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Shettima: Cassava to drive Nigeria's industrial growth, cut imports **Pg 5**



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Coalition politicians driven by hatred for Tinubu, not national interest - Onanuga

By Damilola Olufemi



Bayo Onanuga, President Bola Tinubu's special adviser on information and strategy, has dismissed the newly formed opposition coalition, describing its members as power-hungry politicians united solely by their disdain for Tinubu.

In a post shared on X (formerly Twitter) on Thursday, Onanuga said most of the politicians who recently aligned with the African Democratic Congress (ADC) had long distanced themselves from the All Progressives Congress (APC).

"Their exit happened months and even years ago," he wrote, reacting to the coalition's Tuesday meeting where the ADC was adopted as its official platform for the 2027 general election.

At the gathering, former Senate President David Mark and ex-Osun State Governor Rauf Aregbesola were announced as interim national chairman and national secretary of the ADC.

On Wednesday, the coalition was formally unveiled in Abuja, drawing a crowd of prominent political figures, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, 2023 Labour Party

presidential candidate Peter Obi, former governors Aminu Tambuwal, Liyel Imoke, and Rotimi Amaechi, as well as ex-ministers Solomon Dalung and Abubakar Malami.

Others present included former APC chairman John Odigie Oyejún, publisher Dele Momodu, senators Ireti Kingibe and Eyinnanya Abaribe, and several others with past ties to the APC.

Onanuga downplays significance of their defection

Onanuga, however, downplayed the significance of their defection, insisting the APC won't lose sleep over their departure.

"Rotimi Amaechi's soul left the APC in 2022 after he lost the presidential primary to President Tinubu," he said. "Abubakar Malami, the former Attorney-General, has been estranged from the APC since Tinubu became president and since his failed Kebbi governorship bid."

He also aimed at Hadi Sirika, saying the former aviation minister — now aligned with the ADC — is currently on trial for alleged contract fraud.

On Aregbesola, Onanuga said: "The renegade Rauf Aregbesola committed anti-party activities in the last Osun election and was expelled for being an unfit APC member."

He also described other defectors like Kashim Imam and Chief John Oyejún as disgruntled elements trying to rebrand themselves as national saviours.

"Kashim Imam walked away from the APC after failing to land the VP ticket in 2022, and Oyejún, who once led the party, has long lost interest in it and has been involved with this coalition from the start," he noted.

Onanuga urged Nigerians to be vigilant and not fall for what he called an opportunistic alliance.

"My advice to Nigerians: Shine your eyes very well," he warned. "A political party without a clear agenda or ideology — whose only unifying factor is hatred for President Tinubu — can't be good for our country. It will only set us back by decades."

"These politicians are desperados, hungry for power, not for the benefit of Nigerians but for themselves."

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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
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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
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Tinubu: My administration is changing Nigeria's infrastructure story

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has said that his administration is transforming the narrative of infrastructure development across Nigeria through the delivery of tangible, people-focused projects.

He spoke yesterday during the commissioning of the dualised and upgraded Ushafa to War College/Army Checkpoint roads and other ancillary roads in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Mr Tinubu, represented by Vice President Kashim Shettima, reaffirmed his government's commitment to building a Nigeria where communities are connected, businesses can thrive, and citizens can enjoy lives of dignity and opportunity.

The President described the recently commissioned projects as a clear demonstration of his administration's dedication to inclusive growth and sustainable development.

"We have transformed a path of frustration into a corridor of opportunity," Mr Tinubu said.

"These dualised and upgraded roads will not only ease traffic congestion but will also revitalise economic activities, improve access to education and healthcare, and significantly enhance the quality of life for the people of Ushafa, Bwari, and neighbouring communities."

Mr Tinubu highlighted the importance of awarding the road contract to an indigenous construction company, stressing his confidence in the competence and



resilience of Nigerian professionals.

"We are not just building roads; we are building capacity, creating jobs, and fostering a sense of ownership and pride within our communities. Most importantly, we are showing that Nigerian contractors, when given the right support, can deliver world-class infrastructure," he added.

Also speaking at the event, Minister of the FCT, Nyesom Wike, described the pace of project commissioning in the FCT as unprecedented, attributing it to Mr Tinubu's love and concern for the people living in satellite towns.

Mr Wike noted that improved road infrastructure was key to unlocking the economic potential of these areas and enhancing the livelihoods of their residents.

He praised the indigenous contractor for its professionalism and commitment to delivering a high-

quality project.

Minister of State for FCT, Mariya Mahmoud, expressed gratitude to the President and Mr Shettima for driving the transformation of FCT's satellite towns, noting that the newly commissioned roads would not only improve daily life but also position the region for sustainable development.

Abdulkadir Zulkiflu, Coordinator of the Satellite Town Development Department (STDD), also commended Mr Tinubu for prioritising infrastructure in the satellite towns, adding that residents of these areas fully support his administration.

The commissioned project includes the dualisation and upgrade of the 16.4-kilometre Ushafa to War College/Army Checkpoint roads, along with several other ancillary roads within the Bwari Area Council.

Shettima: Cassava to drive Nigeria's industrial growth, cut imports

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has declared that cassava is now central to Nigeria's industrial development and import substitution agenda under President Bola Tinubu's administration.

Speaking in Abuja on Thursday during the 2025 World Cassava Day celebration, Mr Shettima said the Federal Government had repositioned cassava production to serve as a catalyst for economic growth, rural development, and national food and energy security.

He noted that the administration is shifting from subsidy-driven policies to investment-led initiatives.

He emphasised the government's commitment to prioritising private sector capital, scientific research, and coordinated efforts across government agencies, academic institutions, and development partners to advance cassava mechanisation, processing, and full-scale commercialisation.

"Cassava, once seen as a crop for food security, now holds the promise of prosperity," Mr Shettima said.

"We are moving from just growing cassava to transforming it into a profitable, value-driven sector. Nigeria must lead not just in tonnes harvested, but in value created."

This year's World Cassava Day, themed 'Farm to Global Markets: Driving Industrialisation, Food Security and Exports', highlighted the need to expand cassava's role beyond local consumption to the global marketplace.

Mr Shettima identified cassava as a versatile agricultural asset, with applications spanning food, animal feed, biofuels, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and even construction.

He cited the administration's Cassava Bioethanol Project as a key initiative expected to save the country over N3 trillion annually by reducing reliance on



imported fuel additives.

The project also aims to promote a circular economy by converting cassava by-products into energy, fertilisers, and industrial raw materials.

"This is how nations rise. What was once waste will become wealth. But we must move beyond plans to delivering tangible results. The world will remember our outcomes, not our intentions", Mr Shettima said.

He commended the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and other partners for their contributions to agricultural innovation, particularly in cassava seed multiplication through the Semi-Autotrophic Hydroponic system.

He also praised Nigeria's collaboration with Brazil in advancing cassava research, describing it as a testament to what can be achieved when ambition meets political will.

Highlighting the critical role of young people, Mr Shettima said Nigeria's youth must be empowered not only to farm cassava but to innovate and lead its transformation, just as they have done in fintech and agritech sectors.

Also speaking, the Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Aliyu Abdullahi, reaffirmed the government's

dedication to accelerating cassava sector growth through targeted interventions.

The Minister of Innovation, Science, and Technology, Uche Nnaji, underscored cassava's industrial potential and pledged the ministry's support for research partnerships and value chain development.

Kingsley Uzoma, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Agribusiness and Productivity Enhancement, said the celebration of World Cassava Day underscores the government's vision to put cassava at the centre of Nigeria's socio-economic transformation.

In his goodwill message, Alain-Thierry Mbongue, Regional Chief Operating Officer of Afreximbank, called on stakeholders to embrace cassava's potential to drive job creation, industrial growth, and foreign exchange earnings.

