaffirming its commitment to completing high-graded rehabilitation and retention of the plant,” the statement said.

Mr Ojulari stated that the position isn’t a shift; rather, it is informed by ongoing detailed technical and financial reviews of the Port Harcourt, Kaduna and Warri refineries.

“The ongoing review indicates that the earlier decision to operate the Port Harcourt refinery prior to full completion of its rehabilitation was ill-informed and sub-commercial,” he said.

Reasons for not selling

The NNPC said that although progress is being made on all three refineries, the emerging outlook calls for more advanced technical partnerships to complete and upgrade the rehabilitation of the Port Harcourt refinery.

“Thus, selling is highly unlikely as it would lead to further value erosion,” it said.

According to the statement, the announcement reinforces NNPC’s mandate as a strategic custodian of national energy infrastructure and reflects a firm resolve to deliver on the complete rehabilitation and long-term viability of Nigeria’s refineries.

It added that it signals continuity in the federal government’s broader energy security objectives and a commitment to retaining critical assets under national control.



“NNPC Ltd will continue to reposition itself as a commercially driven, professionally managed national energy company, grounded in transparency, focused on performance, and unwavering in its responsibility to its number one stakeholder group, Nigerians,” Mr Ojulari said.

Earlier in the month, Mr Ojulari said the company was considering selling the refineries due to the complexity of rehabilitation.

Speaking with Bloomberg at the 9th OPEC International Seminar, Mr Ojulari said a strategic review of NNPC’s refinery operations is underway and expected to be concluded before the end of the year.

“We’re reviewing all our refinery strategies now. We hope before the end of the year, we’ll be able to conclude that review. That review may lead to us doing things slightly differently,” he said.

Asked if that could include selling off the refineries, Mr Ojulari said, “What we’re saying is that sale is not out of the question. All the options are on the table, to be frank, but that decision will be based on the outcome of the reviews we’re doing now.”

In November last year, the presidency

announced that plans for the complete privatisation of Nigeria’s state-owned refineries are currently underway.

The refinery

The Port Harcourt Refinery comprise two units, with the old plant having a refining capacity of 60,000 barrels per day (bpd) and the new plant 150,000 bpd, both summing up to 210,000 bpd.

The refinery has not operated maximally for over two decades. It was shut down in March 2019 for the first phase of repair works after the government secured the service of Italy’s Maire Tecnimont to handle the review of the refinery complex, with oil major Eni appointed technical adviser.

In 2021, NNPC Ltd said repairs had started at the refinery after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) approved \$1.5 billion for the project.

On 21 December 2023, the Nigerian government announced the mechanical completion and the flare start-up of the refinery.

In November 2024, the refinery commenced production after a long period of rehabilitation, but in May 2025, NNPC announced the shutdown of the refinery.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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| 7X4 | 180,173.50 |
| 6X4 | 100,434.50 |
| 6X3 | 82,750.00 |
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| 5X3 | 66,875.00 |
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Tinubu constitutes governing council for Federal University in Ogoni

By Friday Omosola



President Bola Tinubu has announced key appointments to the Federal University of Environment and Technology, situated in Koroma/Saakpenwa, Ogoni, Rivers State.

These appointments include the institution's Pro-Chancellor, members of its Governing Council, and principal officers, paving the way for the university to welcome its inaugural students in September 2025.

Professor Don Mon Baridam, a distinguished Professor of Management specialising in Organisational Behaviour and formerly of the University of Port Harcourt, has been named the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council.

Also hailing from the South-South region, Professor Chinedu Mmom, a Professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Management at the University of Port Harcourt and a former Rivers State Commissioner for Education, will assume the role of Vice-Chancellor.

The newly constituted Governing Council brings together a diverse group of individuals from across Nigeria. Its members include Emmanuel Onoja representing the North Central, Hamid Adekunle from the South West, Professor Chima Oji representing the South East, and Abdullahi Lamda from the North West.

In addition to the Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, Tinubu has appointed a team of

professionals to crucial administrative positions.

Dr Mpigi Douglas, from the South-South, has been appointed as the Registrar.

Zoryii Josco Nwaimanie, from the North Central, will serve as the Bursar, and Dr Saghanen Ntogo G. B., also from the South-South, will be the Librarian.

The establishment of the university was formalised when Tinubu signed its enabling bill into law on February 3.

This development marks a new chapter for higher education in the region, with the institution poised to begin academic activities in just over a month.

Nigeria aims for 'food sovereignty', Shettima declares at UN Summit

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has stated that achieving food sovereignty is a core objective for Nigeria.

Shettima, who spoke at the UN Food Systems Summit+4 (UNFSS+4) in Addis Ababa, stated that true national independence is incomplete without it.

Shettima called for strengthened global collaboration to build resilient and inclusive food systems across Africa.

He outlined President Bola Tinubu's comprehensive strategy to tackle food security challenges, particularly for vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas.

He highlighted that Tinubu's administration, which took office in 2023 facing a fragile food system exacerbated by insecurity, climate shocks, and inflation, has since declared a state of emergency on food security.

This bold move, Shettima explained, is part of systemic reforms designed to transform agriculture into a robust, youth-driven, market-oriented engine for economic growth.

"Our target is to attain food sovereignty. So long as a nation is not independent in the area of food sovereignty, it remains a non-sovereign nation," Shettima declared.

He clarified that the state of emergency was not a sign of fear, but a genuine concern for the welfare of Nigerians, especially in regions like the Northeast, where the activities of Boko Haram have caused significant disruption.

Shettima detailed the government's coordinated policy responses to support the 25 million vulnerable people in fragile regions.

These include the establishment of the Presidential Food Systems Coordinating Unit (PFSCU) to harmonise all food security interventions, rather than replace existing bodies.

While acknowledging the initiation of food support mechanisms in the North East and North West, he stressed a shift from direct aid to sustainable empowerment.

"In Africa, we say that when you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach him to fish, you empower him for life," he said.

He emphasised efforts to encourage food production in displaced persons' camps for dignity and resilience.



Shettima further underscored that Nigeria's agricultural transformation strategy must be market-driven, powered by entrepreneurship and innovation.

"Our belief is that agriculture should be market-driven. The whole mantra is about increasing yields. Entrepreneurial capitalism is embedded in the psyche of the average Nigerian," he stated.

To achieve this, he said the government is investing in improved seeds, enhanced extension services to provide farmers with up-to-date information on rainfall patterns and climate shock management, climate-resilient farming practices, and mechanisation.

International support for key initiatives

On the sidelines of the summit, Shettima engaged in high-level bilateral discussions with the heads of leading global food and development organisations.

He met with Dr OU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); Alvaro Lario, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and Cindy McCain, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP).

During his meeting with the FAO Director-General, Shettima sought partnership for the revitalisation of the Lake Chad region, advocating for support for year-round farming and the Federal Government's Green Revolution Project.

He highlighted the multidimensional challenges threatening Lake Chad, including environmental degradation, climate change, humanitarian crises, and

conflict.

He stressed the need for a multi-pronged approach that includes development, conflict resolution, regional cooperation, and large-scale infrastructure.

Shettima urged FAO to play a pivotal role in the region's recovery given its immense agricultural potential.

Dongyu commended the Tinubu administration's political will and pledged enhanced FAO partnership and technical support.

In his discussions with Lario, Shettima reiterated the administration's commitment to empowering smallholder farmers, particularly youth and women, by improving their access to finance, mechanisation, and modern inputs.

"We are focusing on increased productivity, resilience, and commercialisation, not handouts," Shettima noted, adding that Nigeria plans to scale up existing IFAD-supported projects to benefit more rural communities.

Shettima also met with WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain, acknowledging the organisation's long-standing humanitarian interventions in Nigeria.

He reiterated the government's strategic shift towards sustainable solutions.

McCain, in turn, affirmed WFP's continued collaboration with the Nigerian government in areas such as school feeding, nutrition programs, and support for displaced communities.

FG vows to end strikes in tertiary institutions

By **Gbenga Olaleye**



The Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa, has assured Nigerians that the Federal Government is committed to ending the cycle of strikes that have long disrupted the academic calendar in the nation's tertiary institutions.

Speaking during an interview on Channels Television on Tuesday, Dr. Alausa revealed that President Bola Tinubu has issued a firm directive to prevent any further strikes by university unions such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), and others.

"The President has directed that not again, and I'll borrow your word, not again ever in this country — will ASUU or all our tertiary institution trade unions go on strike," Alausa stated emphatically.

READ ALSO: Colleges of Education to begin concurrent NCE, degree programmes in September

He stressed the importance of rebuilding trust and maintaining

consistent dialogue between the government and academic unions. According to him, a lasting solution will require more than just verbal promises; it will depend on demonstrated goodwill and fulfillment of agreements by the government.

"There has to be a lot of relationship-building with ASUU, NASU, SANU, COEASU, everybody. And beyond that, the government demonstrating goodwill. Government meeting its obligations to these unions," he added.

The minister criticized previous administrations for failing to honour agreements with the unions, often making commitments that were never implemented.

