



Tinubu administration prioritises public input in policy reforms - Shettima

Pg 4

NSA Ribadu: Insecurity in North has dropped under Tinubu

Pg 7



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Trump slams Starmer for destroying North Sea energy treasure chest **Pg 23**



Australia bans under-16s from having YouTube accounts December

Pg 26



Burna Boy performs at England's Women's Euro victory party

Pg 22

IMF urges UK to implement further interest rate cuts

Pg 29



27-year-old man kills self, four others in Manhattan skyscraper

Pg 25

"It's time to end fiscal indiscipline" - Obi condemns Senate's new loan approval

By Friday Omosola

The Labour Party's 2023 presidential candidate, Peter Obi, has voiced concerns over Nigeria's escalating debt levels and deepening poverty.

In a statement posted on his X account on Tuesday, the former Anambra State governor warned that the country risks severe economic and social consequences if it continues on its current borrowing trajectory.

Obi highlighted that on 22 July, the Senate approved a new wave of external loans amounting to \$21 billion, €2.2 billion, and ¥15 billion for the 2025–2026 fiscal period.

Additionally, he said the Senate sanctioned the issuance of a ₦750.98 billion domestic bond and accepted a €65 million grant.

He pointed out that the approval comes amid mounting public anxiety over Nigeria's ballooning debt profile.

According to him, the country's total public debt stood at ₦149.39 trillion in the first quarter of 2025.

With the latest loan approvals estimated at ₦37.2 trillion, Obi warned that the debt stock could soar to approximately ₦187 trillion, potentially exceeding ₦200 trillion before the end of the year, according to some analysts.

He noted, "It is time to stop this fiscal indiscipline. We must build a New Nigeria, where leadership is responsible, development is people-centred, and every kobo borrowed or spent delivers a measurable impact to achieve sustainable and inclusive development and growth."

Obi highlighted that, before the recent GDP rebasing, Nigeria's economy was valued at roughly ₦269.2 trillion (around \$180 billion), implying that the government had borrowed nearly 70% of the country's total economic output.

He explained that although the rebasing exercise raised the GDP to ₦372.8 trillion (approximately \$243.7 billion), the debt-to-GDP ratio still exceeds 50%—the highest in Nigeria's history.

Obi stressed the urgent need to return to a culture of disciplined and prudent economic management.



He advocated reducing the cost of governance, plugging financial leakages, investing in human capital, and fostering a productive economy.

He warned that Nigeria cannot sustain a pattern of reckless borrowing while poverty worsens and public confidence declines.

While acknowledging that borrowing is not inherently negative, he emphasised that it must be sustainable and channelled into productive ventures with tangible and measurable outcomes.

"Unfortunately, this current pattern of borrowing without accountability, without transparency, and without transformational impact is simply mortgaging the future of our children.

"The government should consider the inter-generational consequences of their unsustainable borrowings and show at least a minimum consideration and interest in the future of young and unborn Nigerians."

He noted that despite the mounting debt, there is little or no visible impact in key sectors such as education, healthcare, electricity generation, security, and poverty alleviation.

"We still rank low in all major human development indicators. While education is underfunded and standard in continuous decline, healthcare remains inaccessible to millions of Nigerians particularly the poor.

"Security of lives and property has deteriorated with over 10,217 people killed and 672 villages sacked between May 29th 2023, and May 29th 2025, even when security spending has significantly increased from ₦2.98 trillion in 2023 to ₦4.91 trillion in 2025. Infrastructure decay persists across the country, with about 135,000km of our 195,000km of roads remaining unpaved, largely unmotorable, and unusable.

"It is the same depressing situation in almost all sectors of the economy, with the power sector an unquestionable example, with less than 5,000 MW supplied for over 200 million Nigerians.

"Today, over two years after the present government took over and with all the humongous borrowing, we are still confronted with negative reports of worsening poverty with about 133 million (63%) Nigerians classified as multi-dimensionally poor, increasing unemployment and disheartening news like 652 children dead as the malnutrition crisis worsens in Northern Nigeria.

"Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), also known as Doctors Without Borders, has just sounded the alarm over an escalating malnutrition crisis in Northern Nigeria, with Katsina State emerging as one of the worst-hit areas.

"This is a country blessed with enormous resources, yet nobody should go to bed hungry. Still, a persistent deficiency in leadership has thrown the majority of our citizens into increasing multi-dimensional poverty."

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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PRODUCT COLOUR

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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
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10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
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9X4	137,875.00
9X3	112,875.00
8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
5X2	32,916.50
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4X3	39,499.50
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8X3	N/A
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CONTACT US

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

E-mail Address:
info@newdailyprime.news
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Tinubu administration prioritises public input in policy reforms – Shettima

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima declared on Tuesday that the administration of President Bola Tinubu is actively collaborating with Nigerians to navigate significant national reforms, rather than governing from a detached position.

He spoke in Kaduna at a two-day interactive session organised by the Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation.

Shettima emphasised the government's dedication to inclusive governance and responsive policymaking, which he noted are grounded in extensive public engagement and empathy.

Represented by Dr Aliyu Umar, the Special Adviser to the President on General Duties (Office of the Vice President), Shettima underscored that the Tinubu administration is 'neither crafting policy in solitude nor assuming that technocracy alone delivers results.'

He added that the government is actively 'convening conversations and institutionalising listening' as a core part of its approach.

Drawing inspiration from Sir Ahmadu Bello's legacy, he stated, "What we nurture today is not just a government of the people but a government with the people."

Shettima highlighted several policy shifts where public input played a crucial role.

Regarding the student loan program, which initially included stringent income ceilings and guarantor requirements, Shettima noted that the administration responded to public



feedback by repealing and re-enacting the law.

This amendment effectively removed those barriers, ensuring that 'no student should be disqualified for being born on the wrong side of poverty.'

On tax reforms, Shettima pointed to the establishment of a Presidential Tax and Fiscal Reform Committee, which engaged stakeholders nationwide.

He stated that the President embraced public and gubernatorial objections, ensuring tax bills underwent public hearings.

"Even unpopular taxes inherited from past regimes, like the 10% single-use plastic levy and telecom tax, were suspended after critical review," Shettima affirmed.

Addressing the removal of fuel subsidy, a contentious policy, he acknowledged the hardships faced by ordinary Nigerians.

He explained that the government accompanied the policy with strategic

responses, engaging with labour unions with 'empathy', not threats.

Measures included 'palliative packages, increased wages, waived diesel taxes, and introduced alternatives like CNG buses to cushion transport costs.

"We were not merely reacting. We were responding," he said.

Shettima stated that this pattern of public engagement and necessary adjustments extends to reforms across all economic sectors.

He reiterated Tinubu's concern for the populace, emphasising that 'governance is not a theatre of perfection but a process of correction and a government that listens is a government that learns. And a government that learns is a government that leads.'

He commended the foundation for its role in sustaining the late Premier's legacy, calling it 'a torch of civic dialogue that must never be extinguished.'

FG to revive Kaduna textile industry amid regional development concerns

By Damilola Olufemi

The federal government says it is taking steps to breathe new life into the Kaduna textile industry, as part of its larger agenda to industrialise the nation and promote balanced development across all regions.

This announcement follows recent remarks by Rabiun Kwankwaso, former Kano State governor and presidential candidate of the NNPP, who criticised President Bola Tinubu's administration for allegedly prioritising projects in the South while overlooking the North.

Speaking during a forum convened by the Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation, Secretary to the Government of the Federation, George Akume, said the Tinubu-led administration is focused on reviving key industries in the North—especially the Kaduna Textile Limited—to strengthen the economy through industrial growth.

“We are looking at those days of Kaduna Textile and many other industrialised areas in the north,” Akume said.



“We intend to revisit those good old days of Kaduna Textile to further boost and solidify the country's economy via industrialisation.”

Akume explained that the government is actively pursuing reforms in eight strategic areas to drive comprehensive development across Nigeria.

About Kaduna textile industry

The textile Limited was once a major industrial hub and a top employer in the North, but it has struggled for years, hindered by poor management, shifting economic trends, and inconsistent government policies.

Previous attempts to resuscitate the company have largely fallen short of long-term success.

Nurses begin seven-day warning strike

By Alade Adisa

While medical doctors are on a three-day warning strike in Lagos, nurses across the country, especially those in federal government-owned hospitals, are starting a seven-day warning strike by midnight on Tuesday.

The warning strike follows a 15-day ultimatum issued to the government by the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives (NANNM).

The body took the decision at the National Executive Council (NEC) emergency meeting held at the National Hospital, Abuja on 10th July, 2025.

The notice signed by the NANNM National Secretary, Comrade Enya Agatha Osinachi, reads: “Following the decision taken by the National Executive Council of the Sector during the Emergency Meeting held at National Hospital, Abuja on 10th July, 2025 and after the directive of the National headquarters of the association, you are hereby directed to embark on 7-day warning strike commencing from 12:00 midnight of



Tuesday 29th of July, 2025.

“This is as a result of the failure of the Federal government of Nigeria/Federal Ministry of Health to take proactive measures to address our concerns and avert this industrial action despite the 15-day ultimatum given from Monday, 14th July, 2025.

“This strike action is total and there should not be any skeletal nursing services in any of the Federal health Institutions across the

country. Thank you in anticipation as we expect full compliance from all members.”

Among its demands, the association is seeking the creation of the department of nursing at the Federal Ministry of Health, an upward review of shift duty allowances, a special allowance for specialist nurses, a secure and conducive work environment for nurses, and well-equipped hospitals with modern equipment to curb medical tourism abroad.