He also reiterated the bank's ongoing support for Nigeria's agricultural revolution.

Other goodwill messages came from the Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, Yu Dunhai, the IFAD Country Director, Dede Ekoue, and representatives of Agbayewa Farms, Cavista Holdings, and other development partners.

Obi say ADC coalition will prioritise Nigerians

By **Damilola Olufemi**

Former Labour Party presidential candidate, Peter Obi, has declared that the newly formed opposition coalition under the African Democratic Congress (ADC) is fully committed to putting Nigerians first in all its decisions and actions.

Obi, in a post shared on X on Thursday, reiterated his endorsement of the coalition's choice of the ADC as its unifying platform ahead of the 2027 general elections. According to him, the move is driven by a shared resolve to offer Nigeria a leadership rooted in competence, capacity, and compassion.

"The coalition members formally adopted the African Democratic Congress (ADC) for the 2027 Nigeria General Elections," Obi stated, noting the appointments of Senator David Mark as National Chairman and former Osun State Governor Rauf Aregbesola as National Secretary.

Obi explained that the decision followed "deep reflection" on the country's deteriorating state and the urgent need for a new leadership approach. "Our commitment is to sacrifice and work together towards the 2027 General



Elections, ensuring that Nigeria gets a competent, capable, and compassionate leadership that will prioritise the nation's future by putting the welfare of Nigerians first," he wrote.

Obi says collaboration essential

Emphasising unity among the opposition, Obi said collaboration is essential if meaningful change is to be achieved.

"No one group can change Nigeria alone," he said. "To dismantle the structures that keep our people in poverty and insecurity, we must build bridges, not walls, even

when those bridges are uneasy."

The coalition, comprising several influential political figures — including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Peter Obi, and other opposition leaders — officially launched the ADC as its collective platform at an event held Wednesday at the Yar'Adua Centre in Abuja.

The alliance aims to mount a strong challenge against President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid in 2027, promising a fresh alternative focused on the people's needs and the country's future.

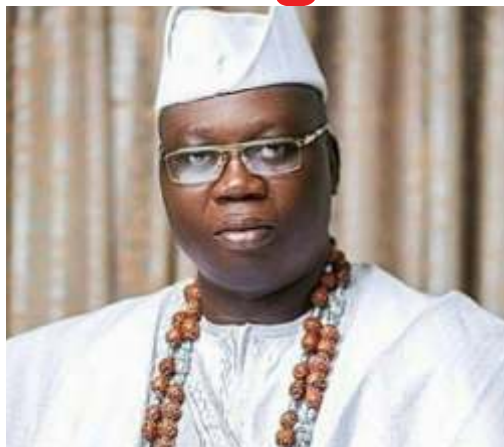
Alleged defamation: Gani Adams loses N5bn suit against Igboho

By **Alade Adisa**

The N5 billion defamation suit filed by Chief Gani Adams against Chief Sunday Adeyemo, popularly known as Sunday Igboho, has been thrown out by a Oyo State High Court sitting in Ibadan.

The court, presided over by Justice O.T Adekola-Salami, on Thursday threw out the matter.

The case was marked M/1006/2004 and Adams, represented by his counsel, Sikiru Akinrele, claimed that Igboho had violated his fundamental rights by allegedly recording a private telephone conversation without his, Adams's, consent.



He argued that this breach of privacy contravened Section 37 of the 1999 Constitution, as amended.

However, when the case was heard on April 30, 2025, Igboho's counsel, Junaid Sanusi, filed a counter-affidavit opposing Adams' claims.

He told the court that Adams did not personally submit the affidavit supporting his application, which is required by law.

In a ruling delivered on Thursday, Justice Ademola-Salami dismissed the suit, stating that Adams' affidavit was defective as it had not been personally deposed by him or someone authorised by him.

The judge also awarded N500,000 costs against Adams.

Tinubu urges Nigerians in Saint Lucia to uphold good conduct

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has called on Nigerians living in Saint Lucia to continue to be law-abiding and serve as worthy ambassadors of their country.

He made this appeal during his ongoing state visit to the Caribbean nation, where he met with members of the Nigerian community for the second consecutive day.

Addressing the gathering yesterday in the Windjammer Resort, Mr Tinubu commended Nigerians in Saint Lucia for their positive reputation and contributions to the local society.

He urged them to maintain good character and avoid any actions that could bring disrepute to Nigeria.

“My plea to you all: continue to be of good behaviour; don’t break the law,” he said.

The President, who had earlier interacted with the Nigerian community on Tuesday at the official residence of Saint Lucia’s Prime Minister, Philip Pierre, assured them of his government’s support and promised to address some of their concerns through diplomatic channels.

The meeting, organised by the Chairman of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), Abike Dabiri-Erewa, brought together Nigerian professionals, students, and business people residing in Saint Lucia.

Ms Dabiri-Erewa commended the diaspora community for their achievements and expressed hope that they would continue to maintain strong ties with Nigeria.

Smart Okeudili Duah, President of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) in Saint Lucia, highlighted the challenges faced by Nigerians in the country, particularly the high cost of work permits, which currently



stands at \$2,500 annually.

He also appealed for the establishment of a Nigerian diplomatic mission in Saint Lucia, a request Mr Tinubu confirmed is already in progress.

Father Festus Iwuagwu, a Nigerian priest in Saint Lucia, expressed delight at the President’s visit, noting the impressive turnout as a sign of the respect Nigerians have for Tinubu.

Also speaking at the event, Olugbemisola Ogunlusi, a paediatrician who migrated to Saint Lucia 19 years ago, expressed appreciation for the President’s engagement with the Nigerian community.

She praised his efforts in promoting Nigeria’s image abroad and wished him a safe return home.

Reflecting on his personal experience as a student in the United States over five decades ago, Mr Tinubu encouraged Nigerians in the diaspora to remain dedicated and resilient in their pursuits.

“Life is about working hard and being

consistent. For the professionals living here, our government will not abandon you. But you must work hard. It is our job to help you succeed,” he assured.

Mr Tinubu also briefed the audience on his administration’s economic reforms aimed at stabilising Nigeria’s economy.

He said his government inherited a nation on the brink of bankruptcy but has since taken decisive steps to revive it.

“We have made the smuggling of our oil unattractive. We have stopped chasing forex papers at the Central Bank of Nigeria. Nigeria has recovered,” he declared.

The President acknowledged that Nigeria’s per capita income remains low but stressed that his government is working to improve living standards.

In a show of appreciation, the Nigerian community presented Mr Tinubu with a portrait crafted by Doris, a medical student and talented artist.

Wike alleges Atiku, David Mark left PDP over failed leadership takeover

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, has alleged that former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, ex-Senate President David Mark, and other key political figures exited the People's Democratic Party (PDP) after failing in their attempts to assume control of the party's leadership structure.

Wike made the assertion during a media chat with journalists on Thursday in Abuja.

According to the minister, David Mark had aspired to become the national chairman of the PDP but was denied the position.

This, Wike claimed, prompted the former Senate President to defect

to the African Democratic Congress (ADC), which has recently emerged as a platform for a new opposition coalition.

“David Mark wanted to be PDP chairman, and because he didn't get it, he left for ADC,” Wike stated.

He urged Nigerians to critically examine the motives behind the newly formed opposition coalition, describing its members as individuals embittered by their loss of political power.

“Nigerians need to be careful of these group of Nigerians who are angry because they left power,” Wike said.

“Nigerians know everybody. For

how long would you continue to deceive them? Who would want to give listening to these kind of people?”

Wike further claimed that the opposition had effectively weakened itself in the run-up to the 2027 general elections.

“The opposition has decimated themselves,” he added.

The comments come in the wake of a recent political realignment in which Atiku Abubakar, David Mark, and other notable figures formally adopted the African Democratic Congress as their new political platform, with the aim of challenging President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the forthcoming 2027 presidential elections.