"They sit, they agree, they go and say, tell us when you're going to implement this. But over the years, government will just renege on those agreements. But that's not what we're doing now. We're talking with them actively," he said.

Responding to recent concerns over salary delays raised by some lecturers,

Dr. Alausa clarified that salaries are still being paid regularly. He explained that the transition from the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) to the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) has caused some temporary delays but not non-payment.

"We're paying salaries. We're paying salaries regularly. What just happened is that after the tertiary institutions went off IPPIS, which was very restrictive to them, the President graciously agreed to that. They are now on GIFMIS so that they have better control of their funds," he said.

He noted that salary payments start from the 25th of each month, and institutions now on GIFMIS are sometimes processed slightly later than those still on IPPIS.

"That's why what happened in the last six months is, where I'm not happy about it, they've been paid around the 8th or 9th of the following month," Alausa explained.

2027: Presidency not hereditary, Tinubu must reapply — ADC

By New Daily Prime

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has faulted a comment by the All Progressives Congress (APC) that there is “no vacancy” for the presidential seat.

The APC National Chairman, Nentawe Yilwatda, had recently told party members that there was “no vacancy in Aso Rock” in 2027.

However, the ADC spokesman, Bolaji Abdullahi, said the comment was “disrespectful” and disregarded the hardship facing Nigerians.

“We understand why APC is afraid, and would wish that they could somehow avoid that day of reckoning with the ballot box. The very fact of periodic elections means that every incumbent must renew its mandate,” Abdullahi said in a statement late Wednesday.

“Therefore, regardless of what APC thinks, there will be vacancy at the Presidential Villa in 2027. President Tinubu must re-apply to the Nigerian people, and he must show Nigerians why they should allow him to continue on the job, despite his ruinous policies that have made life miserable for the majority.”

READ THE FULL STATEMENT BELOW

PRESS STATEMENT

The APC Must Reapply to the Nigerian People in 2027 — Says “No Vacancy” Comment Arrogant and Undemocratic

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has responded to recent comments by the new National Chairman of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Professor Nentawe Yilwatda, that there would be “no vacancy in Aso Rock” come 2027.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the ADC’s National Publicity Secretary, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi, described the remark as presumptuous and undemocratic, insisting that the Presidency of Nigeria is not a hereditary office, but a mandate that must be earned and renewed through performance and public trust.

According to the opposition party, the



APC’s “no vacancy” statement betrays an arrogant mindset, that appears to overlook the right of Nigerian people to choose. The ADC warned that the APC should guide against utterances that could further suggest that people’s votes would not count.

The full statement read: The APC Chairman’s recent declaration of “no vacancy in Aso Rock” is presumptuous and disrespectful of Nigerian people, who are tired of hunger, insecurity, joblessness, and unfulfilled promises, and therefore cannot wait to reclaim their future at the ballot box.

We understand why APC is afraid, and would wish that they could somehow avoid that day of reckoning with the ballot box. The very fact of periodic elections means that every incumbent must renew its mandate. Therefore, regardless of what APC thinks, there will be vacancy at the Presidential Villa in 2027.

President Tinubu must re-apply to the Nigerian people, and he must show Nigerians why they should allow him to continue on the job, despite his ruinous policies that have made life miserable for the majority. In 2027, APC and President Tinubu will be evaluated based on Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of youth employment, security of lives, hunger and

poverty, electricity supply, and justice to all. And no amount of propaganda can change their report cards in the eyes of Nigerians.

While the APC government and its media operatives continue to clap for themselves, and awarding themselves medals of excellence, the price of food has continued to rise beyond the reach of majority of Nigerians, ever increasing number of our communities are being taken over by bandits, and our Naira remains battered and broken.

This is why, to declare “no vacancy” two years before an election, is to spit in the face of every Nigerian who still believes in their democratic power. It is to say: your vote does not matter.

It is to mock the pain of the mothers and fathers who cannot afford food, the graduate who cannot find a job, and the entrepreneurs whose businesses have collapsed due to no fault of theirs. Let it be known, the APC will have to reapply for the job of leading this country in 2027, and they do not get to mark their own papers.

Signed, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi, National Publicity Secretary, African Democratic Congress (ADC)

Lere Olayinka: 'I'm not aware of Peter Obi rejoining PDP'

By **Damilola Olufemi**

Prominent chieftain of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Lere Olayinka, has responded to circulating reports suggesting that the Labour Party's 2023 presidential candidate, Peter Obi, may return to the PDP.

Olayinka, an aide to the FCT Minister, in an exclusive interview with The New Daily Prime on Wednesday, said he was not aware of any plans by the former Anambra governor to rejoin the party.

He explained that his position outside the leadership of the PDP made it unlikely for him to know of such developments.

He said, "I'm not part of those running the affairs of the PDP. So, there's really no way I will know officially that he's planning to return to the PDP."

He added that he could not speak on matters he had no knowledge of, saying, "I'm not Peter Obi and I'm not aware of moves like that, because like I said, I'm not part of the people running the affairs of the party."

The report of Peter Obi rejoining the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was made by the former Governor of Borno State, Ali Modu Sheriff, during an appearance on Channels Television's programme Politics Today on Monday.

He publicly asserted that 'at any moment from now, Peter Obi will go back to the PDP and run as a presidential candidate under the party.' Meanwhile, Peter Obi has denied the claim through his media aide, Umar Ibrahim, who addressed the issue in a press release issued on Wednesday.

The 2023 Labour Party presidential candidate reaffirmed his commitment to the ongoing coalition on the ADC platform.

Ibrahim clarified that neither of the circulating statements was signed by Obi or his office. He said, "Peter Obi has been unequivocal in his position in the ongoing coalition and didn't need anyone to put words into his mouth."

He has remained focused on his mission



but would not accept anybody attributing a statement to him just to satisfy their devious agenda. "Obi reiterated his dedication to building "a new Nigeria of our dreams."

His media office also urged Nigerians to "disregard any statement purported to come from him outside his media office or his official handle."

Background: Obi's PDP Political Journey
Obi joined the PDP in 2014 from the All Progressives Grand Alliance, APGA. In 2019, he sought the Nigerian vice presidential nomination 2019 along with Atiku Abubakar after decamping, but they lost to Muhammadu Buhari.

In 2022, Peter Obi joined the Labour Party and emerged as its presidential candidate. He nominated Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed as his running mate for the 2023 Nigerian presidential election, aiming to challenge the dominance of the two major political parties. Although Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC) was declared the winner with 36.6% of the vote, Obi finished third with 25.4%—a remarkable achievement for a candidate from a less-established party.

His campaign gained widespread support, especially among Nigeria's youth and urban populations. Obi won

convincingly in several states, including Anambra (his home state), Abia, and even briefly led in Lagos, a traditional APC stronghold. His performance marked a significant shift in Nigerian politics, highlighting the power of youth-led movements and social media in shaping national elections.

The Coalition Question Ahead of 2027

As Nigeria gears up for the 2027 general election, questions remain about the political future of Peter Obi. He has repeatedly signaled his commitment to the ongoing opposition coalition movement aimed at unseating the current APC-led administration.

However, Bolaji Abdullahi, the interim National Publicity Secretary of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), stated during an interview on Channel Politics Today that Peter Obi has not formally joined the ADC.

Adding to the tension, the Labour Party recently issued a 48-hour ultimatum to Obi, demanding he formally resign from the party following his involvement with the ADC-led coalition.

With the 2027 elections approaching, it remains unclear under which platform Peter Obi will contest—if he chooses to pursue his presidential ambition again.

Peter Obi not a card-carrying member of ADC, but part of coalition — Abdullahi

By Gbenga Olaleye



The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has confirmed that the Labour Party's presidential candidate in the 2023 election, Peter Obi, is not a card-carrying member of the party.

Speaking on Channels Television on Wednesday night, ADC spokesperson Bolaji Abdullahi clarified Obi's position within the opposition coalition.

Abdullahi maintained, however, that Obi had been an active part of the coalition from its inception.

"Peter Obi has been part of the coalition from day one," he said. "He has attended almost every meeting of the coalition."

"The reason Peter Obi has not joined the ADC as a card-carrying member is because he requested permission to conclude the election process in which he and his supporters were already engaged under the Labour Party."

"The same applies to Mallam Nasir El-

Rufai. Both were granted leave by the leadership to complete the electoral processes they had already begun within their respective parties.

"Peter Obi is a member of the coalition, but not a card-carrying member of the ADC," Abdullahi concluded.

Background to the story:

Following the 2023 general elections, in which Peter Obi finished third behind President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, efforts intensified among opposition parties to form a unified front ahead of the next electoral cycle.

The coalition, largely championed by the ADC and supported by other political figures, aims to challenge the dominance of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

In recent months, discussions have gained momentum around merging platforms, restructuring opposition

forces, and presenting a united candidate for the 2027 presidential election.

Although Peter Obi remains officially aligned with the Labour Party, his frequent engagement with the coalition has fuelled speculation about a potential defection or endorsement scenario.