Nigeria unveils 10-year youth-led agricultural plan at UN food summit

By Friday Omosola

Nigeria has presented a comprehensive 10-year Strategic Action Plan (2026–2035) aimed at revolutionising its agricultural sector, with Vice President Kashim Shettima noting that youth-driven innovation will be pivotal to the nation's food systems transformation.

The initiative aligns with Nigeria's commitment to the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) Kampala Declaration (2026–2036), a continent-wide effort by African Heads of State to bolster food and nutrition security.

Speaking on Tuesday at a high-level dialogue during the United Nations Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4) in Addis Ababa, Shettima underscored the critical importance of investing in young people to foster innovation and resilience throughout food systems.

“A nation that is prepared for the future is not known by the promises it makes but by the place it gives to its youth in shaping those promises.

“To see African youths leading the charge in this essential sector speaks more eloquently than any speech,” Shettima stated.

He detailed that Nigeria has already established an Agricultural Sector Working Group and a Technical Committee to oversee the national implementation of the Kampala Declaration and develop the 10-Year Strategic Action Plan.

This plan, he explained, is designed to harmonise national and subnational priorities, encourage public-private partnerships, and deeply integrate youth engagement at all levels.

He also highlighted the Federal Government, FG's, recapitalisation of the Bank of Agriculture with ₦1.5 trillion (\$1 billion) to fuel Nigeria's Youth Agricultural Revolution.

This initiative provides loans of up to ₦1 million to young farmers and agri-groups nationwide.



“This is not charity. It is strategic inclusion. It is resilience engineered into policy,” Shettima said.

Shettima listed several ongoing projects, including Nigeria's collaboration with the Netherlands, CGIAR, and IITA under the Youth in Agribusiness Initiative.

This programme targets 10,000 young individuals, with a significant proportion (40–50%) being women, across innovative hubs specialising in horticulture, poultry, aquaculture, and cassava processing.

He also pointed to investments in mechanisation, greenhouse expansion, and irrigation systems, as well as the \$1.1 billion Green Imperative Project with Brazil, aimed at enhancing year-round agricultural productivity and value chain efficiency.

“We launched the first 2,000 tractors in a 70-million-dollar investment, targeting over 550,000 hectares of land and reaching more than 550,000 farming households. In partnership with John Deere, we are deploying 10,000 tractors over five years,” he said.

Nigeria, he reaffirmed, continues to advocate for increased investment in value addition and agro-processing to curb the export of raw commodities and strengthen local economies.

The forthcoming 10-Year Action Plan, he added, will emphasise training and mentorship in agro-technology and agribusiness, supported by a robust monitoring and evaluation framework.

“This is not a sprint. It is a generational relay that requires collective action, strategic partnerships, and an unwavering commitment to shared responsibility,” he noted.

Separately, Shettima also addressed the Plenary Session on Transforming Food Systems in Complex Settings.

He disclosed that Nigeria has allocated \$538.05 million to the initial phase of the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) programme, a flagship initiative designed to boost agricultural productivity, improve rural livelihoods, and accelerate agro-industrialisation.

This programme, implemented in partnership with the African Development Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the Islamic Development Bank, is projected to attract \$1 billion in total investments by 2027, reduce post-harvest losses by 80%, and has already created over 785,000 jobs across targeted regions.

Shettima reiterated that African youth are essential to the continent's agri-food future, emphasising the need to fully leverage this vital asset.

NSA Ribadu: Insecurity in North has dropped under Tinubu

By Gbenga Olaleye



Nigeria's National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, has stated that insecurity across northern Nigeria has significantly reduced under the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, compared to the previous government.

Ribadu made the remarks on Tuesday during a two-day interactive session with northern leaders, organised by the Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation, taking place in Kaduna State.

Speaking at the session, the NSA said the decline in violence—including Boko Haram attacks, banditry, and communal conflicts—was due to the Tinubu administration's unified security strategy.

“Compared to what the situation was in the last administration, Boko

Haram attacks, banditry, and communal conflicts in the northern region have drastically reduced,” Ribadu noted.

Citing specific statistics, Ribadu said that during the previous administration, Kaduna State alone recorded 1,192 killings and over 3,348 kidnappings. In Benue State, more than 5,000 people were killed during the same period.

He attributed the current progress to the coordinated efforts of security agencies under the directive of President Tinubu, who mandated a harmonised and collaborative approach to tackling insecurity.

Ribadu, who is also the pioneer Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), revealed that as of May 2025, over 11,259 hostages had been rescued from various security operations across the North-West.

He added that several notorious bandit leaders and their gangs have been eliminated in Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina States.

“We appreciate Governor Uba Sani of Kaduna State for initiating the non-kinetic approach in addressing insecurity in Southern Kaduna, Birnin Gwari and other troubled communities in the state,” Ribadu added.

His comments come amid ongoing efforts by the federal government to stabilise the region, which has long struggled with armed violence, mass abductions, and ethnic clashes.

The NSA's remarks are likely to be welcomed by government supporters and security officials, although critics continue to urge further reforms and more robust protection for vulnerable communities.

Kalu withdraws indigeneship bill over stakeholder concerns

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Deputy Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu, has officially withdrawn the controversial Indigeneship Bill from parliamentary consideration, citing widespread stakeholder concerns and the need for further legislative consultation.

The withdrawal was confirmed in a statement issued late Tuesday evening, where Kalu explained that the move was prompted by constructive feedback from a cross-section of Nigerians, as well as the findings of a Bill Analysis Report submitted by the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS).

Kalu, who also chairs the House Committee on Constitution Review, acknowledged the bill's intentions but emphasised that caution was necessary.

"States should make laws that would allow settlers to benefit from the same

rights and privileges enjoyed by indigenes without any form of discrimination, as rightly provided for in the constitution," the NILDS report noted.

While the bill aimed to promote inclusiveness and national unity by granting equal rights to non-indigenes residing in various states, the report raised potential legal and administrative complications, including issues of dual or multiple indigeneship.

"Though the bill seeks to achieve some commendable objectives, however, this can be achieved through enactment of law. If this bill is passed, it would pose challenges with time, especially on the issue of double or multiple indigeneship," the report stated.

Reaffirming his commitment to a transparent and people-driven legislative process, Kalu urged Nigerians to continue engaging with

the Constitution Review Committee.

"As leaders and representatives, we remain committed to ensuring that every legislative proposal reflects the aspirations of the people we serve," he said.

"The Constitution Review process remains an open, inclusive, and participatory exercise, and no provision or proposal will be pursued without adequate dialogue and consensus-building.

"I therefore call on citizens to continue engaging constructively with the House Committee on Constitutional Review as we work together to build a more just, united, and prosperous Nigeria."

The withdrawal of the Indigeneship Bill marks a significant step in the ongoing constitutional reform process, reflecting lawmakers' responsiveness to public input and commitment to inclusive governance.

Mixed reactions trail Tinubu's rewards for Super Falcons

By Alade Adisa



Divergent views have started trailing the rewards given by President Bola Tinubu to the victorious Nigeria's female senior national team, the Super Falcons.

Super Falcons, who on late Saturday night won their 10th African Women Nations Cup trophy in Morocco were on Monday evening given mouth watering rewards by the President. He gave each player \$100,000, three-bedroom flat and a national honour.

Going by the current exchange rate of the local currency, the naira to the dollar each player got the equivalent of N150 million. Some Nigerians believe the reward was on the high side while others feel it was okay

That is obscene—just too high. —Alfred Speaking with New Daily Prime, a sport analyst and critic, Alfred Joshua, opined that the huge sum given each player was too high. “Given the economic situation in the country, and how we are grappling with tough existential issues, that reward was too

high. Only few days ago, retired policemen took to the streets across the country protesting unpaid entitlements. Entitlements that are just too paltry. After serving the country for 35 years, some retired police officers don't get up to N50,000 monthly as pensions.

“While I am not saying those who do well in areas like sports should not be compensated for their efforts, they can be given lesser amounts. Also, they would still get flats and national honour. In some climes, the national honour will suffice. The English women national team also won the European Championship for the second time, you won't hear such a bogus reward from that end.

“The players have the allowances and prize money they would benefit from. If you multiply what each person was given by the number of players, we are talking of billions of naira. Our schools are on bad shape. Teachers are not motivated and medical doctors are threatening strike, haba, we should stop playing to the gallery,” he opined.

There is nothing bad in it- Suleiman Audu

Backing what the President did for the players, another respondent, Suleiman Audu, noted that there was nothing bad in what was given the players.

“The players are mostly professionals and see playing football as their vocation. So, if they make the nation proud and were rewarded for that, there is no problem. Remember that sports, football particularly has become a big business. Don't we hear how much players are paid in some countries and by some football clubs?

“If they are injured and cannot continue playing who takes care of them. They are on their own. Let them enjoy the fruits of their labour while it lasts and when they can do so. Many former footballers are languishing in poverty and ill health. They just have to ensure they manage whatever they rake in while playing judiciously. It is their time,” he noted.

Electricity Act provides life jail for vandals

By Alade Adisa



Persons who vandalise power and electricity facilities are now liable to be jailed for life, the Electricity Act 2023 (Amended 2025), now provides for that.

Findings by New Daily Prime show that if the level of vandalism causes significant disruption to electricity supply, endangers life, personal safety, or public order, it could land the vandal in jail for life.

The Act states: “Any person who unlawfully or with intent to destroy, vandalize, damage, or render non-functional any electricity infrastructure or assets within the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry, including but not limited to generation plants, transmission lines, towers, substations, transformers, distribution networks,

meters, or any associated equipment, commits an offence.