Super Eagles legend Peter Rufai dies at 61, tributes pour in

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



Nigeria is mourning the loss of one of its greatest football icons as Peter Rufai, legendary goalkeeper and 1994 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) champion, has passed away at the age of 61.

The news of Rufai's death broke early Thursday, sparking an outpouring of grief from fans, former teammates, and the Nigerian football community. The Super Eagles, Nigeria's national football team, confirmed the tragic news in a statement posted on X (formerly Twitter).

"Forever in our hearts, Dodo Mayana. We mourn the passing of legendary Super Eagles goalkeeper, Peter Rufai, a giant of Nigerian football and a 1994 AFCON champion," the post read.

Fondly known as "Dodo Mayana," Rufai was widely regarded as one of the finest goalkeepers to ever wear the green and white. His calm presence, shot-stopping ability, and leadership on the

pitch earned him a revered status among fans and players alike.

Rufai was an integral part of the historic Nigerian squad that won the 1994 Africa Cup of Nations in Tunisia, defeating Zambia in the final. Later that same year, he helped Nigeria qualify for its first-ever appearance at the FIFA World Cup, hosted in the United States, where the Super Eagles made a memorable run to the Round of 16.

Throughout his career, Rufai represented Nigeria in over 60 international appearances, spanning from the late 1980s into the mid-1990s. His club career saw him play in both domestic and international leagues, including stints in Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain, where he became one of the first Nigerian goalkeepers to play in Europe at a high level.

In their tribute, the Super Eagles praised not only Rufai's contributions on the

field but also his lasting impact on the next generation of Nigerian footballers.

"Your legacy lives on between the sticks and beyond. Rest well, Peter Rufai," the team added.

Beyond football, Rufai was known for his disciplined lifestyle, professionalism, and post-retirement work in youth football development and mentorship.

As Nigerians continue to pay tribute, plans for an official memorial are expected to be announced by the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) in the coming days. Meanwhile, fans across the nation remember him as a symbol of Nigerian football pride and excellence.

Peter Rufai is survived by his wife and children.

May his soul rest in peace.

PDP in crisis as APC dismisses 'desperate' coalition plot

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

As Nigeria edges closer to the 2027 general elections, deepening cracks within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) are becoming increasingly visible. Amid internal disarray and a wave of defections, the opposition party has denied involvement in a growing coalition movement aimed at unseating President Bola Tinubu, a move that has drawn harsh criticism from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

In a statement released Wednesday, PDP's National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba, refuted claims that the party had formally endorsed the coalition being led by the African Democratic Congress (ADC). The clarification comes as multiple media reports suggested the PDP was aligning with the ADC and other opposition parties to challenge the APC's dominance in 2027.

"The PDP has not taken any official position on the issue of the coalition," Ologunagba said.

"Our focus remains on rebuilding our internal structure and preparing for the upcoming National Convention."

This statement comes on the heels of a prolonged leadership dispute within the PDP, which was only recently resolved in favour of Samuel Anyanwu during the party's 100th National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting on Monday.

High-Profile Defections Deepen PDP's Crisis

Despite leadership claims of unity, the PDP continues to bleed members. Prominent figures, including Atiku Abubakar, David Mark, and Sule Lamido, have thrown their support behind the ADC-led coalition, calling on Nigerians to embrace the new platform.

At a recent strategy meeting held at Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, the coalition



officially adopted the ADC as its platform for 2027, with David Mark appointed National Chairman and Rauf Aregbesola named National Secretary. The move signals a clear challenge to PDP leadership and has added to the party's internal woes.

In response, PDP Acting National Chairman Umar Damagum warned that disciplinary action would be taken against any member supporting external political arrangements without formal approval.

APC Hits Back: "A Coalition of the Desperate"

The APC has not held back in its response. In a strongly worded statement, APC National Publicity Secretary Felix Morka described the coalition as a "gathering of political opportunists."

"It was an unveiling of a coalition of hoaxers... a roll call of Nigeria's me-or-nothing politicians," Morka said.

"They are desperate to claw their way back to power under the pretense of patriotism."

Morka accused the coalition leaders of being more interested in power and patronage than genuine national progress, stating that the APC remains focused on national development under President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda. Bayo Onanuga, President Bola Tinubu's special adviser on information and

strategy, early dismissed the newly formed opposition coalition, describing its members as power-hungry politicians united solely by their disdain for Tinubu.

Voices from Across the Political Divide
Former Minister of Transportation Rotimi Amaechi also weighed in, urging Nigerians to take action rather than expect miracles from the political class.

"The only way you can stop Tinubu from being president in 2027 is to run an election of Nigerians versus the bandits," Amaechi said during a public event in Abuja.

"You sit at home and grumble. You made yourself helpless, not the elites."

Peter Obi, the former Labour Party presidential candidate, reaffirmed his support for the ADC-led coalition, calling it a product of "deep reflection" and a path toward "competent and compassionate leadership."

As the 2027 elections approach, Nigeria's political landscape appears increasingly polarized. While the ruling APC consolidates its grip, the opposition appears fragmented, with the PDP struggling to maintain unity and control amid rising defections and coalition controversies.

For now, APC leaders remain confident that the disunity among their challengers will only strengthen their chances for victory in 2027.

Wike defends peace with Fubara, slams opposition as “failed politicians”

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has come out strongly in defence of his recent reconciliation with Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, while launching a blistering attack on prominent opposition figures who have criticised the Bola Tinubu-led administration.

Speaking during his monthly media chat in Abuja on Thursday, Wike addressed recent political developments and accused some former public officeholders of hypocrisy, incompetence, and political opportunism.

Wike confirmed that he and Governor Fubara have resolved their differences, declaring that peace has returned to Rivers State. However, he noted that some individuals were displeased with the truce, alleging that they had been profiting from the crisis.

“Some people turned the Rivers political situation into an oil well for their personal gain. They are not happy that peace has returned because they can no longer draw illicit funds from it,” Wike stated.

The former Rivers governor maintained that he does not owe anyone an explanation regarding the terms of his reconciliation with Fubara. He insisted that the most important outcome is the restoration of stability in the state, not the political details behind it.

Shifting his attention to national politics, Wike condemned the recent takeover of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) by a coalition of opposition figures, which includes former Senate President David Mark, former Minister of Transportation Rotimi Amaechi, former Minister of Aviation Hadi Sirika, former Attorney General Abubakar Malami, former Speaker of the House of Representatives Aminu Tambuwal, and former Minister of Youth and Sports Development Bolaji Abdullahi.

Wike described the coalition as a gathering of “expired and failed politicians” who have nothing new to

offer Nigerians. He accused them of using public discontent to regain political relevance after failing to deliver results during their time in office.

“These people want to rescue Nigeria? From what exactly? From the mess they themselves created?” Wike asked.

He criticised David Mark for his performance during his tenure as Senate President, claiming that he achieved nothing for his constituency.

“David Mark says Nigerians are angry. Was he not Senate President for eight years? Were Nigerians not angry then? There was not one single project in Otukpo. He was flying helicopters home while his people had nothing. What legacy did he leave?” Wike said.

Rotimi Amaechi, another key member of the coalition and Wike’s longtime political rival, was also heavily criticised. Wike accused him of plunging Nigeria into debt through reckless borrowing during his tenure as Minister of Transportation.

“Amaechi took Chinese loans and burdened the country with debt. Was that when Nigerians were happy? They were not angry then? It’s only now that they are angry?” Wike asked rhetorically.

He also took aim at Hadi Sirika, questioning the failed launch of the national carrier, Air Nigeria.

“What happened to Air Nigeria? That’s your legacy. And you say Nigerians were happy then?” Wike said, adding that the former aviation minister’s claims were both embarrassing and shameful.