The ADC's clarification comes amid growing public interest in whether prominent figures like Obi and El-Rufai will formally align with the coalition or maintain independent political identities while working together strategically.

The coalition has also attracted attention with its promise of a generational shift, political reform, and stronger representation for marginalised communities.

By confirming Obi's coalition status, the ADC signals its continued efforts to position itself as a key player in shaping the future of Nigeria's opposition politics.

ADC swears in Aregbesola, Mark as interim leaders

By Friday Omosola



The African Democratic Congress (ADC) underwent a significant leadership transition yesterday during its 99th National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting in Abuja.

The party swore in David Mark as its Interim National Chairman and Rauf Aregbesola as the Interim National Secretary.

In his inaugural address, Mark outlined his vision for the party, pledging a strong commitment to internal democratic principles, transparency, and broad inclusivity.

He said he's committed to reserving 35% of leadership positions for women and

ensuring active participation from youth under 40.

Mark also announced the formation of a 50-member Policy Committee, tasked with reviewing the party's manifesto and spearheading reforms across crucial sectors.

The outgoing Chairman, Ralph Nwosu, reflected on his tenure, commending the ADC for resisting external pressures and financial incentives aimed at consolidating Nigeria into a one-party state.

"ADC said no to dictatorship. We stood our ground for democracy," he said.

During the NEC meeting, a

motion was passed to dissolve the party's former National Working Committee (NWC) and Board of Trustees (BoT), effectively handing over full responsibilities to the newly sworn-in interim leadership until new congresses can be organised.

Furthermore, the meeting saw the reinstatement of several previously expelled members, with the notable exception of Dumebi Kachikwu, the party's 2023 presidential candidate.

Officials from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) were present to observe the proceedings.

Bwala: Only Tinubu can offer ministerial slots

By Gbenga Olaleye

Daniel Bwala, Special Adviser on Policy Communication to President Bola Tinubu, has firmly denied allegations that the Presidency offered ministerial slots to Ralph Nwosu, the former National Chairman of the African Democratic Congress (ADC).

Bwala, in a statement posted to his X (formerly Twitter) account on Wednesday, described Nwosu's claim as false and unfounded, asserting that no government official other than President Tinubu holds the authority to promise or grant ministerial appointments.

His response followed allegations made by Nwosu during the ADC's National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting on Tuesday.

At the meeting, where leadership of the party was formally handed over to former Senate President David Mark, Nwosu alleged that certain individuals had approached him with offers of three ministerial appointments in exchange for abandoning plans to reposition the ADC as a core opposition coalition.



Refuting the claim, Bwala questioned the credibility of Nwosu's statement and challenged him to name the officials who allegedly made the offer.

"From his words as reported, you know that he lied, that senior government officials of @officialABAT administration promised him 3 ministerial slots to not surrender his party to the coalition for a wild goose chase,"

Bwala wrote.

He continued, "No government official(s) of whatever rank in our government can promise or grant ministerial slots but Mr President. If a promise of ministerial slots would be made to Mr Nwosu, it would be made by the president and to him directly."

Bwala went further to criticize the internal dynamics of the ADC, saying, "They are painfully graduating to association of jesters or Association of Disorganised Characters."

The dispute underscores growing tensions as the ADC moves toward greater alignment with opposition forces. Nwosu's comments suggest internal resistance to such moves, while Bwala's rebuttal emphasizes the administration's insistence on central authority in decision-making.

The Presidency has not issued an official statement beyond Bwala's comments on the matter.

David Mark warns ADC members: "No room for indiscipline, half loyalty"

By Gbenga Olaleye

Interim National Chairman of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), David Mark, has issued a firm warning to party members, declaring that under his leadership, there will be no tolerance for anti-party activities or internal disloyalty.

Speaking to a gathering of party members in Abuja, the former Senate President made it clear that the ADC would only accommodate individuals who are fully committed to its mission and vision, especially as the party aligns itself with a broader opposition coalition.

"There will be zero tolerance for anti-party and any form of indiscipline; you are either in ADC or not in ADC," Mark said pointedly.

"No mid-way in this business, and those not with us—we will not carry them along."

Mark emphasized that party loyalty and discipline would be non-negotiable going forward. He added that half-hearted



participation or fence-sitting would not be entertained, especially as the party begins a major reorganization at all levels.

"We shall reverse our grassroots leadership structures to reflect modern realities from the polling units upwards to the national level. Every organ reenergised," he said.

"We will open the gates for the next generations. Our policies, nominations, and roles will reflect such."

Mark's statement comes amid a wave of political realignment, with the ADC recently adopted as a central platform by the emerging opposition coalition.

While prominent figures like former Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar have aligned themselves with the coalition, they have yet to officially defect to the ADC.

Observers say Mark's hardline stance may be aimed at asserting control and maintaining internal order as the ADC positions itself for a stronger national role.

The party's restructuring plan is expected to reshape its grassroots leadership and prepare it for increased political relevance ahead of future elections.

With the ADC seeking to become the nucleus of Nigeria's opposition movement, Mark's leadership style signals a shift toward discipline, strategic clarity, and generational inclusion.

Abiodun, Makinde partner to boost food security, regional safety

By Gbenga Olaleye



In a renewed drive to combat food insecurity and enhance safety across the Southwest, Ogun State Governor Dapo Abiodun has joined forces with Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde in a strategic alliance aimed at agricultural development and regional security.

The meeting, held behind closed doors at the Oyo State Government House on Tuesday, focused on developing a unified response to the challenges facing both states, which share borders and similar agricultural potential.

Speaking with journalists after the meeting, Governor Abiodun highlighted the historic connection between Ogun and Oyo, pointing to the legacy of the old Western Region where Ibadan served as the capital and Ogun was part of the region.

“The old Western Region was a model of development, and we

believe that by working together as brothers, we can replicate and even surpass that legacy,” Abiodun said.

He emphasized that both states are strategically positioned to implement a regional agricultural framework that promotes local production, self-sufficiency, and seamless market integration.

Governors Abiodun and Makinde meet in Ibadan to strategize on food security and joint safety efforts in Ogun and Oyo States.

Governors Abiodun and Makinde meet in Ibadan to strategize on food security and joint safety efforts in Ogun and Oyo States.

“We are committed to a ‘grow what we eat, eat what we grow’ philosophy that will transform the Southwest into Nigeria’s food basket,” Abiodun stated.

The two governors also agreed to strengthen cooperation on targeted cross-border interventions,

including the expansion of mechanised farming, harmonisation of agricultural policies, and investments in rural infrastructure like irrigation systems and feeder roads to ease agricultural transport.

“Our discussions centred on how we can further collaborate to ensure that we eat what we grow and grow what we eat, turning our region into the breadbasket of the country,” Abiodun added.

On regional security, both leaders acknowledged the vital role played by the Southwest Security Network, also known as Amotekun, particularly in intelligence gathering and community safety efforts.

The partnership signals a deeper regional integration effort among Southwest states, with a focus on food resilience and public safety.

Northern leaders back Tinubu's re-election, urge power retention in South till 2031

By Gbenga Olaleye

Prominent northern political leaders have declared strong support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's re-election in 2027, calling for power to remain in the South until 2031 in the interest of national unity and political stability.

At a citizens' engagement forum in Kaduna on Tuesday, key figures from across the region, including Vice President Kashim Shettima, governors, ministers, and senior officials, rallied behind the president, citing his performance, inclusive governance, and commitment to fulfilling campaign promises.

Vice President Shettima, represented by Dr. Aliyu Modibbo Umar, described Tinubu as a people-focused leader.

"He governs with the people, not above them," Shettima said, adding that the administration had rejected elitist policymaking and embraced empathy-driven reforms.

Gombe State Governor and Chair of the Northern Governors' Forum, Inuwa Yahaya, said Tinubu had delivered on promises made to the North in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, power, and security. "In 2027, we must reward performance and hard work. By that measure, President Tinubu has earned our continued support," he said.

Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator George Akume, echoed the call for power to remain in the South, urging northern politicians to wait until 2031. "2027 should not be on the minds of politicians from the North. The South deserves to complete its second term," Akume stated.

He emphasized that President Tinubu has appointed many Northerners into strategic roles and ensured fair development across all six geopolitical zones. "The narrative that the North is not carried along is not true," he said.

All Progressives Congress (APC) National Chairman, Nentawe Yilwatda, was more blunt: "There is no vacancy in Aso Villa until 2031."

Yilwatda praised Tinubu's initiatives such as student loans, youth empowerment funds, and agricultural



investments, claiming no previous government had delivered such support to young Nigerians.

The forum also addressed allegations of regional neglect, particularly from former Kano Governor Rabi'u Kwankwaso, who recently accused Tinubu of marginalising the North. Akume responded by listing major projects benefiting the region, including:

Abuja-Kaduna-Kano Expressway

Kano-Katsina-Maradi rail line

Kaduna Refinery rehabilitation

Abuja-Kaduna-Kano Gas Pipeline

Sokoto-Badagry Superhighway

He said over 400,000 students had benefitted from the Student Loan Programme, with N53 billion disbursed.