“For the purposes of this Bill, “electricity infrastructure or assets” includes both public and private property essential for the generation, transmission, distribution, and supply of electricity.

“Any person who commits an offence of vandalism under this Bill shall be liable on conviction where the act of vandalism causes significant disruption to electricity supply endangering life, personal safety, or public order, to imprisonment for a term not less than ten (10) years but not exceeding life imprisonment, without the option of a fine.

“Where the act of vandalism causes

substantial economic loss or prolonged disruption to electricity supply, to imprisonment for a term not less than ten (5) years but not exceeding ten (10) years, without the option of a fine.

“In any other case, to imprisonment for a term not less than three (3) years but not exceeding five (5) years, or a fine of not less than Three Million Naira (N3,000,000.00), or both such fine and imprisonment.”

“In addition to any penalty imposed under subsection (1), the court may order the forfeiture of any tools, vehicles, or equipment used in the commission of the offence, and may also order the convicted person to pay compensation for the damage caused.”

Dangote Refinery drops N100bn lawsuit against NMDPRA, NNPC, oil marketers

By Damilola Olufemi

Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals has formally withdrawn its legal case against the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd), and five other oil marketing firms.

The lawsuit, which was filed at the Federal High Court in Abuja, was discontinued by the refinery's legal counsel, as confirmed in a notice of discontinuance submitted to the court. Although the notice didn't specify a reason, it stated that Dangote Refinery had chosen to halt proceedings against all seven defendants, including Matrix Petroleum Services Limited, AYM Shafa Limited, A. A. Rano Limited, T. Time Petroleum Limited, and 2015 Petroleum Limited.

The terms behind the decision remain unclear—whether it was due to an out-of-court agreement or a change in legal strategy.

In the initial filing, Dangote Refinery had asked the court to compel NMDPRA to pay ₦100 billion in damages, alleging the agency violated its mandate by issuing petroleum import licenses to certain marketers despite domestic refining efforts.

The refinery argued that licenses should only be granted when a shortfall in local supply exists, in accordance with Sections 317(8) and (9) of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). It also claimed NMDPRA had failed in its responsibility to promote and support local refiners like Dangote Refinery.

Marketers involved in Dangote lawsuit
The marketers involved—NNPC Ltd, Matrix, AYM Shafa, A. A. Rano, T. Time Petroleum, and 2015 Petroleum—disputed the claims in a counter-affidavit. They contended that the issuance of import permits was both



lawful and necessary for market competition, warning that Dangote's claims pointed toward an attempt to establish a monopoly in Nigeria's oil downstream sector.

They argued that under Section 317(9) of the PIA, they met all the qualifications required to receive import permits. "The plaintiff is trying to monopolise the supply, distribution, and pricing of petroleum products in Nigeria," the defendants asserted.

The NMDPRA, in its own affidavit filed by Senior Regulatory Officer Idris Musa, said Dangote's local output did not yet meet national consumption needs. Musa maintained that the agency acted within its powers by granting licenses to marketers with proven international trading experience in order to close existing supply gaps.

He further emphasised that NMDPRA is legally mandated to uphold competition and prevent monopolistic practices. "There is no conspiracy against the plaintiff," Musa stated.

Earlier in the case, on December 9, 2024, Dangote Refinery sought the court's

permission to amend its documents by correcting the name of the second defendant from "Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation Limited" to "Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited."

NNPC Ltd, in response, filed a preliminary objection seeking the dismissal of the suit on grounds including misidentification. The objection was supported by an affidavit from Isiaka Popoola, a litigation officer in the legal firm representing NNPC.

However, on March 18, 2025, Justice Inyang Ekwo rejected the objection, ruling that the naming error did not invalidate the suit. He held that the defendants should have addressed the main issues raised in the suit before resorting to procedural objections.

Despite that ruling, Dangote Refinery has now dropped the case, leaving questions over the outcome and next steps in the ongoing debates about refining capacity, product importation, and regulatory fairness in Nigeria's oil sector.

Saraki denies directing supporters to join ADC, reaffirms commitment to PDP

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Reconciliation Committee, Senator Bukola Saraki, has denied directing any of his supporters to defect to the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in Kwara State.

Speaking at a stakeholders' meeting held at his residence in Ilorin, Saraki reassured his supporters of his unwavering loyalty to the PDP and expressed confidence that ongoing efforts to reposition the party would soon yield positive results.

Addressing party members from all 16 local government councils of the state, Saraki described the gathering as a family meeting aimed at clarifying rumours and fostering unity within the party.

"I'm here as a democrat, whose people have asked to clarify a

number of issues about the party," he said. "You have all been observing what's been happening at the national level of our party and you want to know the situation. I owe you that to come down and explain to you."

Saraki emphasised his commitment to the PDP, stating that despite recent challenges, he believes the party's ongoing repositioning efforts will be fruitful.

"We are staying in PDP because ongoing efforts to reposition the party will yield fruitful results, so we are committed to the party," he affirmed.

He also addressed circulating rumours and innuendos, asserting that he never encouraged any supporters to join the ADC in Kwara State.

"Number two, you're all aware of innuendo that has been given about what I know and what I don't know. I believe I must come and let you hear from the horse's mouth, so you can know the true position of the matter. I never directed anyone to go to ADC in the state," Saraki added.

The former Senate President's remarks come amid growing speculation about political realignments ahead of upcoming elections, with several PDP members reportedly considering alternative parties.

Saraki's clarification is expected to bolster unity within the Kwara State PDP and discourage defections as the party works towards consolidating its position in the region.

Onanuga defends Super Falcons' rewards, draws comparison to BBNaija prize

By Friday Omosola



The recent financial and honorary rewards bestowed upon Nigeria's victorious Super Falcons by President Bola Tinubu have found a vocal defender in presidential spokesperson Bayo Onanuga.

In a post on his X handle on Tuesday, Onanuga questioned the criticisms levelled by some Nigerians regarding the commendation package given to the team for their triumph at the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco.

To illustrate his point, Onanuga referenced the significant prize money offered in the popular BBNaija reality television show.

He noted the disparity in public perception, stating: "When you remember that Multichoice, the organiser of the BBNaija reality show, is offering the winner ₦150 million

grand prize, you wonder why some Nigerians are unappreciative of President Tinubu's rewards to the Super Falcons. President Tinubu has rewarded excellence, creativity, hard work, soccer artistry and the undying Nigerian spirit."

Onanuga's commentary comes shortly after Tinubu hosted the Super Falcons at the Presidential Villa on Monday, following their arrival from Morocco.

During the reception, the President announced a cash award of the naira equivalent of \$100,000 for each of the 24 players.

Additionally, he revealed that each victorious player would receive a three-bedroom apartment.

Further recognising their historic achievement, Tinubu conferred the national honour of Officer of the Order

of the Niger (OON) on all members of the Super Falcons for securing Nigeria's tenth WAFCON title.

He specifically thanked the team for embodying and reminding Nigerians of the resilient national spirit.

The Super Falcons arrived at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja on Monday at approximately 2:26 p.m., after a chartered flight from Morocco.

They were earlier welcomed by First Lady Oluremi Tinubu upon their landing.

The team made history on Saturday by dramatically coming from two goals down to defeat host country Morocco 3-2 in the final, securing their tenth WAFCON trophy in ten appearances.

Maintenance: DisCos assure Lagosians electricity restoration by 5 p.m daily

By Damilola Olufemi



The Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Nigerian Electricity Distributors (ANED), Sunday Oduntan, has reassured Lagos residents that power will be restored each day by 5 p.m. throughout the 25-day maintenance work on the Omotosho-Ikeja West 330kV transmission line.

The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) had earlier announced that the planned upgrade would begin on Monday, July 28, 2025, and would lead to intermittent blackouts in parts of Lagos. The daily maintenance activities are scheduled to take place between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Responding to concerns raised by some Lagos residents over whether power will indeed return on time each day, Oduntan, speaking on behalf of the DisCos during an appearance on Channels Television's Sunrise Daily on Tuesday, urged the public to trust the process.

"We now need to start believing in our institutions," he said. "I am not a TCN person; I am a spokesman for the Discos. But I can tell you for a fact that what they are trying to do has been planned over a long period of time, and they will surely keep to exactly what it is."

He explained that the nature of engineering work all

ows for precise planning and timelines. "These are engineering works. This is not law," he said. "As a lawyer, I can tell you: if this were a case in court, I'd say, 'Don't worry, in three weeks we should be able to get judgment.' But that's not guaranteed."

"In engineering work, they know exactly what to do, here and there. They know how long it will take, and they know why it is taking this long."

Oduntan also noted that while 25 days may seem lengthy, it is a deliberate approach to avoid deeper disruption. "Twenty-five days is not 24 hours. If they were going to do it in 24 hours, they would have done it within two weeks — but that would not be good for our economy," he added.

Earlier, both Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC) and Ikeja Electricity Distribution Company (Ikeja Electric) had issued public notices informing customers of the planned outage and warned of intermittent power supply during the maintenance period.

Despite public scepticism, the DisCos and TCN insist the maintenance work is essential for long-term grid stability and improved service delivery across Lagos.

Distribution companies notify electricity customers

Both Ikeja Electric and Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC) have issued alerts to their customers, warning of intermittent power supply during the TCN's maintenance window.

In its public notice, Ikeja Electric stated, "Dear Esteemed Customer, please be informed that the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) will carry out scheduled maintenance on the Omotosho-Ikeja West 330kV transmission line from Monday, July 28, to Thursday, August 21, 2025, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM daily."