Wike accused the opposition coalition of manipulating the emotions of Nigerians, asserting that they only raise concerns about public dissatisfaction when they are no longer in power.

“When they are in power, everything is fine. The moment they lose power, suddenly Nigerians are angry. That’s the politics they play,” he said.



He argued that history would not be kind to the coalition leaders, claiming that their past performances contributed significantly to the challenges the country now faces.

“They were in government for years. What did they do to solve Nigeria’s problems? What contribution did they make to stop insecurity or improve infrastructure? History will hold them responsible for where we are today,” Wike added.

He also accused former AGF Malami of doing little to improve Nigeria’s legal and security framework during his time in office, describing his recent comments as “foolish” and “shameful”.

On Aminu Tambuwal, Wike questioned what lasting impact the former Speaker and ex-governor of Sokoto State had made during his years in office, saying: “He was Speaker for four years and governor for eight years. What did he do to reduce anger among Nigerians?”

As for the state of the opposition, Wike said that only the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has the national structure and potential to challenge the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), provided it resolves its internal issues.

“The only party today that can truly challenge Tinubu is the PDP—if it puts its house in order. These other coalitions are just for show,” he concluded.

Labour party issues 48-hour ultimatum to Peter Obi over coalition move

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Julius Abure-led faction of the Labour Party has issued a 48-hour ultimatum to former presidential candidate Peter Obi, demanding he resign from the party following his involvement in a newly formed political coalition.

In a statement signed by the faction's National Publicity Secretary, Obiora Ifoh, and released in Abuja on Thursday, the faction reiterated its strong opposition to the coalition, branding its members as "power mongers" driven by self-interest rather than the collective good.

"The Labour Party under the leadership of Julius Abure is not part of any coalition," the statement read.

"Any of our members who has joined the coalition is hereby given 48 hours to resign from the party."

Ifoh criticised the coalition as an alliance of "recycled, desperate, and frustrated politicians" who have misgoverned Nigeria in the past. He argued that such individuals are incapable of delivering the "New Nigeria" often promised by Obi and his allies.

"We are aware of several nocturnal meetings between Peter Obi and some of our members, lobbying them to join him in his new party, Labour Party will not be a platform for individuals with dual allegiances or deceptive personas," Ifoh revealed.

He further warned that the

ambitions of "gerontocrats and opportunists" cannot align with the aspirations of Nigeria's youth, who make up nearly 70% of the population and are seeking a break from the status quo.

"The new Nigeria of our dream can only be realised through the Labour Party, we urge all members to remain loyal and maintain the party structure ahead of future elections," Ifoh asserted.

Peter Obi has not yet publicly responded to the ultimatum. His recent involvement in the coalition, alongside other opposition figures, is part of a broader political effort to challenge President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the 2027 general elections.

Seven Akwa Ibom lawmakers decamp to APC, citing internal party crisis

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



The gale of defections in the House of Representatives intensified on Thursday as seven federal lawmakers from Akwa Ibom State officially defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC), citing irreconcilable internal crises within their former parties.

During Thursday's plenary, Speaker of the House, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, read letters from the defecting lawmakers, marking a significant political realignment in the state's representation at the national level.

Among the defectors, six were elected under the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) while one, Emmanuel Ukpong-Udo, was previously a member of the Young Progressives Party (YPP).

The PDP lawmakers who crossed over to the APC include:

- Paul Ekpo
- Unyime Idem
- Martins Etim
- Okpolu Ukpong Etteh
- Uduak Odudoh
- Okon Ime Bassey

In their letters, the lawmakers cited what

they described as "protracted internal wrangling, lack of direction, and irreparable divisions" within the PDP, particularly in Akwa Ibom State, as the driving force behind their decision.

"We can no longer continue under a political platform that has lost touch with its foundational principles and can no longer guarantee cohesion or unity of purpose," one of the letters read in part.

The development comes just weeks after Governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom also defected to the APC, signaling a possible shift in the state's long-standing political landscape, historically dominated by the PDP.

Reacting to the mass defection, Minority Leader of the House, Hon. Kingsley Chinda (PDP, Rivers), strongly condemned the move and called it "unconstitutional and politically motivated." He accused the defectors of acting out of personal interest rather than principle.

Chinda invoked Section 68(1)(g) of the 1999 Constitution, which stipulates that any lawmaker who defects from their sponsoring political party without a justifiable division should vacate their

seat. He urged the Speaker to apply the law and declare the affected seats vacant.

"The so-called division being claimed is neither recognised by the courts nor reflected in the structure of the PDP at any level. These defections are not just a betrayal of the electorate's mandate, but also a blatant violation of the Constitution," Chinda stated.

The defecting lawmakers, however, maintained that the dysfunction within the PDP had made it impossible to effectively represent their constituencies, and insisted their move to the APC was necessary to align with a platform that would support development initiatives and deliver on campaign promises.

As tensions rise within the House, the issue is expected to trigger fresh legal and political debates around the constitutional implications of such mass defections. Meanwhile, the PDP leadership is reportedly considering legal options to challenge the defections and reclaim the vacated mandates.

The political climate in Akwa Ibom and beyond is set to witness further shake-ups as the 2027 general elections draw nearer.

HYPREP, IARC-WHO flag off health study in Rivers community

By Helen Okechukwu



To better understand the health implications resulting from exposure to oil pollution in Ogoniland, Rivers State, the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP), in collaboration with the International Agency for Research on Cancer and the World Health Organisation (IARC-WHO), has embarked on a health study.

The health study, a Human Biomonitoring (HBM) project to be conducted in the affected area, was recommended by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Report.

HBM is a scientific technique that helps to ascertain the levels of chemical components located in the human body. The procedure provides advanced information regarding the health risks associated with chemical exposure.

According to documents shared by HYPREP, the recommended study, spanning a period of three years, aims to identify the correlation between exposure to hydrocarbon contamination and disease patterns in the area.

During a gathering held with the IARC-WHO team on Wednesday at the Project Coordination Office (PCO) in Port Harcourt, Professor Nenibarini Zabbey, HYPREP Project Coordinator, highlighted that the Ogoni Public Health Study aligns with the objectives of UNEP.

Describing the implications of hydrocarbon pollution as a major concern for the health agency, Prof. Zabbey said the UNEP Report on the Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland remains a core focus in tracking health impacts across the Ogoni population.

“This highlights the urgent need for the work we are initiating today,” Prof. Zabbey declared.

With the aim of driving policy interventions, public health planning, and long-term monitoring of the well-being of the Ogoni population, Prof. Zabbey believes the outcome will be credible, actionable, and gain global recognition.

“According to the PC, the key deliverables from the collaboration with

IARC-WHO include, a comprehensive health risk assessment linked to hydrocarbon pollution, capacity building for local health professionals, and clear recommendations for public health responses based on the findings,” the document noted.

Additionally, the project will provide a 100-bed Ogoni Specialist Hospital, a 40-bed Buan Cottage Hospital, health strengthening at Bori, Terabor, Kpita, and Nchia Health Centres, as well as medical outreach programmes.

While underscoring the need for a transparent study, HYPREP urged stakeholders such as civil groups and health institutions to engage and apply ethical compliance. The HYPREP Project Coordinator reaffirmed their commitment and support for the execution of the project.

Dr. Joachim Schütz, the IARC-WHO lead, Dr. Ann Ollson, and Mike Cowing asserted that the research will be carried out adequately and will be beneficial to Ogoni scientists in epidemiology and future studies.

WHO targets 50% health tax hike on tobacco, alcohol, sugary drinks by 2035

By Helen Okechukwu



In a move to prevent 50 million premature deaths over the next five decades, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is urging countries to increase one-off health taxes on tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks by 50%, targeting 2035.