Shettima also outlined reforms in tax policy, fuel subsidy removal, education, and transportation. He said the administration has prioritized responsive governance, not perfection. "A government that listens is a government that learns," he said.

Former Niger State Governor Babangida Aliyu blamed the North's deep-seated issues—banditry, poverty, out-of-school

children—on past northern leaders, not the current administration. He advocated for structured citizen-government dialogue and accountability from northern elites.

Chairman of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) Board of Trustees, Bashir Dalhatu, reminded the President of the North's significant contribution to his 2023 election victory, delivering 5.6 million of the 8.8 million votes. He urged the Federal Government to reflect northern needs more visibly in national policies.

NEF Chairman Ango Abdullahi called for better focus on education and infrastructure, particularly in the Northeast, and questioned leadership imbalance in agencies like the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). He also advocated agro-allied industrial development in the North.

The forum was organised by the Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation under the theme: "Assessing Electoral Promises: Fostering Government-Citizens Engagement for National Unity."

It served as both a platform to evaluate Tinubu's administration and a signal that key northern figures are prepared to support continuity—at least until 2031.

Ondo govt approves N3.5bn for rural roads, launches statewide flood mapping

By Friday Omosola



Ondo State Government has announced a substantial financial commitment to rural infrastructure and a proactive strategy to combat flooding, following a State Executive Council (EXCO) meeting presided over by Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa.

The council approved a N3.5 billion counterpart fund for the Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP), alongside a comprehensive flood mapping exercise across the state.

Additionally, two new traditional rulers received official recognition.

Speaking to journalists after the EXCO meeting, Tob Loko, the Commissioner for Environment, detailed the state's new flood mitigation efforts.

He explained that the initiative involves not only identifying flood-prone zones but also investigating the environmental and structural factors that contribute to their vulnerability.

This data-driven approach, Loko stated, reflects the government's commitment to preventing and managing flood disasters more effectively.

Loko acknowledged that while the government aims for thoroughness,

unforeseen circumstances might arise.

He assured that provisions are being considered for residents who may be inadvertently affected by unexpected flooding, including potential emergency measures such as temporary relocation and the distribution of relief materials.

He urged residents, especially those in high-risk areas, to fully cooperate with government officials during the upcoming assessments and interventions.

In a related announcement, Abiola Olawoye, Commissioner for Infrastructure, Lands and Housing, confirmed the approval of the N3.5 billion counterpart fund for the World Bank-backed RAAMP, aimed at developing rural roads.

Olawoye emphasised that this financial commitment highlights Aiyedatiwa's dedication to enhancing infrastructure and boosting agricultural productivity in rural communities.

Olawoye also disclosed that his Ministry has been directed to conduct a thorough inspection of roads across all 18 local government areas to identify those urgently needing rehabilitation.

He noted that this process would include hydraulic designs to assess water flow

and upgrade drainage systems, appealing for public patience as the government focuses on building "durable infrastructure, not temporary fixes."

Meanwhile, Amidu Takuro, Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, announced the EXCO's approval of two new traditional rulers.

Olusola Joseph Ajaka has been confirmed as the pioneering Gbogunro of Idi-Ogba Alagbon in Ilaje Local Government Area, and Isiaka Oseni as the new Alale of Akungba-Akoko in Akoko South West Local Government Area.

Takuro affirmed that both appointments followed due process and recommendations from relevant authorities.

Idowu Ajanaku, the Commissioner for Information, underscored that the significant decisions made during the EXCO meeting demonstrate Aiyedatiwa's dedication to the state's infrastructural development.

Ajanaku encouraged the people of the state to continue supporting the current administration, promising that more developmental projects would soon be rolled out.

FG appeal ignored as 25,000 nurses begin 7-day warning strike

By Damilola Olufemi



Nurses under the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives – Federal Health Institutions Sector (NANNM-FHI) have begun a seven-day warning strike, defying appeals from the Federal Government to suspend the action.

The strike, which took effect from midnight, follows the expiration of a 15-day ultimatum issued on July 14, 2025. The union is demanding improved welfare, better allowances, and working conditions for nurses serving in federal health facilities.

Speaking on Tuesday, NANNM-FHI National Chairman, Morakinyo Rilwan, expressed disappointment in the government's failure to engage with the union before the deadline elapsed.

"To this moment, we've received no meaningful response from the government. That's why the strike is proceeding as planned. Even if they reach out today or tomorrow, it's too late. They had their chance," Rilwan stated.

Among the association's key demands

are a revision of shift and uniform allowances, implementation of a distinct salary structure for nurses, an increase in core duty allowances, large-scale recruitment of nursing staff, and the establishment of a dedicated nursing department within the Federal Ministry of Health.

Nurses give reason for strike

Rilwan emphasised that the strike was driven by the frustration of nurses across the country, not a top-down directive from union leaders.

"This strike wasn't decided by just the leadership. Our members made it clear that they've had enough. They are not worried about 'no work, no pay' threats because, frankly, the current pay isn't even sufficient. They're willing to make sacrifices," he added.

He also noted that nurses have exercised patience for decades without resorting to industrial action.

"For over 40 years, we endured inadequate provisions—no gloves, no essential tools. Yet we kept working.

This is the first strike action by nurses in decades," he said.

The warning strike is set to conclude on August 5. However, the union has warned that if the government remains unresponsive, it will issue a fresh 21-day notice as required by labour law, which could lead to an indefinite nationwide strike.

"If nothing changes after those 21 days, we'll begin a full, indefinite strike," Rilwan cautioned.

Addressing concerns about potential non-participation by some hospitals, Rilwan clarified that only institutions not financially affiliated with NANNM-FHI would be exempt.

"No hospital is pulling out. But FMC Ebute-Metta and LUTH in Lagos haven't been part of our association for three years due to internal matters, so they aren't covered to join this strike. Every other federal facility across Lagos, other states, and the FCT is actively involved," he affirmed.

Minister urges nurses to halt strike pending negotiations

By Friday Omosola

The Minister of Labour, Muhammadu Dingyadi, has appealed to the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives (NANNM) to halt their ongoing industrial action.

Dingyadi emphasised that direct negotiation is the most effective path to resolving workplace disagreements.

The Minister encouraged the nurses' association to engage in dialogue, assuring them that the government is actively working to address their concerns.

According to Patience Onuoha, Head of Press and Public Relations at the Ministry of Labour, Dingyadi met with the association on Tuesday to avert the strike.

This initial discussion is scheduled to resume on Friday at the Ministry of Health, as the government seeks a resolution to the dispute.

Despite the Tuesday meeting, which took place as their 15-day ultimatum (issued on July 14, 2025) expired, the nursing union commenced its strike on Wednesday.

The union is advocating for improved welfare packages, equitable allowances, and enhanced working conditions for nurses across all federal healthcare facilities.

Morakinyo Rilwan, the union's Chairman, stated yesterday that the Federal Government failed to engage meaningfully with the association during the period leading up to the strike.

"As far as we are concerned, there has been no communication from the government to this moment. That is why we are saying the strike is going on, and nothing is stopping it. Even if the government calls today or tomorrow, it won't stop the strike. They had enough



time," Rilwan said.

The nurses' demands encompass a range of issues, including an increase in shift allowances, adjustments to uniform allowances, and the creation of a distinct salary structure for nurses.

Others are higher core duty allowances, a significant increase in nursing staff recruitment, and the establishment of a dedicated nursing department within the Federal Ministry of Health.

Rilwan underscored that the decision to strike was not a top-down directive from the union's leadership but rather stemmed from deep-seated frustration among its members due to prolonged neglect.

"This strike is not initiated by the leadership of the union; it was initiated by the members, and they said this is what they want," he explained.

He also noted the members' resolve regarding potential financial repercussions.

"They are not even contemplating 'no work, no pay,' because that is the only language the government can use, and

they are ready—because the money they are taking is not even enough for them. They are ready to sacrifice that as long as this strike continues."

He further highlighted the enduring challenges faced by the profession.

"For over 40 years, we have been patient with them. They subjected us to no provision of gloves or equipment, and for the past 40 years, nurses have not embarked on any strike," he recounted.

The union has indicated that the current warning strike is slated to conclude on August 5.

However, NANNM-FHI warned that if the government does not provide a satisfactory response by then, they will issue a fresh 21-day ultimatum, in compliance with labour regulations, potentially leading to an indefinite strike.

"If the 21 days elapse and there is no reasonable response from the government, we would embark on a total and indefinite strike," Rilwan cautioned.

Iyabo Ojo urges mothers to make sacrifices for children

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



Nollywood star Iyabo Ojo has called on mothers to break away from harmful generational patterns and create a more positive, faith-driven environment for their children.

The actress shared this heartfelt message during her daughter Priscilla Ojo's baby shower, which took place over the weekend in Canada.

Speaking to a close-knit group of friends and family, Iyabo used the emotional event to encourage women to be intentional about parenting and to protect their children from the pain of past struggles.