"During this period, customers may experience intermittent power supply and load shedding across our network due to the planned TCN outage," the statement added.

EKEDC issued a similar advisory: "Dear Valued Customer, kindly be informed that there will be a planned outage by our partner, Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN)..."

Northern leaders meet in Kaduna to evaluate Tinubu's performance

By Damilola Olufemi



Top political, traditional, and business figures from Northern Nigeria converged in Kaduna on Tuesday to review the performance of President Bola Tinubu's administration, two years after he took office.

The high-level meeting is being held at the historic Arewa House, once the residence of the late Premier of Northern Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello. It was convened by the Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation, a respected socio-political think tank focused on advancing the ideals of the late Sardauna.

The two-day forum, themed "Assessing Electoral Promises: Fostering Government-Citizens Engagement for National Unity," draws participants from across the 19 northern states and the Federal Capital Territory.

Scheduled to continue on Wednesday, the event has attracted a broad range of northern stakeholders including former governors, ex-ministers,

traditional rulers, technocrats, civil society leaders, and religious figures. Their presence underscores the importance the region places on its role in the national conversation under Tinubu's leadership.

Foundation DG speaks as Northern leaders gather

Speaking ahead of the session, the Foundation's Director-General, Abubakar Gambo Umar, said the event follows the region's tradition of engaging constructively with those in power.

"The Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation is pleased to announce a significant two-day interactive session scheduled for 24th and 25th June 2025 in Kaduna, Nigeria," he stated.

"This landmark event builds on the Foundation's successful engagement on 17th October 2022, where frontline presidential candidates, including then-candidate Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR, presented their manifestos and made

commitments towards the development of Northern Nigeria."

Umar added that the review is designed to examine the extent to which those commitments have been fulfilled.

"With President Tinubu now two years into his administration, this follow-up session aims to evaluate the progress made on those electoral promises, deepen government-citizen engagement, and promote a clearer understanding of the administration's policies and programmes," he explained.

He also described the initiative as a "critical litmus test" to gauge the federal government's responsiveness to the pressing socio-economic and security issues confronting the region.

The forum is expected to yield recommendations aimed at reinforcing unity and advancing Northern Nigeria's development agenda within the broader national framework.

2027: Ali Modu Sheriff, ADC battle Obi's return to PDP

By Damilola Olufemi



Former Borno State governor, Ali Modu Sheriff, has suggested that Peter Obi, the 2023 Labour Party presidential candidate, may soon return to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to pursue his 2027 presidential ambition.

Obi, who recently aligned with several opposition leaders under the African Democratic Congress (ADC) coalition, has been vocal about challenging the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the next general elections. While he has shown interest in contesting again, there is growing speculation that former Vice President Atiku Abubakar could also be in the race for the PDP's presidential ticket.

Speaking during an interview on Channels Television Politics Today, on Monday, Sheriff revealed that credible information available to him points toward Obi rejoining the PDP.

Sheriff shares Obi's tendency to leave ADC

"Information available to me is that any moment from now, Obi would go back to the PDP and run as a presidential candidate under the PDP," Sheriff stated.

He added, "Atiku has been the vice president of Nigeria. So for him, (it is) president or nothing. Peter Obi ran under the PDP. His ambition is to become President."

Sheriff also weighed in on the political influence of key opposition figures, suggesting their current standing may not give them a significant edge. "So that leaves Vice President Atiku and (Rotimi) Amaechi. So tell me, which states do they control?" he asked.

Obi's possible return to the PDP could reshape the dynamics ahead of the 2027 elections, especially if he seeks to unify the opposition under a stronger, singular platform.

Bolaji Abdullahi, the spokesman for the African Democratic Congress, ADC, has said the presidential

candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi, cannot "take the risk" of returning to the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP.

ADC reacts

Meanwhile the spokesman for the ADC, Bolaji Abdullahi, has said the presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi, cannot "take the risk" of going back to the PDP.

He noted that the former Anambra governor is part of the ADC coalition while speaking on Arise TV's Prime Time.

"Let me say clearly, Peter Obi is in the coalition. Regardless of what anybody is saying. But it is good to see that it has taken the coming on board of ADC, to get PDP to begin to make some movements.

"But everyone knows the jugular of the PDP is in the hands of the ruling party. Peter Obi, more than anyone else, knows that he cannot take the risk of going to the PDP."

Babachir Lawal: Northern politicians must defect to ADC, risk defeat in 2027

By Gbenga Olaleye



Former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Babachir Lawal, has delivered a damning verdict on the chances of northern politicians retaining office under the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2027 general elections, warning that re-election would be impossible unless they defect to the opposition African Democratic Congress (ADC).

Speaking during an interview on Trust TV, Lawal did not mince words as he accused the APC of marginalising northern Nigeria and failing to deliver on its promises. He argued that most northern elected officials, including governors, would be left with no viable option but to abandon the APC and seek refuge in the ADC if they intend to secure electoral victories in the upcoming polls.

“Which northern elected official will go to campaign on the platform of the APC this coming election? Nobody. Unless ab initio, you have no plan to win the election. I can’t see anywhere,” Lawal declared.

He added pointedly: “Unless they join the ADC, they will not win... simply because they belong to a destructive party. A party

that woefully failed to perform.”

Lawal claimed the ADC has already initiated discussions with several governors and top northern political figures, signalling a strategic effort to consolidate opposition forces in preparation for 2027.

His remarks come amid growing internal dissent within the APC and rising concerns over the party’s handling of development issues in the northern region.

Echoing sentiments recently expressed by former Kano State Governor, Rabiu Kwankwaso, Lawal criticised President Bola Tinubu’s administration for what he described as deliberate neglect of northern Nigeria, particularly in the area of infrastructure.

“Every Nigerian that has anything to do with the North will know that no infrastructure work is going on at any level,” he said.

“No projects are going on, at least they are not visible to the eye. Maybe in their imagination, maybe in the spirit, but we don’t see it. We don’t see any construction

work. We don’t see any infrastructure going on. No federal government project whatsoever.”

Lawal, himself an engineer, highlighted his shared technical background with Kwankwaso, noting that it sharpens their awareness of physical development and underscores the visible absence of federal investment in northern projects.

His comments align with Kwankwaso’s earlier rebuke of the Tinubu administration, in which the New Nigeria People’s Party (NNPP) leader accused the government of prioritising the South in its developmental agenda, to the detriment of the North.

As political realignments begin to take shape ahead of the 2027 general elections, Lawal’s bold declaration signals the deepening fractures within the APC and the increasing appetite for alternative platforms among northern leaders.

Whether the ADC can capitalise on this momentum remains to be seen, but the battle lines for the North’s political future appear to be forming rapidly.

PDP tackles ADC, reaffirms strength ahead of 2027 polls

By Friday Omosola

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has criticised the African Democratic Congress (ADC) for what it termed an 'unprovoked public verbal assault' delivered on national television by Bolaji Abdullahi, the ADC's Interim National Publicity Secretary.

PDP in a statement signed by its National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba expressed its dismay at Abdullahi's 'unwarranted resort' to attacking the party.

Ologunagba highlighted Abdullahi's past role as a prominent spokesperson and defender of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

He suggested his current actions through the ADC platform were 'not only reckless but also revealing' and served to divert attention from pressing national issues.

Ologunagba inferred that Abdullahi, being APC-indoctrinated, was likely displeased with the PDP's growing momentum against the ruling APC in anticipation of the 2027 general elections.

This, he said, was his decision to target the PDP instead of confronting the APC government.

Despite the perceived provocation, he stated the party's status as the leading opposition party, commanding widespread respect, loyalty, and solidarity across Nigeria.

Ologunagba affirmed PDP's role as the primary platform driving Nigerians' aspirations to remove the APC from power in 2027.

He stated that PDP would not stoop to engage in verbal sparring with the ADC or any other opposition party.



Instead, Ologunagba said PDP vowed to maintain its focus on rigorously challenging the 'failed APC' on substantive issues, shaping constructive national discourse, and mobilising Nigerians towards voting for a 'people-oriented government' on the PDP's platform in 2027.

He underscored the PDP's historical record of performance, which he said Nigerians still remember fondly.

Addressing recent defections, Ologunagba maintained that PDP's true strength lies with the Nigerian populace.

"Despite the defections of some of our members, it is clear that Nigerians, who are the real organic strength of the PDP, are still standing shoulder to shoulder with our Party," he said.

Ologunagba stated that the party possesses the necessary support base, connections, national reach, and political leverage to unseat the APC.

Ologunagba also affirmed that PDP currently boasts 'more than enough presidential personalities with clear records of achievement and capacity to defeat President Bola Tinubu at any time.'

Nevertheless, as a preferred platform for all Nigerians, he said PDP remains open to collaborating with other well-meaning and like-minded individuals and groups in the collective effort to 'rescue our nation from the APC.'

Ologunagba reiterated PDP's commitment to consolidating its ongoing reconciliation efforts and building on the success of its 101st National Executive Committee meeting.

He said the party is diligently working towards a successful National Convention scheduled for November 15th to 16th, 2025, in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.

Ologunagba stressed that the party would not permit itself to be distracted by 'baseless attacks from known agents of the APC.'

Oyinlola: Tinubu's 'renewed hope' is renewed agony

By Gbenga Olaleye



Former Governor of Osun State, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, has strongly criticised the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, stating that Nigerians are living through “renewed agony” rather than the “Renewed Hope” promised during the 2023 presidential campaign.