While unveiling the global campaign, WHO stated that the initiative, “3 by 35,” aims to curb chronic and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), which currently account for over 75% of global deaths, while also boosting public revenues.

The initiative also targets the generation of \$1 trillion in revenue within 10 years, to be

reinvested into healthcare, education, and social protection.

“Health taxes are one of the most efficient tools we have,” said Dr Jeremy Farrar, WHO’s Assistant Director-General. “They cut the consumption of harmful products and create revenue governments can reinvest in health care, education, and social protection. It’s time to act.”

Between 2012 and 2022, nearly 140 countries increased tobacco taxes by over 50% on average, says WHO.

Evidence from countries like Colombia and South Africa

shows that such taxes reduce consumption and increase revenue. Still, WHO warns that tax breaks and long-term deals with harmful product industries threaten public health progress.

Backed by global partners, the initiative supports country-led reforms and promotes best practices, focusing on reducing affordability, mobilising domestic funding, and building political and civil society support.

For support, WHO appeals to governments, civil groups, and development agencies to back this push for smarter, fairer taxes that promote health and sustainable development.

Researchers give warning on anti-inflammatory food trends

By Helen Okechukwu



A group of researchers has urged the public to reconsider following anti-inflammatory food trends aimed at slowing down the ageing process.

Anti-inflammatory foods are specific diets believed to reduce inflammation in the body, promote good health, and help prevent chronic diseases.

“Inflammaging” refers to a chronic, low-grade form of inflammation commonly associated with ageing, while inflammation itself is the body’s natural response to infection and injury.

Some researchers believe that chronic inflammation accelerates ageing and contributes to health conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease, arthritis, cancer, and heart disease, noting that many older

individuals are prone to inflammation.

However, a new study published in *Nature Ageing* suggests that chronic inflammation may be more closely linked to lifestyle and environmental factors than to ageing itself.

Researchers analysed blood samples

Researchers analysed blood samples from around 2,800 adults aged 18 to 95 across four populations: two nonindustrialised groups—the Tsimane of Bolivia and the Orang Asli of Malaysia—and two urban groups from Italy and Singapore.

The study found that inflammation levels in the Tsimane and Orang Asli did not significantly increase with

age, unlike in the urban populations. This challenges the notion that inflammation is an inevitable aspect of ageing.

Alan Cohen, a co-author from Columbia University, stressed that the findings reveal how little is truly understood about inflammation.

He cautioned against blindly adopting health trends focused on reducing inflammation, describing the issue as more complex than commonly believed.

Other experts echoed this caution. Vishwa Deep Dixit of Yale University noted that lower exposure to pollution could be a factor, while Bimal Desai of the University of Virginia emphasised the need for further research before redefining the role of inflammation in ageing.

Ayra Starr becomes first African female artiste to reach 5 million spotify followers

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian music sensation, Ayra Starr, has achieved a groundbreaking milestone on Spotify, becoming the first African female artist to reach 5 million followers on the popular streaming platform.

The 23-year-old singer, known for her energetic sound and bold fashion style, continues to rise steadily in the global music scene.

Her follower count surged past the 5 million mark this week, cementing her place as one of Africa's fastest-rising stars.

A new chapter for African women in music

This achievement marks a significant moment for African women in the music industry. While male artists like Burna Boy and Wizkid have long dominated Spotify's charts, Ayra Starr's new feat adds a fresh chapter to the story, one that highlights the growing influence of female talent from the continent.

The singer blends Afrobeats with pop and R&B influences, attracting fans from across the world. Since her breakout in 2021 with the self-titled EP Ayra Starr and her debut album 19 & Dangerous, she has delivered hit after hit, becoming a household name in Nigeria and beyond.

Still behind Tems in total streams

Despite the historic follower milestone, Ayra Starr still sits behind fellow Nigerian singer Tems in terms of total streams on Spotify.

Tems, a Grammy award winner, who has gained massive international acclaim through collaborations with Drake, Future, and Beyoncé, currently boasts 3.8 billion streams across all credits. In comparison, Ayra Starr has racked up 2.7 billion streams to date. This means that while Ayra has more individual followers, Tems holds a lead in total listening volume.

Hit songs power her global appeal

The "Rush" crooner's success on Spotify is backed by several highly streamed



songs. Her most-streamed track on the platform is Santa, which has earned over 708 million streams across various platforms. The track, known for its catchy melody and festive vibe, played a key role in boosting her global recognition.

Meanwhile, her most-streamed lead single, Rush, has accumulated over 476 million streams, making it one of the biggest solo hits by an African female artist. The song's relatable lyrics and vibrant beat have made it a fan favourite, especially among Gen Z listeners worldwide.

Other notable tracks that have contributed to her streaming growth include Bloody Samaritan, Sability, and her recent collaboration with American pop star Giveon.

Rising star with a global vision

The Grammy nominated singer rise has been swift, yet strategic. Signed under Don Jazzy's Mavin Records, she has benefited from strong industry support and a carefully curated brand image.

Her music videos, fashion choices, and social media presence reflect a young artist who is not only talented but also in tune with global trends.

Her achievements also show how African artists are leveraging platforms like Spotify to break into international

markets. With streaming now playing a crucial role in the music business, milestones like this open new doors for sponsorship deals, collaborations, and tours.

Fans celebrate on social media

Following the news, fans flooded social media with congratulatory messages, using hashtags like #AyraStarr5M and #AfricanQueen. Many hailed her as a role model for young African girls who dream of making it big in music.

Ayra, in turn, expressed her gratitude to fans on X (formerly Twitter), writing: "5 million of you! Thank you for believing in me. The journey is just beginning."

Conclusion

Ayra Starr's 5 million Spotify followers mark a major achievement not just for her but for the broader landscape of African music.

As streaming platforms become the main stage for global artists, her milestone signals a shift in how African female voices are being heard and celebrated around the world.

With more hits on the way and a growing international audience, Ayra Starr is proving that African women can lead on the world stage, one stream at a time.

'Work with God,' Wizkid advises fans

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Global Afrobeats sensation, Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun, popularly known as Wizkid, has shared a deeply personal moment with fans, revealing that he had a heartfelt conversation with God and asked Him to remove everything evil from his life.

The Grammy-winning singer made this emotional confession on Tuesday via a post on his Instagram story. According to him, since that prayer, he has been noticing signs that his request is being answered.

A new chapter for the superstar

Wizkid, known for hits like Essence, Ojuelegba, and Fever, said the change in his life began after he made the spiritual request. He told his over 17 million Instagram followers that he spoke directly to God and pleaded for divine help.

"I told God to take everything evil out of my life, and I've been seeing signs," Wizkid wrote in his Instagram story. "Work with God."

The message was brief, but it carried deep meaning for fans who view the singer as more than just a performer, but also as a role model. It also marks a rare moment where the usually private artist opened up about his personal and spiritual life.

Fans react with support and praise

Wizkid's message quickly caught the attention of fans and followers across social media platforms. Many praised him for acknowledging God publicly and taking a spiritual step towards self-growth and peace. Others shared how they were inspired by his words and planned to do the same in their own lives.

One fan commented on X (formerly Twitter), "Wizkid just reminded me that no matter how big you get, you still need God."



Another added, "He didn't have to say much. Just a simple message, and I feel so motivated to talk to God again."

A pattern of reflection

This is not the first time Wizkid has spoken about deeper issues beyond music. In the past, he has hinted at the importance of family, humility, and keeping a close circle. However, this message is one of the clearest signs that the artist is entering a more reflective and possibly spiritual phase in his life.

Observers say this may also reflect the emotional growth that comes with age and experience. The 34-year-old father of four has been in the music industry for over a decade and has faced both success and challenges along the way.

Encouraging others to walk with God

Wizkid did not stop at sharing his personal story. He also used the opportunity to urge his fans to build a closer relationship with God.