According to the proud mother of two, raising a child should involve conscious decisions to end cycles of pain, trauma, and inherited negativity.

She said that many women unknowingly pass on their emotional burdens and limitations to their children, but that this can and must be stopped.

Iyabo urged mothers to take responsibility for changing the narrative. She stressed the importance of using positive words, embracing faith, and

making sacrifices for their children's future.

"Sometimes, you need to sacrifice so much for your children," she said. "You have to think, 'For me to be here today, to have this baby, I made a decision. Whatever comes out of it, good or bad, it's not a burden for my children to carry.' I will never deprive my children of their blessings."

Iyabo Ojo cautions against unresolved pain

The actress warned against allowing unresolved pain to shape the next generation. She explained that when mothers carry their struggles into motherhood without healing, they risk passing on emotional baggage to their kids.

"When mothers carry pain and struggle, and they extend it to their children, they unknowingly deprive them of certain things," she noted. "There's something called ancestral curses. You cannot break it if you are still leading it. To break it, you must stop it. You must end it."

Iyabo's message resonated with many, especially women who are working to

build better lives for their families. Her words highlighted the importance of healing from past trauma to raise healthy, emotionally strong children.

She also reminded women that motherhood is not just about giving birth but about creating a safe space where children can thrive emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. The actress encouraged women to stop normalising suffering and to instead speak life and blessings into their children.

Her daughter, Priscilla, visibly emotional during the speech, expressed her gratitude for her mother's strength, love, and guidance. She called Iyabo her "biggest role model" and thanked her for always choosing to rise above challenges for the sake of her children.

The baby shower, held in a beautifully decorated venue in Toronto, was filled with love, laughter, and meaningful moments. But it was Iyabo's message of healing and hope that stood out most, a reminder to mothers everywhere that breaking negative cycles begins with a decision, and that the power to do so lies within.

2Baba holds private wedding with new lover Natasha Osawaru in Abuja

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



Nigerian music legend 2Baba Idibia has officially tied the knot with his new partner, Natasha Osawaru, in a private traditional ceremony held in Abuja.

The quiet wedding, which reportedly took place over the weekend, was attended by a small group of close family members and friends.

A now-viral video from the event shows the couple dressed in traditional attire, smiling as they pose with a customised wedding cake, further confirming the news of their union.

Natasha Osawaru is not only 2Baba's new bride but also a serving lawmaker representing a constituency in Edo State. Her political profile has sparked even more interest in the marriage, especially as it comes just a few months after the singer announced his separation from his longtime wife, Annie Macaulay Idibia.

Netizens react to 2Baba's wedding with Natasha

In February 2025, shortly after confirming his split from Annie, 2Baba proposed to Natasha. The engagement news surprised many fans at the time, but reactions intensified after the wedding video surfaced online this week.

Social media users have since flooded comment sections with mixed reactions. Some expressed shock at how quickly the singer moved on, while others criticised the decision altogether.

One user, @iam_Bonex, sarcastically commented:

"Who would have thought that 2Baba would one day become someone's housewife?"

Another user, @Engr_Ashile, added a controversial take:

"In this life, don't let your wife stop you from marrying your future wife."

@shamah007 expressed concern about the pace of the marriage, writing:

"Why is my legend rushing like this? You just left one wife, and now you're marrying another. Can't you take a break from women? This is too much."

Others directed their focus to Natasha herself.

@KEkeinde remarked bluntly:

"Her dressing is always weird."

Meanwhile, @DeyemiAdediran voiced doubt about the longevity of the marriage: "It's just a matter of time. He will still leave Natasha. That's his pattern."

Despite the backlash, neither 2Baba nor Natasha has issued any official statement regarding the marriage or the online reactions.

2baba, also known as 2Baba, has long been regarded as one of Nigeria's most respected music icons, with a career spanning over two decades. However, his personal life has often made headlines, especially concerning his relationships and family matters.

His previous marriage to Annie Macaulay Idibia was celebrated as one of the most admired celebrity unions in the country. Yet, the couple experienced several public challenges, including infidelity rumours and emotional outbursts on social media. Their separation earlier this year marked the end of a relationship that had lasted for over a decade.

Now, with his new union to Natasha Osawaru, 2Baba enters another chapter in his personal life, one that is already drawing as much attention as his music career.

Whether this new marriage will stand the test of time remains to be seen, but fans and critics alike will be watching closely.

Cubana Chief Priest taunts Hellen Ati over paternity drama, stirs online buzz

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



Popular Nigerian socialite and nightclub promoter, Pascal Okechukwu, widely known as Cubana Chief Priest, has stirred fresh controversy on social media amid an ongoing paternity dispute with a Kenyan woman, Hellen Ati.

In a recent Instagram post, the celebrity barman shared a video clip of himself enjoying a vacation in France.

The video, intended to be humorous, was captioned with the phrase, “PASKAL!!! You Will Suffer”, a line that has become synonymous with Hellen Ati’s public outbursts against him.

The tension between both parties began after Ati accused the nightlife entrepreneur of fathering her now two-year-old son.

According to Ati, the child was conceived following a brief romantic encounter with Chief Priest in April 2022.

Since then, Ati has repeatedly taken to

social media to demand a DNA test. She claims the child deserves recognition and support from his alleged father.

However, Chief Priest has not publicly responded to her requests for paternity verification. Instead, he has filed a defamation lawsuit against her in a Kenyan court.

In the suit, Chief Priest seeks a court order restraining Ati from making further statements about him online. His legal team insists that her claims are false, malicious, and based solely on selective social media narratives without any credible evidence.

The latest video posted by Chief Priest has amused many of his fans and followers. While some found the post hilarious, others expressed concern for the child at the centre of the dispute.

The comments section of the video has since become a hotbed of reactions, with fans and critics weighing in on the situation.

Instagram user @wf_lamar wrote, “I read it in her voice,” while @dr_dalu added, “Helen think say life na Nollywood.” Another user, @donsurplusenterprise, joked, “Na this kain suffer I want o.”

However, not all responses were in jest. User @ejuraobike commented, “Kai, this little boy did not beg to come to this world. Hmmm,”

User @crossberry8 criticised the situation, saying, “Pity people that get pregnant for a man that doesn’t even like them in the first place.”

Another follower, @Vivianvictor296, demanded action, writing, “Pascal, you must do DNA.”

Others joined in the mockery. @ifypeterofficial said, “Paskal, you be agbaya.”

While @bolaomoekiti added, “Paskaluuu Ogechukwu, come and take your baby. Your baby never eat since one week now you dey eat suya.”

BBNaija S10: Kaybobo cries after Mensan labels him a bully

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Drama unfolded in the Big Brother Naija Season 10 house as housemate Kaybobo broke down in tears following serious allegations made against him by fellow contestant, Mensan.

The tension began when Mensan accused Kaybobo of being a bully and making disrespectful comments about his mother. The claims sparked a heated argument between the two housemates, drawing the attention of other contestants.

Mensan did not hold back. He described Kaybobo's behaviour as aggressive and disrespectful, insisting that the comments targeted his family, especially his mother. His accusations quickly stirred emotions in the house.

However, another housemate, Imisi, challenged Mensan's version of



events. She stated that she did not hear Kaybobo make any offensive remarks about Mensan's mother. Her intervention added a layer of doubt to the accusation and further fueled the ongoing tension.

As the argument continued, Kaybobo, visibly shaken, responded to the

bullying label with strong emotions. At one point, he declared, "I fit change am for everybody inside this house," while wiping away tears. His voice cracked as he tried to defend himself against what he saw as a false and damaging label.

Kaybobo also lashed out at Mensan, telling him he would not win the show. Despite the bold words, it was clear that the situation left him deeply hurt.

The house atmosphere remains tense as housemates take sides, with viewers closely watching how the issue unfolds. While some support Kaybobo, others believe Mensan's claims are not far-fetched.

For now, Kaybobo insists he is not a bully and says the accusations do not reflect his true character.

BBNaija 10: Isabella breaks down in tears, says she almost had sex with Kayikunmi

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Emotions ran high on Wednesday night in the Big Brother Naija Season 10 house as housemate Isabella broke down in tears over her complicated relationship with fellow contestant, Kayikunmi.

During a heartfelt conversation with co-housemate Thelma Lawson, Isabella opened up about her emotional turmoil.

She expressed deep frustration and pain over Kayikunmi's sudden revelation that he is also interested in another female housemate.

According to Isabella, their connection had grown quickly, and things had almost become intimate before Kayikunmi's confession shattered her trust.

She revealed that their bond seemed strong and that she felt a deep emotional and physical attraction to him. However, his admission of having feelings for

someone else made her feel betrayed.

In her words, "We were so close to having sex. He kept telling me how much he liked me. Then all of a sudden, he said he also likes someone else in the house and wants to keep talking to her. That broke me."

Isabella goes emotional
Isabella didn't hold back her emotions. She told Thelma that she felt disrespected, especially because their relationship had almost reached a physical level. She disclosed that she had set boundaries, but Kayikunmi had tried to cross them.