Oyinlola, a retired Nigerian Army general who served as governor from May 2003 to November 2010, made the remarks on Tuesday while appearing on Frontline, a current affairs programme aired on Eagle 102.5 FM, Ilese Ijebu. The interview was monitored by NEW DAILY PRIME in Abeokuta.

Assessing the current state of the nation, Oyinlola expressed deep dissatisfaction with the Tinubu-led government, accusing it of failing to fulfil its campaign promises and exacerbating hardship across the country.

“When he was campaigning, he promised a Renewed Hope. What we

are seeing now is nothing short of bad governance. The economy is in terrible shape, and it’s affecting every Nigerian,” he said.

Oyinlola did not hold back in his critique, citing the deteriorating economy, rising poverty, insecurity, and declining quality of life as clear evidence of the administration’s shortcomings.

“We have a very bad economy, bad security, and hard-biting poverty. The common man cannot afford basic medication. We are also plagued by religious tension, war, banditry, terrorism, and insurgency. What we have is renewed agony, not renewed hope,” he declared.

His comments come just a week after the Osun State Governor, Senator Ademola Adeleke, along with the state’s Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leadership, endorsed President Tinubu for re-election in 2027. The endorsement followed a stakeholders’ meeting held at the Government House in Oke-Fia, Osogbo.

While Oyinlola acknowledged the endorsement and did not disassociate himself from it, he described the move as strategic rather than ideological. He clarified that the endorsement was not necessarily a vote of confidence in Tinubu’s policies or performance.

“It was a political strategy, not a declaration of ideological alignment or trust,” Oyinlola explained.

The former governor’s remarks reflect growing discontent among Nigerians amid worsening economic and security challenges, despite promises of reform and revitalisation by the current administration.

As political discussions around the 2027 general elections begin to surface, Oyinlola’s comments are expected to fuel further debate about the performance and direction of the Tinubu government.

Political giants endorse Tinubu, Oyebanji for second term

By Friday Omosola

The All Progressives Congress (APC), various political stakeholders, and non-partisan groups converged to endorse President Bola Tinubu and Governor Biodun Oyebanji for second terms in their respective offices.

The political leaders endorsed Tinubu and Oyebanji at a gathering in Ekiti State yesterday.

The event, held at the expansive Ekiti Parapo Pavilion in Ado-Ekiti, saw the endorsement extended not only to Oyebanji but also to his Deputy, Monisade Afuye.

Several prominent figures took to the podium, offering glowing commendations for both Tinubu and Oyebanji before backing their re-election bids for the 2027 presidential and 2026 Ekiti gubernatorial elections.

Among these heavyweights were Ondo State Governor Lucky Ayedatiwa, former Ekiti Governors Niyi Adebayo, Ayodele Fayose, and Segun Oni, alongside Senate Leader Opeyemi Bamidele.

The sprawling Ekitiparapo Pavilion, situated along Ado-Iyin Road, was filled to capacity, with a diverse assembly of politicians, artisans, traders, teachers, and other community groups thronging the venue to partake in the statewide endorsement.

The ruling APC also saw its ranks swell, marked by the high-profile defection of Senator Biodun Olujimi, a former Senate Minority Leader and chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

She was joined by Obafemi Adewale, a former Ekiti State Attorney General, and Babatunde Omolayo, a member of the State Assembly, along with their numerous supporters.

Bamidele, flanked by both serving and past National Assembly members from Ekiti, moved the motion for Tinubu's second term endorsement, which was seconded by House of Representatives member Femi Bamisile.

Subsequently, a letter communicating the President's endorsement was presented to



the APC National Secretary, Senator Bashiru Ajibola.

In a parallel display of support, the Speaker of the Ekiti State House of Assembly, Adeoye Aribasoye, accompanied by members of the 7th Assembly, moved the motion for Oyebanji's second term.

The motion received unanimous ratification from the enthusiastic crowd after being seconded by Deputy Speaker Bolaji Olagbaju.

A visibly ecstatic Oyebanji addressed the gathering, expressing his profound gratitude for the vote of confidence.

He stated that the endorsements would further fuel his administration's drive for accelerated development across the state.

He added that he was deeply moved by the convergence of political luminaries affirming his re-election.

In a rare display of political sportsmanship, Oyebanji affirmed that the endorsements would not curtail any individual's right to contest for the governorship within the APC.

He emphasised that the Nigerian constitution upholds such rights.

He sent a strong message to the opposition, declaring that Ekiti would remain loyal to the APC and would not

abandon it for any other party.

He assured that the state would increase its voting strength in support of President Tinubu.

Ayedatiwa, in an address filled with praise for Oyebanji, predicted an overwhelming victory for the governor, stating that the combined forces of Tinubu and Oyebanji would elevate Ekiti's economy to enviable heights if granted a second term.

He noted that all 23 APC governors had already endorsed Tinubu and have now come to Ekiti to reciprocate the gesture for Oyebanji.

Fayose described the event as "epochal and unique" for uniting such a wide array of political heavyweights.

He reaffirmed his unreserved support for both Tinubu and Oyebanji.

Recalling his own record of sweeping all 16 local governments in the state during his 2014 victory, Fayose expressed his desire for Oyebanji to surpass this achievement, urging attendees to support the governor's "humility and sense of delivery."

Lending their support, Oni and Adebayo concurred that Tinubu merited the endorsement, asserting that a "Nigeria of our dream" was progressively taking shape under the APC-led federal government.

Hurricane Tinubu: Supporters' expectations come 2027 election

By Clement Abayomi

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's supporters are teeming with preparations as Nigeria edges close to the 2027 general elections. They are mobilising across geopolitical zones, exuding a great deal of confidence in Tinubu's re-election chances and the continued dominance of the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC). Interestingly, from Kano to Awka, Abuja to local communities, Tinubu's followers trust in his leadership and view his "Renewed Hope" platform as a vow, and of course a promise, worth fighting for.

Recently in an interview on Channels Television, Laolu Akande, former president aide, showed some level of optimism in Tinubu's re-election, claiming that the governing All Progressive Congress (APC) still runs far better than its opponents. According to him, the opposition has no distinct or clear-cut political organisation. He therefore maintained that the aim of the opposition appears to be only removing President Tinubu without providing fresh or alternative ideas. In his opinion, the "APC has better arrangements".

For supporters of Tinubu, the weakness in the opposition party, precisely Obi's Labour Party, is a strategic edge, an advantage which, they believe, speaks to the victory of Tinubu in two years' time. Akande, demonstrating his optimistic mindset towards the APC, referenced the disconnect between Datti Baba-Ahmed and Peter Obi as evidence of a larger leadership void in the opposition party.

Moreover, the South East, originally a difficult area for the APC, has been observed to start aligning with Tinubu. Recently, the South East Progressive Ambassadors (SEPA), a coalition of young professionals, announced their backing of Tinubu's 2027 campaign. This is a new development worthy of note and attention. The SEPA convener, known as John Ikeotuonye, noted that President Tinubu has exhibited tremendous bravery in tackling problems including local government responsibility and fund diversion. In fact, inclusive governance was said to be evidenced by the creation of the South East Development Commission and important Igbo appointments. This,



according to the SEPA, reflects Tinubu's seriousness about inclusive governance. The SEPA's secretary, Dr. Justin Nwankwo, also noted that political engagement is crucial and remaining on the sidelines would be imprudent for the South East. He therefore urged his audience to consider forming strategic relationships.

It should be remarked that even after the resignation of Abdullahi Ganduje, APC National Chairman, Tinubu still had strong support in Kano. Leader of the APC Promoters Group, Abdullahi Maiturare, predicted that Tinubu would get 100% Kano votes in 2027. Maiturare told party stakeholders that the voters are with them, not with Ganduje. And he declared that Tinubu's performance will pave the path in 2027, because, in his opinion, Tinubu's work is louder than opposing tactics.

Also, the APC stakeholders are rallying behind Tinubu in the North-Central region. The APC Unity Forum advocated for Dr. Amos Gizo from Plateau State as Ganduje's replacement and urged for more internal cohesion before the elections in 2027. A spokesperson stated that they hope the National Working Committee will endorse Dr. Gizo and assist the party in becoming united. The North-Central APC Forum led by Alhaji Saleh Zazzaga also reconfirmed full support for Tinubu, calling him the only candidate and promising more than six million votes from the area.

Tinubu's supporters lay emphasise Tinubu's followers also emphasise his capacity as a stabiliser in highly-charged political circumstances. One of the most

noteworthy instances is the reconciliation he brokered between Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara and FCT Minister Nyesom Wike. A Rivers-based supporter has tagged such intervention as a manifestation of leadership. The supporter said, "He didn't just calm a storm; he potentially saved a governorship". Such an action, the followers claim, consolidate Tinubu's reputation as a unifier able to negotiate Nigeria's political challenge.

Though Tinubu's supporters recognise the necessity of more powerful communication and internal unity, they remain hopeful. Many think the forthcoming APC National Executive Committee (NEC) meetings will help set the party's course anew. As Akande stressed, they "desire issue-driven politics" and critical discussions about poverty, corruption, and reforms, not about personalities.

The South East Progressive Ambassadors declared: "2027 must not catch us unprepared. We are ready to rise, reconcile, and rebuild."

Tinubu's supporters thus believe that the next two years are not just about campaigning or winning an election. It's about defending a vision and supporting progress.

Reacting, a political analyst, Sunday Bisu, said politics couldn't be decided by people's feelings.

He added that it's clearly a strategic game.

Bisu noted, "The APC has continuously shown how strategic it's as a political party rendering its opposition parties useless."