"Work with God," he advised in his post, a direct message to fans encouraging them to involve faith in their lives and decisions.

For some, it felt like more than just a suggestion; it felt like guidance from

someone who has walked a long road and learned important lessons.

Growing influence beyond music

As one of the biggest names in African music, Wizkid's influence goes far beyond the studio or stage. His words carry weight, especially among young people who look up to him not only for his talent but also for his attitude and lifestyle.

Experts say that when celebrities open up about their spiritual journeys, it can have a positive ripple effect across communities. In a world filled with pressure and distractions, a simple reminder to seek peace through faith can make a big difference.

Final thoughts

Wizkid's message may have been short, but it was powerful. It gave fans a glimpse into his private world and reminded many of the power of prayer and personal transformation.

In an industry often defined by fame, money, and attention, the Starboy is showing that spiritual health matters too.

And for many fans, that message came right on time.

Old Guard 2, after a five-year wait, an unfinished tale

By Eyitayo Jemimah Ajayi



After an excruciating five-year wait for another thrilling Old Guard sequel, Netflix finally released a new installment. I, for one, decided to eagerly rewatch the first sequel a few days ago because, truth be told, I was not sure if I had the intricate details of the movie clear in my head, or if I might have unintentionally muddled it up with another movie of a similar theme, *Infinite*.

The Old Guard, starring the commanding Charlize Theron, garnered a sizable fan base due to its distinctive plot and compelling structure. Viewers had no choice but to impatiently anticipate the next sequel, especially when it employed a masterful Marvel-esque cliffhanger at the end of the movie. This gripping cliffhanger presented the unexpected return of Quynh, meeting up with the banished Booker. At that point, you might think they would become a formidable duo against the rest of the

ancient immortals.

Unraveling the Mysteries

The enigmatic introductory scene of *The Old Guard 2* answered one of the most pressing questions the first sequel left us with: How did Quynh escape? The people who found her were remarkably unsurprised, which strongly suggests it was premeditated. This leads to a further, intriguing question: Who are they? Mortals or immortals?

The first scene vividly shows us that the rest of the immortals – Andy, Joe, Nicky, and Nile – are still actively engaged in perilous missions alongside the newly recruited, resourceful mortal, Copley. You will almost forget about Andy's vulnerable mortality status until Copley gently reminds her about it, as she fights just as fiercely as when she was eternally immortal. Joe and Nicky still share an unbreakable, profound bond that

transcends simple categorization. Nile, on her own, does quite well trying to protect Andy and being one of the strongest and freshest immortals on the determined team.

Expanding the Immortal World

Let me say I was not surprised that this sequel skillfully unearthed two different immortals. That needed to happen to significantly expand the plot. We were introduced to Tuah, who is more like the living anthology of all the immortals' lives. Tuah tells Andy about the oldest living immortal, Discord, shattering Andy's long-held belief that she was the oldest. Discord takes on the role of the selfish, ambitious immortal who wants all of their extraordinary powers for themselves.

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Quynh catches up with Booker, the isolated exile, and gets him to deliver a critical message to Andy. We also discovered that Joe had been keeping close, watchful tabs on Booker during his exile. It somewhat looked like a betrayal, but the team had far bigger problems up their sleeves. Andy goes to meet Quynh, but Nile does not trust her to go alone, due to the fact that 500 tumultuous years might have transformed Quynh into an unpredictable, unknown immortal.

As Andy goes to meet Quynh, we are taken through different timelines that have happened on that same street throughout centuries, which was excellent, captivating cinematography. Andy still sees Quynh as the same woman who went missing 500 years ago. Quynh, on the other hand, feels deeply betrayed that Andy moved on without her and carries the heavy burden of an unbroken promise. She soon discovers that Andromache (Andy) is unwilling to leave her loyal pack and join her as the inseparable duo they were before.

A Clash of Ideals

In the midst of this, Nile sees Discord lurking around and cautiously follows

her. Discord tells her that she wishes to utterly end the Immortals, and it is only if Nile, being the last immortal, joins forces with her that this is possible. At this point, we sense a familiar cliché of plots trying to unfold.

At the safe house, Tuah discovers that Nile has the unique ability to take an immortal's power, but an immortal can bestow such power unwillingly to another person. Tuah tells Booker, and with his inherent inquisitiveness, it was obvious that Booker would do anything to end his burdensome immortality.

Quynh, in liaison with Discord, creates a catastrophic nuclear mess at an Indonesian nuclear plant, and this leaves Andy and her team almost no choice but to desperately clean up. At this point, it feels like *Avengers: Infinity War*, where the Marvel team walks into a battle with Thanos, knowing they might not win. They lose almost half the team and the world's population, leaving the rest to strategically re-strategize a recovery.

At the end of *The Old Guard 2*, we have a fallen Booker who transfers his immortality to Andy, a captured Nile, Copley, Joe, Nicky, and Tuah, a mortalized Quynh who unexpectedly joins forces with her old friend, Andy,

and Discord, who gets away with what she cunningly wants.

The Road Ahead

No doubt, *The Old Guard 3* might take the shape of *Avengers: Endgame*, but one thing is for sure: Andy is getting her team out. Is she going to come out unscathed, or is she going to be like Iron Man, who sacrifices his life to win his battle with Thanos? Who knows? Although we might not get an answer to this until another agonizing five years later, or when Netflix deems fit to release another anticipated sequel.

A Disappointing Dive into Predictability

Although I had eagerly anticipated an expansive, groundbreaking plot after a lengthy five-year wait, the movie unfortunately took a very slippery slope into tired, popular movie clichés. With more than half of the team in grim body bags, we now desperately expect a more intriguing, innovative plot that deeply explores the complex dynamic between Andy and Quynh, at least for the first few crucial scenes of the next sequel.



'She will ruin your legacy', 2Face's brother warns about singer's relationship

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Charles Idibia, popularly known as Charlybrave and younger brother to legendary Nigerian singer 2Face Idibia, has spoken out in a heartfelt and revealing message directed at the music icon.

In a lengthy Instagram post, Charles poured out his emotions, praising his brother's calm and gentle nature while also accusing his current partner, Natasha Osawuru, of being a major source of distress in the singer's life.

The post, which has since gone viral, sparked strong reactions from fans and followers of 2Face, many of whom expressed deep concern for the singer's well-being.

A brother's plea

Charles began his message with an emotional tribute to 2Face, describing him as a selfless and peace-loving individual who often puts others ahead of himself, even at great personal cost.

"To my dear @official2baba, there are not enough words in English to express how much I love you, so I won't even try," Charles wrote. He referred to 2Face as a man who "would not intentionally hurt a fly," and someone who quietly absorbs pain and criticism just to protect those around him.

He went further, likening the singer to "a modern-day Jesus Christ from Nigeria," noting his humility and purity of heart. He praised 2Face's rare musical talent and called him "the most insanely talented musician that has ever graced my ears."

Accusations against Natasha Osawuru

Despite his glowing words for 2Face, Charles did not hold back in his criticism of the singer's current partner, Natasha Osawuru. He accused her of manipulating and isolating 2Face from both his business associates and loved ones.

In his words, "You haven't moved on. You have been captured, from the frying pan into an industrial furnace." He claimed Natasha's controlling behaviour has caused his brother to lose touch with reality and his purpose.

Charles alleged that Natasha had accessed 2Face's phone to announce their divorce on his behalf, posted and deleted



images on his social media accounts, and even asked fans to beg 2Face to marry her, all without his consent. He claimed she cloned his WhatsApp, deleted messages she disliked, and responded to others pretending to be him.

Furthermore, Charles accused her of pressuring 2Face to cut ties with his Lagos-based businesses and move to Abuja, where he allegedly became her "arm candy" and was paraded around unfamiliar territories. "She dragged you to places the real you would never go," he added.