"What annoys me most is how close we were. I didn't even let him finger me, but he wanted to. Can you believe that on just Day 3, he was already trying that?" she added with visible frustration.

Her emotional outburst sparked concern among other housemates, who later tried



to comfort her. Many viewers on social media have also weighed in on the incident, expressing mixed reactions, some sympathising with Isabella, while others criticised her for becoming emotionally attached too soon.

This drama adds another layer to the ongoing romantic tensions in Biggie's house. With feelings and alliances constantly shifting, the pressure inside the BBNaija house continues to build.

Veteran actor Don Richard battles kidney disease, cries out for help

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nollywood actor Don Richard has made a heartfelt appeal to the public, seeking financial support as he battles kidney disease.

In a deeply emotional video shared on Instagram Tuesday evening, fellow actress and media personality Biola Bayo posted a clip of Don Richard explaining the severity of his condition and the toll it has taken on his life and family.

Speaking in the video, the actor revealed that he has been struggling with kidney-related complications for a while now. He noted that the diagnosis not only shook him but also left his wife in tears. According to him, her emotional reaction was immediate and intense.

“When my wife heard the diagnosis, she broke down and started crying,” Don Richard said in the video. “I told her, ‘Another man is a lucky man.’ I begged her to stay strong and take good care of our children, especially our twins.”

He went on to describe the sacrifices his wife has made to keep him alive. After leaving the hospital, she reportedly sold off their house and their car to raise money for his treatment.

“Since then, we’ve lost everything,” he said, clearly overwhelmed by the situation.

The actor’s health condition has reached a critical point, and he is now relying on public goodwill to continue his treatment. Though he did not give detailed medical information, it was clear from his words and appearance



that he urgently needed medical intervention.

Biola Bayo seeks help for Don Richard Actress Biola Bayo, in her Instagram caption accompanying the video, confirmed Don Richard’s health status. She also included his bank account details for those who wish to contribute financially.

“Don Richard has been down with kidney issues for a while,” she wrote. “Please, let’s join hands to help him survive this difficult time.”

Her post quickly gained attention from fans and fellow entertainers, many of whom expressed concern and called for more people to assist.

Don Richard is a respected figure in Nollywood, known for his roles in several classic films. Over the years, he has earned a reputation as a talented and dedicated actor. His sudden health crisis has shocked many of his colleagues and fans alike.

In Nigeria, cases of kidney disease have become increasingly common, and treatment costs remain high. Many patients require long-term dialysis or kidney transplants, both of which demand significant financial support.

As the actor continues to fight for his life, his call for help serves as a sobering reminder of the health challenges faced by entertainers behind the scenes. Despite years of work and public recognition, many actors are left without adequate health insurance or a stable income during medical emergencies.

Friends, fans, and colleagues are now rallying behind Don Richard. His plea has sparked fresh conversations about better healthcare support for artists in the entertainment industry.

Those interested in supporting the actor are encouraged to visit Biola Bayo’s Instagram page, where donation details have been shared.

Trump announces 25% tariff on Indian plus 'penalty' over ties to Russia

By Fatimah Idera



U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Wednesday that the United States would impose a 25% tariff on goods imported from India, effective August 1.

Trump said India would face an unspecified penalty on the same date.

“While India is our friend, we have, over the years, done relatively little business with them because their tariffs are far too high among the highest in the world,” Trump said in a post on Truth Social. “They also maintain the most strenuous and obnoxious non-monetary trade barriers of any country.”

He also criticised India’s longstanding military and energy ties with Russia, stating: “They have always bought a vast majority of their military equipment from Russia, and are Russia’s largest buyer of energy, along with China, at a time when everyone wants Russia to stop the killing in Ukraine. All things not good!”

India, the world’s fifth-largest economy, has yet to respond officially. The Commerce Ministry, which is leading trade negotiations with the U.S., did not immediately comment on Trump’s announcement.

The move appears to end hopes for a limited trade agreement that U.S. and Indian officials had been negotiating for months. Multiple rounds of discussions had aimed to resolve longstanding issues, including market access for the U.S. agricultural and dairy products. While some progress had been made, India has consistently resisted opening its domestic market to imports of wheat, corn, rice, and genetically modified soybeans, citing the impact on millions of small farmers.

India’s exports to the United States totalled around \$87 billion in 2024. The new tariffs are expected to hit labour-intensive sectors particularly hard, including textiles and garments, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery, and petrochemicals.

The U.S. currently runs a \$45.7 billion trade deficit with India.

India now joins a growing list of countries affected by Trump’s “Liberation Day” trade policy, which focuses on restructuring trade relationships and demanding greater reciprocity from trading partners.

Washington has previously warned New

Delhi about its high average tariffs, nearly 39% on agricultural products, with some items like vegetable oils, apples, and corn facing duties as high as 50%.

The setback also dims the prospects of meeting ambitious bilateral trade targets. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Trump had earlier committed to concluding the first phase of a trade agreement by autumn 2025, to expand U.S.-India trade to \$500 billion by 2030, up from \$191 billion in 2024.

The U.S. also exports about \$42 billion worth of manufactured goods to India, along with energy products such as liquefied natural gas, crude oil, and coal, all of which could be subject to retaliatory measures if India chooses to respond in kind.

Despite the current tensions, Indian officials have maintained that the U.S. remains a critical strategic partner, particularly in efforts to counterbalance China. However, they have consistently emphasised the importance of retaining policy flexibility in sensitive areas like agriculture, digital data governance, and government subsidies.

Saudi, Other Arab states urge Hamas to disarm, give up Gaza rule

By Fatimah Idera

Arab countries, including Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, joined calls Tuesday for Hamas to disarm and end its rule of Gaza, in a bid to end the devastating war in the Palestinian territory.

Seventeen countries, plus the European Union and Arab League, threw their weight behind a seven-page text agreed at a United Nations conference on reviving the two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians.

“In the context of ending the war in Gaza, Hamas must end its rule in Gaza and hand over its weapons to the Palestinian Authority, with international engagement and support, in line with the objective of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State,” said the declaration.

It followed a call on Monday by the Palestinian delegation at the United Nations for both Israel and Hamas to leave Gaza, allowing the Palestinian Authority to administer the coastal territory.

The text also condemned the deadly October 7, 2023 attacks by Hamas against Israel, something the UN General Assembly has yet to do.

France, which co-chaired the conference with Saudi Arabia, called the declaration “both historic and unprecedented.”

“For the first time, Arab countries and those in the Middle East condemn Hamas, condemn October 7, call for the disarmament of Hamas, call for its exclusion from Palestinian governance, and clearly express their intention to normalise relations with Israel in the future,” said French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot.

The text, co-signed by France, Britain and Canada among other western



nations, also called for the possible deployment of foreign forces to stabilize Gaza after the end of hostilities.

Israel and its ally the United States did not take part in the meeting.

21 months of war

The document was issued on the second day of the conference in New York, at which Britain announced it may recognise a Palestinian state in September.

British Foreign Secretary David Lammy said London would proceed with recognition if Israel did not fulfil conditions, including implementing a ceasefire in Gaza and allowing sufficient aid in.

French President Emmanuel Macron last week said he would formally announce France's recognition of Palestinian statehood at the UN General Assembly in September.

For decades, most of the global body's members have supported a two-state solution with Israel and a Palestinian state existing side-by-side.

But after more than 21 months of war

in Gaza, the ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and Israeli officials declaring designs to annexe occupied territory, it is feared that a Palestinian state could become geographically impossible.

The current war in Gaza started after the Hamas attacks on Israel, in which more than 1,200 people were killed.

Israel responded with large-scale military action that has claimed tens of thousands of Palestinian lives and destroyed most infrastructure in the enclave.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said at the meeting on Monday, “the two-state solution is farther than ever before.”

In a statement issued late Tuesday, 15 Western nations, including France and Spain, affirmed their “unwavering support to the vision of the two-state solution.”

Among the signatories, nine that have not yet recognised a Palestinian state expressed “willingness or positive consideration of their countries” to do so: Andorra, Australia, Canada, Finland, Luxembourg, Malta, New Zealand, Portugal, and San Marino.

Trump claims Epstein 'stole' Virginia Giuffre from Mar-a-Lago

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Donald Trump has claimed that Jeffrey Epstein, the late convicted sex offender with whom he socialised for over a decade, "stole" Virginia Giuffre and other young female staff members from his Mar-a-Lago resort in the early 2000s.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One on Tuesday, as he returned to Washington from Scotland, Trump was pressed to elaborate on remarks he made earlier in the week about falling out with Epstein. On Monday, the president stated that he had expelled Epstein from Mar-a-Lago "because he did something inappropriate," specifically, that "he stole people that worked for me".

Senior White House aides have claimed in recent weeks that Trump severed ties with Epstein around 2004, allegedly expelling him from the private club for "creepy" and sexually inappropriate behaviour. However, Trump's latest comments suggest the rift may have stemmed, at least in part, from Epstein poaching Trump's staff.

Asked whether the workers in question were young women, Trump responded: "The answer is yes, they were. People who worked in the spa."