The analyst further explained that the new coalition party, All Democratic Congress had put the APC to race, showing itself as a strong opposition party in the coming election.

He said, "The 2027 election will be very hard. People should watch out as ADC isn't there to play. The PDP may find it difficult to resurrect as a result of the party's internal conflict."

Burna Boy performs at England's Women's Euro victory party

By Oluwatosin Ologun



Grammy Award winner and Nigerian star Burna Boy was a surprise guest at Buckingham Palace, London on Tuesday where England's Lionesses celebrated their triumph at the 2025 Women's Euros.

Burna Boy was ushered on stage by the compere and former England star Alex Scott who said, "Three years ago in Trafalgar Square you [Sarina Weigman] said, 'I am not ready to dance, the music was not quite right.'

"The surprise right now — we know who your favorite artiste is — he is in the building, so we want to see you dance. Please give it up, everybody, for Sarina's favorite artist. Burna Boy is coming to the stage."

England boss, Wiegman who is a huge fan of the artist and has been in charge of the team since 2021, was surprised to see the Grammy-award winning star and screamed "Oh, no way" on sighting the

Nigerian.

She could not hide her excitement dancing with Burna Boy as he performed his 2022 song "For Your Hand," to the delight of the players and hundreds of supporters who also sang along.

In 2023, the coach said she is a fan of the Afrobeat star, and noted that the Nigerian is top of her playlist.

"I don't know the name of the song ['For My Hand'], with Burna Boy and Ed Sheeran. I have definitely played that song the most," she had said then.

The Dutchwoman led England to the defence of their WEURO title in Switzerland. The Lionesses battled hard in the final, beating world champions Spain 3-1 on penalties on Sunday after normal and extra time ended 1-1.

In 2023, Spain beat England 1-0 to win the Women's World Cup.

Tuesday's event is part of the Lionesses' homecoming tour after the most recent victory, four years after the English women also took home the trophy on home soil.



Trump slams Starmer for destroying North Sea energy treasure chest

By **Fatimah Idera**



President Donald Trump has criticised Sir Keir Starmer's energy policies, accusing the Labour Government of squandering the North Sea's vast oil and gas resources and pushing up household energy bills.

In a post on Truth Social on Tuesday morning, the former US President said Britain was wasting a treasure chest of natural resources. He blamed the Government's tax hikes and regulatory restrictions for deterring investment and driving energy prices higher.

Trump's comments come just a day after a joint appearance with Starmer at his Turnberry golf resort in Scotland, where the two held an hour-long press conference. During the meeting, Trump urged the Prime Minister to cut taxes and tighten immigration controls, warning that failure to act could strengthen Nigel Farage's political challenge at the

next election.

At the centre of Trump's criticism is the Labour Government's decision to raise the windfall tax on oil and gas producers from 75% to 78% while extending the levy until 2030. The policy shift, combined with Energy Secretary Ed Miliband's move to ban new drilling in the North Sea, has caused concern in the energy sector.

Miliband has defended the restrictions as essential to Britain's transition to renewable energy and achieving net zero targets. However, critics argue the strategy risks undermining energy security and increasing reliance on foreign imports.

Trump tells UK to expand fossil fuel production

Trump has previously urged the UK to expand fossil fuel production,

saying earlier this month that Starmer should get rid of the windmills in Scotland and focus on extracting more oil and gas from the North Sea.

Industry leaders have echoed Trump's concerns. David Whitehouse, chief executive of Offshore Energies UK, wrote to the Prime Minister last week to call for a more pragmatic approach. He warned that the current policy trajectory could damage the UK's energy independence and economic prospects.

"The industry is asking for a pragmatic conversation about the future of the North Sea which recognises and prioritises home-grown energy, the outcomes of consultations on licensing, future taxes, and the wider North Sea are of national importance," White house said

Ghislaine Maxwell interviewed again by US prosecutors

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The US deputy attorney general, Todd Blanche, has held a second in-person meeting with convicted sex trafficker Ghislaine Maxwell, as calls mount for full transparency over the federal investigation into the late financier Jeffrey Epstein.

Blanche met Maxwell behind closed doors on Thursday and again on Friday at the federal prosecutor's office inside the courthouse in Tallahassee, Florida, where Maxwell is currently serving a 20 year prison sentence for her role in Epstein's abuse network.

Maxwell's lawyer, David Oscar Markus, confirmed that the questioning concluded on Friday afternoon. "We started this morning at 9 o'clock and wrapped just after lunch, following all-day sessions yesterday and today," Markus told reporters outside the courthouse. "Ghislaine answered every single question asked of her. She did so honestly, truthfully, and to the best of her ability. She never invoked privilege. She never refused a question."

Markus added that prosecutors "asked about every single, every possible thing you could imagine".

Blanche, who had previously indicated he was reaching out to Maxwell's team to determine whether she might possess information on others involved in crimes against victims, has not stated whether further questioning will occur. Markus, too, said it remains unclear whether these discussions would affect her case in any way, though he described Thursday's session as "very productive".

Maxwell, a longtime associate of Epstein, was convicted in 2021 of sex trafficking underage girls for the disgraced financier, who died by suicide in a New York jail cell in 2019 while awaiting trial.

The renewed interest in Maxwell's knowledge comes amid growing public outrage and pressure on US president Donald Trump's administration to release all materials related to the Epstein case. Trump, whose name appeared in Epstein's flight logs in the 1990s, departed for Scotland on Friday for a private trip combining politics and golf.



Protests are anticipated in the UK, as controversy continues to swirl around his past ties and political conduct.

When asked if Maxwell had been offered clemency in exchange for cooperation, Markus was firm: "No offer has been made." Trump, speaking upon arrival in the UK, dismissed speculation about a pardon. "A lot of people have been asking me about pardons," he said. "Obviously, this is no time to be talking about pardons."

Though US attorney general Pam Bondi had earlier pledged to release materials related to Epstein's alleged clients, the justice department reversed its stance this month, issuing a memo stating there was no evidence of a so-called "client list" or blackmail operation. However, prosecutors have since sought to unseal grand jury transcripts from prior investigations, a move partially blocked last week by US district judge Robin Rosenberg, who denied one such request.

What Maxwell legal team is doing
Meanwhile, Maxwell's legal team is pushing for her conviction to be overturned. The US Supreme Court, currently in its summer recess, is expected in late September to consider whether it will hear her appeal. Her lawyers argue that a 2007 non-prosecution agreement reached between Epstein and federal prosecutors in Florida should have protected his associates, including Maxwell, from future charges brought in other jurisdictions.

Legal analysts say the appeal hinges on a contentious point in US law. Mitchell Epner, a former federal prosecutor, noted that the question of whether one US attorney's plea deal binds all federal prosecutors has split opinion across the country's appeals courts.

"There's a legitimate disagreement among the circuits," Epner said. "The Supreme Court may decide to step in because it's an unresolved legal issue with serious implications."

Markus, speaking again after Friday's session, remained vague about what might come next but emphasised Maxwell's willingness to talk. "We don't know how this will play out. But this is the first time she's ever been given the opportunity to answer questions about what happened. The truth will come out and she's the one answering the questions."

Despite these developments, the federal judge who oversaw Maxwell's trial and prosecutors have maintained that she gave multiple false statements under oath and has failed to accept responsibility for her actions. Markus, however, insists otherwise: "People have questioned her honesty, which I think is just wrong."

The Supreme Court is expected to make its decision on whether to hear Maxwell's case later this year.

27-year-old man kills self, four others in Manhattan skyscraper

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A gunman opened fire inside a Manhattan skyscraper on Monday evening, killing four people, including an off-duty New York police officer, before turning the gun on himself.

Authorities confirmed the attack occurred at 345 Park Avenue, a highrise that houses the headquarters of the National Football League (NFL) and several prominent financial firms.

The shooter, identified as 27 year old Shane Tamura of Las Vegas, reportedly drove cross-country before arriving in New York earlier in the day. According to New York City Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch, Tamura had a documented history of mental illness and was found dead at the scene after taking his own life with an assault rifle.

Among the victims was NYPD officer Didarul Islam, a Bangladeshi immigrant, father of two, and husband to a pregnant wife. He had been working as a security guard during off-hours at the time of the attack. New York Mayor Eric Adams called him a “true blue hero”.

The identities of the other victims, two men and a woman, have not yet been released. A fourth male victim was critically wounded and remains in hospital “fighting for his life”, according to city officials.

The shooting spree began during the evening rush hour. Surveillance footage shows the assailant exiting a black BMW that was double-parked between 51st and 52nd streets, before entering the lobby of the Park Avenue tower and opening fire. One witness said the gunman allowed a woman to exit the elevator before proceeding to the 33rd floor, where he continued the attack inside the



offices of Rudin Management Company, a leading New York real estate firm.

After shooting another victim on that floor, Tamura entered a stairwell and fatally shot himself, police said. Law enforcement recovered additional weapons and a prescription bottle bearing Tamura’s name from his vehicle.

Tamura is believed to have driven from Las Vegas to New York, making stops in Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, and finally New Jersey shortly before arriving in Manhattan.

Police have ruled the incident as isolated, with no indication that Tamura acted in concert with others. Commissioner Tisch confirmed the shooter acted alone and had no known ties to any of the victims or organisations housed in the building.

Police respond to Manhattan shooting

The shooting prompted a heavy police response, with the area around the building locked down and staff ordered to shelter in place. An internal NFL security alert instructed employees to hide and silence their

phones until police cleared the building.

“I just saw a lot of commotion, cops everywhere, and people screaming,” said Russ McGee, a 31 year old sports bettor working out in a nearby gym.