He also claimed that Natasha sabotaged his business trips, spread lies using his name, and falsely claimed to be his wife, even though they were not legally married.

A call for reflection and healing

Charles ended his post by urging 2Face to take a step back from the public eye, including social media, and focus on healing and rediscovering himself. He emphasised the importance of protecting his legacy and being present for his seven children.

"It can never be a crime to save yourself," he wrote. "Wake up."

Fans react

The emotional message quickly sparked reactions across social media. Fans expressed shock, sadness, and support for both Charles and 2Face.

Instagram user @ehijay_ wrote, "This is really sad. To think that this lady has reduced our legend to nothing is even more heartbreaking. I pray he comes out of this bondage."

Another user, @yettyclesia, commented, "God bless you. He needs all the help he can get."

@official_lolah added, "God please protect our 2baba from all of this madness. Restore his peace and happiness. This is getting out of hand."

User @kiki.derika offered hope, saying, "My brother, God is awake and God is watching. Darkness can never shine over light."

Meanwhile, @eleyil questioned the singer's relationship choices, stating, "Inno is such a great human being to be in this spot all the time. He needs serious internal work, how is he choosing his women?"

Family concerns not new

It's not the first time concerns have been raised about 2Face's relationship with Natasha Osawuru. Earlier this year, his mother, Rose Idibia, reportedly warned that the singer was under spiritual influence.

She alleged that Natasha placed charms, specifically beads, on 2Face's head and neck in what she described as a bid to spiritually control him.

Angelique Kidjo becomes first African honoured with Hollywood walk of fame star

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Grammy-winning singer and global music icon Angelique Kidjo is set to make history as the first African artist to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The announcement was made by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, which unveiled the list of honorees for the Walk of Fame Class of 2026.

Kidjo's inclusion marks a major milestone, not just for her career but also for African music and culture as a whole.

Celebrating a legacy of global impact

Kidjo, born in Benin, has spent decades using her voice and music to bridge cultures and inspire change. Known for blending West African sounds with elements of American funk, jazz, and Latin influences, she has earned widespread acclaim and several Grammy Awards.

Throughout her career, she has also used her platform to advocate for education, women's rights, and African development. Her artistry and activism have made her one of the most influential African musicians of all time.

This honour on Hollywood Boulevard recognises not only her musical achievements but also her role as a cultural ambassador. With this recognition, Kidjo joins an exclusive group of global stars who have left a lasting mark on the entertainment industry.

Hollywood honours global talent

The Beninese singer is among a diverse list of international entertainers named in the 2026 Walk of Fame class. The list includes prominent figures from film, music, and sports, showcasing Hollywood's growing appreciation for global talent.

Some of the other celebrities selected this year include American pop sensation Miley Cyrus, known for her chart-topping hits and bold performances, and French-American actor Timothée Chalamet, praised for his roles in films like *Dune* and *Call Me by Your Name*.

Also on the list is retired NBA star and



current sports analyst Shaquille O'Neal, whose influence extends beyond the basketball court into entertainment, business, and philanthropy.

A truly international lineup

In addition to Kidjo, the 2026 honorees feature a broad mix of celebrated performers from around the world.

Filipino singer and Broadway legend Lea Salonga, best known for her roles in *Miss Saigon* and Disney's *Aladdin* and *Mulan*, will receive a star for her decades-long contribution to music and theatre.

French actress Marion Cotillard, who won an Academy Award for her portrayal of Édith Piaf in *La Vie en Rose*, is also among the honorees, as is Indian film star Deepika Padukone, who has become one of Bollywood's most recognised faces internationally.

British actress Emily Blunt, famous for her performances in *A Quiet Place*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, and *Mary Poppins Returns*, will also receive a star, as will Canadian actress Rachel McAdams, widely known for her roles in *The Notebook*, *Mean Girls*, and *Spotlight*.

Star ceremony timeline

While the Walk of Fame selection has been confirmed, the actual date for the

star installation ceremonies is yet to be announced. The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce typically gives honorees up to two years to schedule and carry out their induction.

This means Kidjo and the other selected stars will have until 2028 to arrange their ceremonies, which are often attended by fans, friends, and fellow celebrities.

A landmark moment for African music

Angelique Kidjo's selection is more than a personal triumph; it is a powerful moment for African music. For years, African artists have influenced global sound, yet few have received recognition on this scale in the heart of the American entertainment industry.

With this honour, Kidjo becomes a trailblazer for African artists aspiring to reach global audiences. Her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame will serve as a permanent reminder of the continent's rich cultural heritage and its growing influence in global entertainment.

As fans around the world celebrate this achievement, many also hope it opens the door for more African stars to be recognised in the future. For now, Angelique Kidjo stands tall, an icon of music, activism, and African pride, ready to leave her mark on Hollywood's most famous sidewalk.

'Release 2Face', Cynthia Morgan slams Natasha

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Former Nigerian dancehall singer Cynthia Morgan has caused a stir on social media after she publicly criticised Natasha, the wife of music legend Innocent Idibia, popularly known as 2Baba or 2Face.

Morgan accused Natasha of allegedly pressuring her husband to make a recent public apology, which followed backlash from a viral interview. In a fiery post on her Instagram story, Morgan called for prayers for the veteran musician and questioned the sincerity behind his apology.

Morgan questions motive behind 2Baba's apology

In the now-viral Instagram story, Cynthia Morgan suggested that 2Baba's decision to apologise publicly may not have come from him willingly. She implied that his wife may have played a key role in influencing his words.

"Pray for Tuface," she wrote. "Someone says he deserves it. Indiscipline truly brings shame. Proverbs 29 vs 15. Free Tubaba."

Morgan appeared to be referring to 2Baba's recent apology video, which followed controversial remarks he made during an interview. In that interview, he suggested that men were not "naturally wired" to stay with just one woman. His comments triggered a wave of backlash from fans and critics alike.

"You can't force monogamy overnight", Morgan jabs Natasha

Taking direct aim at Natasha Idibia, Morgan wrote:

"You can't purge a man like Tuface into monogamy overnight."

She argued that it was unrealistic to expect someone with 2Baba's history to suddenly embrace a lifestyle that does not align with his past actions. Her comment referenced the singer's well-known personal life; he is a father of seven children with three different women.

Morgan also raised questions about his religious beliefs.

"Is he a Christian or a church leader?" she asked rhetorically.



According to her, people should not be surprised that the 49-year-old artist sees himself as polygamous.

"At 49, with 7 kids from 3 women, are we really surprised? I'm not," she added.

Fans react to Morgan's outburst

Cynthia Morgan's statements quickly went viral, dividing opinions online. While some social media users agreed with her views and supported her call for honesty and freedom for 2Baba, others accused her of disrespect and bitterness.

Many pointed out that her comments seemed to be targeted at Natasha, who has been mostly quiet in public controversies involving her husband. Some users criticised Morgan for bringing religion into the issue, while others praised her for saying what they believed many were afraid to say.

2Baba remains silent

So far, neither 2Baba nor his wife, Natasha, has responded to Morgan's claims. The singer's apology video, which triggered this latest wave of reactions, was seen by many as a form of damage control. In the video, he expressed regret for saying men are not sexually built for one woman and apologised to anyone he may have hurt.

Despite his apology, the debate continues. Some believe he was being honest in the interview and should not have apologised, while others say his words were irresponsible and disrespectful.

Morgan's history of speaking out

This is not the first time Cynthia Morgan has voiced strong opinions about issues in the entertainment industry. Once a rising star in the Nigerian music scene, Morgan, who now goes by the name Madrina, has become known for her outspoken nature and controversial takes on trending matters.

Her recent comments add another layer to the ongoing discussions about gender roles, marriage expectations, and public image within Nigeria's celebrity circles.