One reporter followed up by asking whether one of the people he referred to was Virginia Giuffre, one of Epstein's most prominent accusers. Giuffre, who died earlier this year, alleged in a civil lawsuit that she was recruited at age 16 by Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's close associate, while working at Mar-a-Lago's spa in 2000.

Trump replied, "I think she worked at the spa. I think so. I think that was one of the people, yeah. He stole her. And by the way, she had no complaints



about us, as you know. None whatsoever."

Giuffre had alleged she was initially abused by Epstein and Maxwell together, before being trafficked to other powerful men, including Prince Andrew, who has denied the allegations.

Trump's comments complicate relationship timeline with Epstein Trump's comments appear to complicate the timeline of his relationship with Epstein. Despite claiming to have broken ties with Epstein in the early 2000s, Trump told New York magazine in 2002: "I've known Jeff for 15 years. Terrific guy. He's a lot of fun to be with. It is even said that he likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side."

Further scrutiny of Mar-a-Lago's membership records reveals that Epstein remained a member until at least October 2007, well after his first arrest and charges for soliciting

prostitution from a minor in 2006. These details were documented in The Grifter's Club, a 2020 investigative book by Miami Herald journalist Sarah Blaskey.

Meanwhile, Ghislaine Maxwell, currently serving a 20-year sentence for conspiring with Epstein to sexually traffic minors, has reportedly offered to testify before the US Congress. According to documents seen by CNN, Maxwell's legal team has submitted a list of demands to the House Oversight Committee, including a request for immunity in exchange for her testimony.

Trump's latest remarks come as his team works to shift public focus away from his past ties to Epstein, a subject that has increasingly unsettled segments of his political base. However, his admission that Giuffre was among those allegedly "stolen" by Epstein has reignited scrutiny over his long-standing acquaintance with the disgraced financier.

Thailand accuses Cambodia of violating border ceasefire

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Tensions flared once again along the Thai-Cambodian border as Thailand accused Cambodia of launching an overnight assault in breach of a newly agreed ceasefire aimed at ending days of deadly cross-border fighting.

According to Thailand's foreign ministry, troops stationed in Sisaket province came under sustained fire from Cambodian forces on Tuesday night, with reports of small arms and grenade attacks continuing into Wednesday morning.

"This represents a flagrant violation of the ceasefire agreement," read a statement from the ministry.

The accusations come just a day after the two neighbours formally agreed to a truce following five days of clashes that left at least 43 people dead and forced the evacuation of more than 300,000 residents from the border region. The fighting, rooted in a long-running territorial dispute, erupted into full-scale combat along sections of the 800-kilometre frontier.

Government spokesperson Jirayu Huangsab acknowledged the overnight violence but insisted Thai forces had maintained control. "The Thai side maintained control of the situation," he said in a statement, adding that "general conditions along the border are reported to be normal" as of 8 am Wednesday.

Cambodia has denied violating the ceasefire, which was brokered in Malaysia with diplomatic pressure from US President Donald Trump. Both Thailand and Cambodia are actively seeking to finalise a trade agreement with the US in a bid to avoid steep tariffs threatened by Washington.

Thailand accuses Cambodia of continuing offensive actions Although the ceasefire officially came into effect in the early hours of Tuesday, Thailand had already accused Cambodia of continuing offensive actions, calling them "a clear attempt to undermine mutual trust". Despite this rocky start, relative calm had appeared to return by Tuesday afternoon.

As part of the agreement, military

commanders from both sides held scheduled meetings at the border, where they reportedly agreed on measures to de-escalate tensions, including a freeze on troop movements that could be misinterpreted as hostile.

However, the Thai government warned that the situation remained precarious. Maratee Nalita Andamo, a spokesperson for Bangkok's border crisis centre, said: "In this moment, in the early days of the ceasefire, the situation is still fragile."

The death toll from the recent clashes includes at least 15 Thai troops and 15 Thai civilians. Cambodia, meanwhile, has confirmed the deaths of eight civilians and five soldiers, although officials in Phnom Penh have been more reserved in their casualty reporting.

The ongoing border conflict, fuelled by historical grievances and contested territorial claims, continues to test diplomatic relations between the two Southeast Asian nations, despite regional efforts to foster stability.

Israeli public figures urge sanctions on Israel over Gaza starvation

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

A group of prominent Israeli public figures, including artists, academics, and intellectuals, has issued an extraordinary plea for the international community to impose “crippling sanctions” on Israel, in response to what they describe as the state’s brutal campaign of starvation against Palestinians in Gaza.

In a letter published by The Guardian, the 31 signatories, among them an Academy Award winner and a former attorney general, accuse Israel of deliberately starving the population of Gaza and contemplating the forced expulsion of millions. They call on the international community to act decisively to end what they describe as a humanitarian catastrophe.

“The international community must impose crippling sanctions on Israel until it ends this brutal campaign and implements a permanent ceasefire,” the letter reads.

Among the signatories are Yuval Abraham, a filmmaker and Academy Award recipient; Michael Ben-Yair, a former Israeli attorney general; Avraham Burg, former Knesset speaker and one-time head of the Jewish Agency; and several recipients of the prestigious Israel Prize, the country’s highest cultural honour. Other notable figures include the painter Michal Na’aman, poet Aharon Shabtai, filmmaker Ra’anana Alexandrowicz, choreographer Inbal Pinto, and Lebanese director Samuel Maoz.

The letter is particularly striking in a nation where speaking out against military policy often invites severe backlash, and where legislation has been promoted to penalise those who advocate for international sanctions.

It arrives at a time of growing international horror over Israel’s military campaign in Gaza, now in its



21st month. According to Gaza’s health ministry, more than 60,000 Palestinians have been killed. The world has been confronted with harrowing images of emaciated children and reports of Israeli forces opening fire on hungry civilians at food distribution sites.

This internal Israeli dissent mirrors mounting alarm across the global Jewish diaspora. On Sunday, the Reform movement, the largest Jewish denomination in the United States, issued a strong rebuke of Israel’s role in Gaza’s deepening famine.

“No one should be unaffected by the pervasive hunger experienced by thousands of Gazans,” the statement read. “The situation is dire, and it is deadly... The Jewish state is also culpable in this human disaster. Blocking food, water, medicine, and power, especially for children, is indefensible.”

The Reform movement urged Jewish communities not to let grief harden into indifference, nor loyalty to Israel eclipse compassion. “Let us rise to the moral challenge of this moment,” the statement concluded.

In a separate development on Monday, two prominent Israeli human rights organisations, B’Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights Israel, released reports characterising Israel’s actions in Gaza as “genocidal”, marking yet another break from official narratives and a significant escalation in the language used by domestic watchdogs.

Israeli PM speaks on starvation

Earlier this month, former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert made headlines when he described a proposed “humanitarian city” in Rafah as a modern-day concentration camp. He warned that forcing Palestinians into such an area would amount to ethnic cleansing.

Despite these intensifying criticisms, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, along with Israeli officials and right-wing NGOs, continues to deny that famine exists in Gaza, a stance contradicted by the United Nations’ own food security assessments and even US President Donald Trump, who recently acknowledged “real starvation” in the territory.

The Israeli government has been contacted for comment.

Rotherham abuse scandal deepens, police accused of sexual assault

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Some women who were exploited by grooming gangs in Rotherham during their childhood say they were also abused by police officers in the town at that time,

According to reports, one says she was raped from the age of 12 by a serving South Yorkshire Police (SYP) officer in a marked police car. He would threaten to hand her back to the gang if she did not comply, she says.

“In a world where you were being abused so much, being raped once by a police officer was a lot easier than multiple rapes by the gang, and I think he knew that,” she tells the BBC.

Written accounts were reviewed from those women, along with testimony from 25 other victims of grooming gangs, and some of these women allege that corrupt police officers either collaborated with the gangs or failed to take action against child sexual exploitation.

According to the landmark Jay Report published in 2014, at least 1,400 girls in Rotherham were abused between 1997 and 2013 by gangs of men, who were predominantly identified by victims as being of Pakistani heritage.

South Yorkshire Police takes up Rotherham police officer scandal

A new criminal investigation into the involvement of police officers in the Rotherham grooming scandal is now being conducted by South Yorkshire Police's major crime unit, under the oversight of the police watchdog.

Professor Alexis Jay, who led the independent inquiry into the abuse in Rotherham, told the BBC she is shocked that South Yorkshire Police is investigating its former officers. She believes the criminal investigation should be handed over to another police force or an independent body.

In response, Assistant Chief Constable Hayley Barnett of South Yorkshire Police said: “We understand how difficult it must be for a victim or survivor, especially someone who was so severely let down in the past, to place their trust in today's South Yorkshire Police.”



She added, however, that victims and survivors are at the heart of the investigation, with every action being taken in their best interests. The women's accounts, reviewed by the BBC, have been redacted to protect their identities. These statements were gathered by Switalskis.

Solicitors, a specialist child abuse law firm, as part of efforts to pursue a separate civil claim against South Yorkshire Police and seek compensation for alleged victims.