The highrise building spans an entire city block and houses major tenants including the NFL, JP Morgan Chase, Blackstone, and other financial giants.

US House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries expressed his condolences, calling the event a “horrific shooting” and offering prayers for the NYPD officer’s family. “May God watch over our city during this challenging moment,” he posted on social media.

The tragedy marks the 254th mass shooting in the United States this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive, which defines a mass shooting as an incident in which four or more people, excluding the shooter, are injured or killed by gunfire.

The investigation remains ongoing.

Australia bans under-16s from having YouTube accounts December

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Children under the age of 16 will be banned from having YouTube accounts from December, following a major policy reversal by the Albanese government. The Google-owned platform had previously been exempt from Australia's national under-16s social media ban, but will now be included alongside other major services such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat.

The change will be formally announced on Wednesday by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Communications Minister Anika Wells. It follows advice from the eSafety commissioner, who warned that YouTube poses a significant risk to young users despite operating differently from traditional social media platforms.

Minister Wells said the government's decision was driven by concerns over predatory algorithms and harmful content targeting children online.

"The Albanese government is giving kids a reprieve from the persuasive and pervasive pull of social media while giving parents peace of mind," she said. "There's a place for social media, but there's not a place for predatory algorithms targeting children."

YouTube, which had previously been granted a carveout by former Communications Minister Michelle Rowland, is expected to push back strongly against the inclusion. The platform had argued it functions more as a video-sharing site than a social media network. However, criticism from rival platforms, who labelled the exemption a "sweetheart deal" prompted renewed scrutiny. TikTok described the initial carveout as "irrational and indefensible".

The eSafety commissioner, Julie Inman Grant, recently cited a study involving 2,600 children that found nearly four in ten reported exposure to harmful content on YouTube, more than any



other platform.

While the legislation prevents children under 16 from creating accounts, it does not block access to content entirely; users can still watch videos without logging in.

From December, platforms will face fines of up to \$49.5 million if they fail to take "reasonable steps" to prevent underage users from opening accounts. However, many tech companies have expressed concern over the vague legal language and a lack of guidance on what constitutes "reasonable steps". The government has promised to provide further details in the coming months.

PM defends decision on YouTube

Albanese defended the decision, saying social media platforms had a "social responsibility".

"Social media is doing social harm to our children, and I want Australian parents to know that we have their backs," he said. "We're making this decision independently of any threats from tech companies."

YouTube had warned it would consider legal action if included in the ban, stating it provides "benefit and value to

younger Australians". The company is expected to make its position clear at its annual "Google at Parliament House" event on Wednesday evening. The high-profile function, featuring performances by The Rubens and appearances by popular YouTube creators like the Mik Maks and Never Too Small, is widely attended by MPs and political staffers.

In contrast to social media platforms, the government has confirmed that online gaming services, messaging apps, and health-related platforms such as Kids Helpline's MyCircle and Google Classroom will not fall under the ban. These services are considered to serve essential educational or mental health functions.

Wells said the new rules are a step in the right direction, even if not a perfect solution.

"We want kids to know who they are before platforms assume who they are," she said. "There is no one perfect solution when it comes to keeping young Australians safer online but the social media minimum age will make a significantly positive difference to their wellbeing."

Labour MPs urge Starmer to abandon EU net zero agreement

By **Fatimah Idera**



Sir Keir Starmer is under growing pressure to abandon plans to align the UK's carbon trading system with the European Union's, as MPs warn the move could damage British industry and raise energy costs.

A cross-party group of MPs, including two Labour backbenchers, has written to the government raising concerns about proposals to link the UK's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) with its EU counterpart. The MPs argue that the plan, part of a wider post-Brexit reset with Brussels, could increase costs for UK businesses and hand regulatory control to the EU.

Under the ETS, companies must buy carbon credits to offset their emissions. While the UK and EU previously operated a joint system, they have run separate markets since Brexit. UK carbon credits currently trade at a significant discount to those in the EU, making production cheaper for domestic industries.

The MPs argue that aligning the two schemes would force British companies to pay EU-level prices, raising production costs and risking job losses and factory closures. They also warned that dynamic alignment automatically adopting EU changes to the scheme would turn the UK into a rule-taker with no input in future decisions.

In their letter to EU relations minister Nick Thomas-Symonds, the MPs called on the government to set red lines in negotiations and retain full decision-making power over the UK's carbon market.

Henry Tufnell, chair of the Commission for Carbon Competitiveness, said a link should only happen once prices between the two markets are comparable. "We support closer cooperation with the EU, but UK industry must be protected," he said. "Giving control to the EU would limit our ability to respond to changing circumstances and harm our competitiveness."

The warnings follow a report in The Telegraph suggesting the EU-UK ETS link could increase household energy bills. Gas-fired power stations major contributors to electricity generation would be forced to buy pricier EU carbon credits, with costs likely passed on to consumers. Conservative MP Nick Timothy estimated the changes could add £112 a year to household energy bills.

Despite the criticism, the government defended the proposed link. A spokesperson said the move would create a larger, more efficient carbon market, attract investment in green technologies, and exempt UK firms from EU carbon border taxes on £7 billion worth of exports.

"We are not re-joining the single market," the spokesperson added. "Any final agreement will preserve the UK's right to shape the rules and act in our national interest."

UK food prices climb faster than overall inflation

By **Fatimah Idera**



Households in the United Kingdom are facing steeper weekly shopping bills as food prices rise faster than overall inflation, driven by higher costs for essentials like beef and teabags.

According to the British Retail Consortium (BRC), food price inflation jumped to 4% in July, the highest level since February 2023. This outpaces the UK's overall inflation rate, which rose to 3.6% in the year to June, up from 3.4% in May, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The ONS said that the inflation increase was largely fuelled by rising costs in food and fuel. Despite this, inflation remains well above the Bank of England's 2% target.

BRC chief executive Helen Dickinson highlighted that staples such as meat and tea have been particularly affected due to tighter global supply chains. Retailers are also passing on rising labour costs following changes

introduced in the Chancellor's October Budget, which came into effect in April.

Call for govt intervention on inflation Dickinson urged the government to consider the impact of further tax rises, warning that they would add to household costs. "Further tax rises will ultimately hurt households, locking in inflation and forcing people to pay higher prices to put food on the table," she said.

July marked the sixth consecutive month of rising food inflation. As food is a major part of household spending, families are becoming increasingly sensitive to price changes.

Mike Watkins of data firm NielsenIQ noted that household budgets are under growing pressure as food prices continue to rise above the Consumer Prices Index.

However, he added that consumers could still save money through promotional offers and by shopping

around.

"High street retailers will also be concerned about customer retention over the summer holidays if they are to maintain sales momentum," Watkins said.

Overall shop price inflation rose to 0.7% in July, up from 0.4% in June. Non-food prices continued to fall, dropping by 1% in July thanks to summer sales in clothing and furniture, compared with a 1.2% decline in June.

Retailers are also bracing for additional cost pressures from a new packaging tax set to come into effect later this year. The levy, which charges companies based on the weight of packaging materials like glass, plastic, and aluminium, has raised concerns it could increase costs for businesses and lead to higher prices for consumers without significantly improving recycling rates.

IMF urges UK to implement further interest rate cuts

By **Fatimah Idera**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has called on the Bank of England to cut interest rates at least two more times this year, warning that Britain's economy remains fragile following Chancellor Rachel Reeves's sweeping tax hikes.

In its latest World Economic Outlook, the IMF said interest rates should be lowered from their current level of 4.25% to support growth. The UK central bank has already reduced rates twice this year but is now expected to pause before potentially resuming cuts later in 2025.

The Fund warned that fiscal tightening at home, combined with global uncertainty including concerns over Donald Trump's potential trade policies could trigger renewed financial market volatility. Risks are tilted to the downside, it noted. "Larger fiscal deficits or increased risk aversion could raise long-term interest rates and tighten global financial conditions. Combined with fragmentation concerns, this could reignite volatility in financial markets."

The IMF highlighted that although Mr Trump's tariffs have been lower than previously threatened, uncertainty over future U.S. trade direction continues to cloud the global economic outlook. A rush in global trade activity at the start of the year, as firms sought to avoid possible new levies, helped boost short-term growth.

Despite the challenges, the IMF has slightly upgraded its forecast for UK economic growth in 2025 to 1.2%, while maintaining its 2026 forecast at 1.4%. Global growth is projected at 3% for 2025 and 3.1% in 2026, buoyed by easing trade tensions.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves welcomed the forecast, saying it confirmed that



the UK remains the fastest-growing G7 economy in Europe, despite broader global pressures.

However, the IMF also cautioned that monetary easing globally would likely proceed more slowly than previously expected. It forecasts that the Bank of England will make around two additional rate cuts this year, depending on economic data.

Meanwhile, concerns are mounting at home over the impact of recent fiscal policy. Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey recently warned that tax changes introduced in Ms Reeves's October Budget particularly to National Insurance contributions are hurting employment and wage growth. "Companies are adjusting employment and hours, and also having pay rises that are possibly less than they would have been if the NICs change hadn't happened," he said.

The IMF also recently suggested that the UK Government may soon be forced to consider politically difficult measures to support the NHS and balance the budget. These include

higher taxes on working-age people, ending the pension triple lock, or introducing charges for NHS services.

Shadow Chancellor Mel Stride criticised the Labour Government's economic strategy, claiming growth under Labour is going nowhere. He warned that Reeves may raise taxes by as much as £20 billion this autumn. "You can't tax your way to growth," he said. "We need to back British businesses and workers."