One of the women, Willow – not her real name – says she was sexually abused by hundreds of men over five years after first being targeted, as an 11-year-old in 1997, by a grooming gang.

Two police officers also sexually abused her, she says. Over three years, one of the SYP officers would repeatedly track her down and pick her up in a police car in Rotherham town centre, she says.

“He knew where we used to hang out, he would request either oral sex or rape us in the back of the police car,” she tells the BBC.

If she tried to refuse his requests, he would even contact the grooming gang directly to threaten her. Willow also alleges that both officers who abused her, including PC Ali, were involved in drug supply.

Since December 2024, three former officers have been arrested on suspicion of historic sexual offences, including attempted rape, indecent assault, and misconduct in public office.

The alleged crimes occurred between 1995 and 2004 while the officers were serving as PCs. None of them has been charged.

A South Yorkshire Police spokesperson told the BBC that the complaints the force received about Hassan Ali were not related to drugs but involved “allegations of persistently asking a victim on a date, sharing information, and failing to safeguard victims.”

Former IOPC investigator Garry Harper says he was aware of allegations against PC Ali and that the officer's connections to organised crime groups were discussed within the IOPC during Operation Linden.

“There were several complaints that he had supplied and used drugs, as well as sexually abused some of the survivors,” Harper said. The IOPC told the BBC it had no record of any allegations against PC Ali being made by “any of the victim-survivors involved in Operation Linden.”

It also said it had investigated a third-party report claiming that a former officer had a sexual relationship with “two young vulnerable females.” However, when these individuals were interviewed as adults, they denied that the relationship took place.

US added to global watchlist over attacks on civic freedoms

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The United States of America (USA) has been placed on a global civic space watchlist by a coalition of international civil society organisations, joining countries such as Turkey, Serbia, El Salvador, Indonesia, and Kenya as areas of urgent concern.

The move follows the release of a new report on Wednesday by Civicus, a non-profit alliance that monitors civil liberties and civic space around the world.

The report cites “sustained attacks on civic freedoms” across the the country, highlighting a growing authoritarian trend that has raised alarms within the international community.

Civicus pointed to three key areas of concern: the militarised response to protests, increasing restrictions on journalists and civil society organisations, and the aggressive targeting of anti-war activists, particularly those expressing solidarity with Palestinians.

As part of its global monitoring system, Civicus assigns countries one of five civic space ratings: “open”, “narrowed”, “obstructed”, “repressed”, or “closed”. The United States has now been downgraded to “narrowed”.

According to Civicus, a “narrowed” rating applies to countries where civic freedoms are legally permitted but frequently undermined in practice. “People can form associations to pursue a wide range of interests, but full enjoyment of this right is impeded by occasional harassment, arrest or assault of people deemed critical of those in power,” the group explains. It adds that while peaceful protests may occur, authorities often deny permits on vague security grounds and



occasionally use excessive force, including tear gas and rubber bullets, against demonstrators.

The report also warns that while a diverse media landscape exists in “narrowed” countries, press freedom is often constrained through political pressure, targeted funding cuts, or restrictive regulations.

“The United States appears to be sliding deeper into the quicksands of authoritarianism,” said Civicus Secretary General Mandeep Tiwana in a statement. “Peaceful protests are confronted with military force, critics are treated as criminals, journalists are targeted, and support for civil society and international cooperation has been cut back.”

Tiwana cited the deployment of US Marines and National Guard troops to California in June to quell protests against immigration raids as a particularly alarming development. “This level of militarisation sets a dangerous precedent. It’s a line that democratically elected leaders aren’t meant to cross,” he warned.

He also criticised recent decisions by

the Trump administration to reduce or revoke funding for public broadcasters such as PBS and NPR. “What they’re trying to do is defund critical news sources and deny the American people the ability to receive truthful, non-partisan reporting,” Tiwana told The Guardian.

The report further highlights the growing criminalisation of peaceful advocacy, particularly regarding Palestinian rights. Civicus condemned reprisals against foreign-born student activists, including Mahmoud Khalil, Mohsen Mahdawi and Rümeyza Öztürk, and criticised the sanctioning of Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur for the West Bank and Gaza.

“We are seeing a wide-ranging attack on civic space in the US by the federal and some state governments,” said Tiwana. “Authorities in the US should reverse course from the present undemocratic path by guaranteeing everyone’s First Amendment right to organise and dissent legitimately.”

Trump's approval rating falls to 40%

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

United States President Donald Trump's approval rating has dropped to 40%, the lowest point of his second term, as Americans voice increasing dissatisfaction with his handling of key issues such as immigration and the economy.

The findings come from a three-day poll conducted by Reuters and Ipsos, which concluded on Monday. The survey included 1,023 adults nationwide and carries a margin of error of three percentage points. In mid-July, Trump's approval rating stood at 41%, reflecting a modest but notable decline.

The poll results underscore a starkly polarised nation: 83% of Republicans said they approved of the president's performance, compared with a mere three percent of Democrats. Among independents, about one-third expressed approval.

Trump, who was re-elected in 2024 on promises to revitalise the American economy and implement a hardline immigration policy, is now receiving mixed reviews on both fronts. Notably, support for his immigration strategy, once considered a strength, has significantly eroded. Back in March, around 50% of Americans approved of Trump's approach to immigration. Today, that figure has dropped sharply.

The president's tactics, including increased deportations and stringent enforcement, have sparked backlash across the country. A separate CNN/SSRS poll found that 55% of Americans believe Trump has gone too far in deporting undocumented immigrants, a 10-point jump since February.



"I understand wanting to get rid of illegal immigrants, but the way that's being done is very aggressive," said Donovan Baldwin, 18, of Asheboro, North Carolina, who did not vote in the 2024 election. "And that's why people are protesting because it comes off as aggression. It's not right."

Trump's economic policies are drawing scrutiny

His economic policies are also drawing scrutiny. The Reuters/Ipsos poll showed a slight uptick in approval of the economy, rising from 35% to 38%. However, the CNN poll paints a bleaker picture, suggesting that many Americans feel the policies have done little to improve their financial well-being.

There is particular concern over the impact of tariffs, a cornerstone of his economic strategy, which some fear could hurt domestic industries and raise prices for consumers.

Nevertheless, not all voters are turning their backs on the president. Brian Nichols, 58, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, who supported Trump in 2024, remains cautiously optimistic.

"We put him into office for a reason, and we should be trusting that he's doing the job for the best of America," Nichols said. Though he admits concerns over Trump's volatile style and his unpredictable use of social media, Nichols said he's still backing the president, for now.

As Trump enters the latter half of his second term, he faces a delicate balancing act: shoring up support among his base while addressing growing discontent among independents and moderates. With immigration and the economy front and centre, how he handles these issues could define the remainder of his presidency.

Atiku's aide slams presidency BBNaija, Super Falcons' grand prize comparison

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



Paul Ibe, media adviser to former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, has criticised the Presidency for comparing the reward given to the Super Falcons to the grand prize awarded to the winner of Big Brother Naija (BBNaija).

The controversy began after Bayo Onanuga, Special Adviser to President Bola Tinubu on Information and Strategy, took to his X (formerly Twitter) account to defend the federal government's cash reward to the Super Falcons. He wondered why some Nigerians were unhappy with the President's gesture.

According to Onanuga, the reality TV show BBNaija offers its winner a N150 million cash prize. He questioned why Nigerians praised such private initiatives but criticised Tinubu's reward of \$100,000 to each Super Falcons player for their performance at the 2024 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco.

Onanuga's post sparked mixed reactions. Many users on social media debated whether the comparison between a privately sponsored TV show and a government-funded national reward was

fair.

Responding on Wednesday, Paul Ibe called the comparison "misplaced" and emphasised the difference between private and public funding. He stated clearly that the N150 million BBNaija prize is paid by Multichoice, a private company, using its revenue, not public funds.

In a post on his own X handle, Ibe wrote: "Dear @aonanuga1956, I believe the Super Falcons and, indeed, any team or individual who brings pride to Nigeria deserves to be rewarded. That's not in question.

However, comparing this to Multichoice paying N150 million to BBNaija winners is simply off the mark. Multichoice uses its own money, generated from business activities. Tinubu, on the other hand, is spending public funds—our commonwealth. Even the fish that lives in water does not gulp it recklessly."

Ibe's post quickly gained attention, especially among Nigerians who expressed concerns about government spending in a time of economic hardship.

Super Falcons get reward from Tinubu
New Daily Prime reported that President Tinubu had awarded each Super Falcons player a \$100,000 cash reward, while each member of the coaching and support staff received \$50,000. In addition, all 24 players and 11 technical crew members were honoured with the national title of Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON).

The rewards did not stop there. Each team member is also set to receive a three-bedroom apartment as part of the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Housing Scheme.

While many Nigerians praised the government's recognition of the Super Falcons' achievement, others argued that the rewards were excessive, especially given the country's current economic situation.

This debate highlights a larger issue: how the government prioritises spending and how public funds are perceived in comparison to private business incentives.