Globally, the IMF suggested that the U.S. Federal Reserve may face more constraints in cutting rates, potentially setting up a confrontation with Donald Trump, who has repeatedly pressured Fed Chair Jerome Powell to loosen policy. Inflation in the U.S. is expected to remain above the Fed's 2% target, while other major economies are projected to see more subdued price increases.

"Monetary policy rates in the United Kingdom and the United States are expected to decline in the second half of 2025, though at varying speeds," the IMF said.

Over 30 killed in Beijing floods

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

More than 30 people have died and tens of thousands have been displaced following days of relentless rainfall and severe flooding in Beijing and its neighbouring regions, according to Chinese state media.

State broadcaster CCTV reported that 28 people were confirmed dead in the Miyun district on the city's northern outskirts, with an additional two fatalities in Yanqing district as of midnight on Monday. Both districts lie far from central Beijing but were among the worst-hit areas during the downpour.

In neighbouring Hebei province, a landslide on Monday killed four individuals, while eight others remain missing. Torrential rain began over the weekend and intensified throughout Monday, causing widespread destruction across northern China.

According to the official Xinhua news agency, Beijing recorded rainfall of up to 543.4mm in its northern districts. The downpour forced the relocation of 80,322 residents from flood-prone areas. Roads were washed out, communication infrastructure was damaged, and 136 villages were left without electricity by Monday night.

Chinese President Xi Jinping ordered an "all-out" search and rescue operation, calling for efforts to minimise further casualties. Premier Li Qiang confirmed that there had been "significant casualties" in Miyun.

Beijing authorities raised the city's rain and flood alerts to their highest level on Monday, urging residents to remain indoors. The capital also activated a top-level emergency response, suspending schools, halting construction projects, and cancelling outdoor tourism activities.



In response to the rising water levels, authorities released water from the Miyun reservoir, which had reached its highest point since construction was completed in 1959. More than 730 million cubic metres of water had flowed into the reservoir by Tuesday morning, prompting officials to warn residents to avoid downstream rivers as further rainfall was forecast.

In Miyun, floodwaters overturned cars and downed power poles. In Taishitun, a town roughly 100km northeast of central Beijing, flood damage left the streets coated in thick mud and uprooted trees piled along roadsides.

"The flood came rushing in, just like that, so fast and suddenly," said Zhuang Zhelin, a local shopkeeper clearing mud with his family. "In no time at all, the place was filling up."

The heaviest rainfall was expected in the early hours of Tuesday, with up to 30cm forecast in some areas.

The disaster echoes the deadly floods of 2023, which also devastated Beijing and Hebei, killing dozens and displacing nearly one million people. At the time, the government faced backlash for allegedly directing floodwaters away from the capital, leading to increased destruction in surrounding provinces.

In a statement, the central government announced an emergency fund of 50 million yuan (approximately £5.5 million) to support recovery efforts in Hebei and said a high-level emergency response team had been dispatched to the region.

Experts warn that human-driven climate change is intensifying extreme weather events globally, fuelling more frequent and more deadly natural disasters. Scientists say many of the most catastrophic weather incidents in recent years, ranging from heatwaves to wildfires and floods, would have been virtually impossible without the influence of global warming.

Nigeria triumphs, WAFCON 2024 Highlights big issues

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Nigeria made history in Rabat on Saturday night, claiming a record-extending 10th Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) title in dramatic fashion. The Super Falcons came from two goals down at half-time to defeat hosts Morocco in a pulsating final, earning not only continental glory but a \$1m prize after CAF boosted the tournament's prize pool.

Captain Rasheedat Ajibade, who lifted the trophy and was later named Player of the Tournament, led a squad that had to overcome both fierce opponents and persistent institutional challenges. But beyond Nigeria's heroics, WAFCON 2024 shed light on pressing issues still hindering the growth of women's football in Africa.

Empty Seats and Scheduling Concerns

Despite the passionate home support for Morocco, whose matches saw packed crowds at the smaller Olympic Stadium, overall attendances were disappointing. The much larger Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium — which previously hosted over 50,000 fans — was unavailable due to renovations for the 2025 men's AFCON.

Games not involving the host nation drew sparse audiences, revealing a lack of promotion and minimal signage in the cities. Travel costs also restricted visiting support from other African nations. Moreover, the tournament's timing clashed with the 2025 UEFA European Championship, reducing international media coverage.

CAF general secretary Veron Mosengo-Omba urged patience: "Europe took 25-30 years to reach this level. We need time, but we have the potential."

Improved Competition on the Pitch

The football on show was more competitive than ever. Algeria advanced to the knockout stages for the first time without conceding, and Senegal took defending champions South Africa to penalties. Tanzania earned their first point in WAFCON history, holding



South Africa in the group stage despite an 83-place gap in FIFA rankings.

However, CAF remains cautious about expanding the 12-team tournament until consistency is seen across all nations. Mosengo-Omba also stressed the need to reinforce domestic leagues and improve the Women's Champions League, which remains an eight-team, two-week tournament.

Calls for Equality and Fair Treatment

Inequality between men's and women's football in Africa was again thrust into the spotlight. Nigeria's players were moved after captain Ajibade criticised their accommodation, while both South Africa and DR Congo faced disputes over bonuses and allowances.

Despite a 45% prize pool increase, WAFCON 2024 still pales in comparison to the men's AFCON. Ivory Coast earned \$7m for winning the 2023 edition, while Nigeria's men received \$4m as runners-up. In contrast, Morocco, as women's runners-up, took home just \$500,000.

Former Super Falcons striker Desire Oparanozie was blunt: "The discrepancy is as big as the ocean. We're winning more and still earning far less."

Investment the Key to Progress

Morocco continues to lead the way in supporting women's football. With heavy investment from King Mohammed VI, the Royal Moroccan Football Federation (RMFF) provides \$500 monthly for each top-flight player, aiming to build the best women's league on the continent.

However, most African countries lack such resources and depend on CAF and FIFA funds. Morocco's support has yet to yield a major trophy, but their continued investment may eventually shift the balance.

CAF is now looking to secure commercial partnerships for the women's game. Some sponsors of the men's tournament have shown interest in expanding into WAFCON. Players like Ghana's Chantelle Boye-Hlorkah say more visibility will bring better pay: "Football is a business. More fans, more broadcast views, more shirt sales — it all adds up."

With the next WAFCON scheduled for March 2026, Morocco will once again host, giving African women's football another shot at setting new standards — both on and off the pitch.

Al-Nassr seal £43.7m deal for Chelsea's Joao Felix

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Saudi Pro League side Al-Nassr have agreed a deal worth up to £43.7 million for Chelsea forward Joao Felix, marking another high-profile addition to the league and reuniting the Portuguese international with compatriot Cristiano Ronaldo.

Felix, 25, has been granted permission to travel to Riyadh to undergo a medical ahead of completing the move. The deal signals the end of the forward's brief spell with Chelsea, who paid Atletico Madrid £45 million to sign him permanently last summer following a previous loan spell.

Al-Nassr's offer fended off strong competition from former club Benfica, who were keen to bring Felix back to Lisbon but ultimately failed to match the financial terms offered by the Saudi club. The move further strengthens Al-Nassr's Portuguese connection, with the former Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo playing a key role in persuading Felix to make the switch.

The transfer represents a break-even point for Chelsea financially, having also loaned Felix to AC Milan in January for a £5 million fee. While his numbers at Stamford Bridge were modest—11 goals in 40 appearances—his technical ability and flair were evident in spells. Still, Chelsea have opted to move him on as they undergo a significant squad rebuild this summer.

The Blues, fresh off their Club World Cup triumph earlier this month, are under pressure to balance the books amid scrutiny from UEFA's Financial Fair Play (FFP) regulations. The club was previously fined £27 million and has been warned to maintain a positive net transfer balance this window or risk limitations on registering new signings for the Champions League.

So far, Chelsea have raised close to



£130 million in player sales. In addition to Felix, they have offloaded both goalkeepers Djordje Petrovic and Kepa Arrizabalaga, as well as winger Noni Madueke. More departures are expected, with players such as Raheem Sterling, Ben Chilwell, Renato Veiga, and Armando Broja reportedly on the market.

At the same time, Chelsea have been active in the market. The West London side have spent approximately £212 million this summer, bringing in striker Liam Delap, winger Jamie Gittens, and Brazilian forward Joao Pedro. They remain interested in signing midfielder Xavi Simons and highly-rated Dutch defender Jorrel Hato.

Felix's exit is part of a broader restructuring under Chelsea's current management, as the club looks to transition from a bloated and inconsistent squad to a more youthful and dynamic one. Despite his undoubted talent, Felix never fully settled into Chelsea's system, with injuries and tactical shifts limiting his impact.

New chapter for Felix

The move to Saudi Arabia represents a new chapter for Felix, who burst onto the European scene as a teenager at Benfica and was once seen as one of the continent's most promising attacking talents. His £113 million move to Atletico Madrid in 2019 was, at the time, one of the most expensive in football history, but his career has since stalled amid inconsistency and a lack of a defined role.

At Al-Nassr, Felix will join a growing roster of European stars who have opted for the Saudi Pro League, drawn by both financial incentives and the ambition of clubs in the region. The presence of Ronaldo, who continues to be a central figure at the club, is likely to aid his integration both on and off the pitch.

As Felix prepares to begin this new chapter, Chelsea will continue reshaping their squad under financial scrutiny, with the hope of building a team capable of challenging both domestically and in Europe—while staying within the bounds of UEFA's financial regulations.