Final thoughts

While the full story behind 2Baba's apology remains unclear, Cynthia Morgan's remarks have brought fresh attention to the complexities of his personal life and public image.

Whether her words help or hurt his situation, one thing is certain: her voice has once again sparked a national conversation.

Trump to host five African leaders amid rising global competition

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



In a strategic move widely seen as an effort to counter growing Chinese and Russian influence on the African continent, U.S. President Donald Trump has announced an unexpected summit with five African heads of state. The meeting, set to take place at the White House on July 9, will bring together leaders from Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, and Senegal, a White House official confirmed on Wednesday.

According to the official, the summit will focus on “commercial opportunities” and will include a working lunch hosted by the president.

“President Trump believes that African countries offer incredible commercial opportunities which benefit both the American people and our African partners,” the official stated, emphasizing the administration’s intention to shift toward trade-based engagement.

The summit, first reported by Africa

Intelligence and Semafar, is expected to run from July 9 to 11 in Washington, D.C.

The move comes amid a broader realignment of U.S. foreign policy toward Africa. The Trump administration has significantly cut foreign aid to the continent, aiming to reduce what it considers wasteful spending. Instead, the administration has promoted a model based on trade, investment, and mutual prosperity, aligned with the president’s “America First” doctrine.

Earlier this week, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio reinforced this shift, declaring that the United States is moving away from what he called a “charity-based” foreign aid system. He stated that future support would prioritize countries that demonstrate both the “ability and willingness to help themselves.”

In line with this strategy, U.S. envoys in Africa will now be assessed based on

the volume and value of commercial deals they help secure, according to Troy Fitrel, Senior Bureau Official for African Affairs.

However, the announcement comes at a time of renewed controversy over U.S. immigration policy. Just weeks ago, President Trump reinstated a travel ban affecting 12 countries, citing national security concerns. Notably, seven of the affected countries are in Africa, prompting criticism from human rights groups and reigniting debates over the human and diplomatic costs of national security policies that disproportionately impact African nations.

The upcoming summit is seen as a high-stakes effort to reframe U.S.-Africa relations, but critics remain wary of what they perceive as a transactional approach focused more on competition with global powers than long-term partnership.

Starmer promises six-day 'neighbourhood' NHS service

By Fatimah Idera

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer will, on Thursday, unveil Labour's 10-year health plan, pledging to create a six-day a week neighbourhood health service in what he describes as one of the most radical reforms in NHS history.

The new plan aims to shift routine healthcare out of hospitals and into local one-stop centres, offering care from GPs, nurses, dentists, and other professionals under one roof. These neighbourhood clinics would operate 12 hours a day, six days a week, providing access to diagnostics, post-operative care, rehabilitation services, and even social support like debt advice and employment coaching.

Starmer is expected to say the NHS must reform or die, warning that the current hospital-centric system is no longer sustainable. He will describe the plan as a way to fundamentally rewire and future-proof the NHS by bringing care closer to patients, embracing technology, and focusing on prevention.

Key features of the plan are six-day access, one-stop neighbourhood centres, staffing reforms, and community outreach.

Newly qualified dentists will be required to work in the NHS for at least three years, and the NHS app will become central to patient care, using artificial intelligence to direct users to appropriate services.

The proposal follows a difficult week for Starmer, who faced internal party unrest and was criticised for not publicly backing Chancellor Rachel Reeves. Labour sources hope this ambitious NHS announcement will mark a reset moment for his leadership.

The proposed model draws some



inspiration from Australia's community-based clinics and echoes Labour's previous attempt to introduce polyclinics under Gordon Brown. That earlier plan failed after opposition from the British Medical Association. Similarly, Conservative pledges to deliver a seven-day NHS during the Cameron and May years never materialised and led to industrial disputes, including the first doctors' strikes in decades.

This time, Labour hopes to avoid such resistance by giving top-performing GPs more autonomy to run larger centres across wider areas.

Still, critics argue that the proposals lack ambition compared to those earlier, failed promises. Dr Sean Phillips of the Policy Exchange think tank noted that access to out-of-hours care was better before 2004 and warned that vulnerable patients could be left behind by the digital-first approach.

NHS in Crisis

Twelve months after Labour's general election victory, the NHS remains under severe pressure. The waiting list has only fallen marginally down by 200,000 to 7.39 million. A quarter of

patients still wait over four hours in A&E, and just under 70% of cancer patients start treatment within the target time of 62 days.

Despite repeated pledges to improve access to GPs, fewer than 60,000 patients are seen at weekends, compared to 1.6 million on Mondays.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting insisted the plan would turn the NHS on its head, shifting focus from crisis management in hospitals to prevention and coordinated local care.

"With this plan, we will finally end the days of patients bouncing from pillar to post," he said.

The government also plans to have the NHS spending watchdog, NICE, reassess medicines it has previously approved, and withdrawing support for those no longer considered cost-effective.

As the government prepares to launch its flagship reform, questions remain over how it will be funded and whether the vision can overcome the institutional and staffing challenges that have plagued past efforts.

China slams U.S. defense chief for 'inciting conflict,' warns against interference on Taiwan

By Damilola Olufemi



A top Chinese official on Thursday sharply criticised U.S. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, accusing him of fueling tensions rather than promoting peace in the Asia-Pacific region.

Liu Jianchao, head of the Chinese Communist Party's International Department, rebuked Hegseth's recent comments urging U.S. allies to strengthen their militaries in response to East Asian country growing assertiveness. Speaking at the World Peace Forum in Beijing, Liu said: "What he truly wants is force, not dialogue. What he is inciting is confrontation and conflict, not peace and harmony."

The remarks come just weeks after Washington and Beijing appeared to reach a tentative trade truce following prolonged tariff battles. However, tensions remain high over a range of issues, including technology, global conflicts, and China's regional territorial ambitions.

Hegseth has previously warned that Beijing is preparing for military action aimed at altering the balance of power in Asia, calling on U.S. partners to embrace a strategy of "peace through strength."

Despite some diplomatic progress, deep divisions remain, particularly over the East Asia country's sweeping claims in the South China Sea and its

insistence on the eventual reunification with Taiwan, which Beijing considers a breakaway province.

China vows not to back down

Reaffirming China's firm stance, Liu stated: "The Chinese government has made it crystal clear that it will never back down on these issues. The Chinese people will do their utmost to strive for the prospect of peaceful reunification of the motherland, but we will never allow Taiwan independence."

He concluded with a pointed message: "The United States must respect China's sovereignty on this issue."

Trump announces scaled-down tariff deal with Vietnam

By Damilola Olufemi



U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday revealed that the United States will impose a reduced 20% tariff on several Vietnamese exports, lower than the initially proposed 46% rate outlined in April.

The announcement comes just ahead of a July 9 deadline when broader tariffs are set to take effect on a range of imports, part of Trump's ongoing push to reshape U.S. trade policy through aggressive levies.

While Trump offered limited specifics, he indicated that Vietnamese goods would now face a 20% tariff, and goods transhipped through Vietnam from third countries—particularly China—would attract a higher

40% duty. In contrast, Vietnamese imports of U.S. products would benefit from zero tariffs.

Trump speaks

"It is my great honour to announce that I have just made a Trade Deal with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam," Trump posted on Truth Social after holding talks with Vietnamese President To Lam.

The implementation of the new tariffs, especially the transshipment rules designed to prevent relabelling of Chinese goods as Vietnamese, remains unclear. U.S. officials have yet to outline how enforcement will be carried out.

Vietnamese officials have not confirmed the exact tariff percentages. Instead, Hanoi

issued a statement describing the development as a joint agreement on a trade framework. According to Reuters, the Vietnamese government committed to expanding market access for U.S. goods, including large-engine automobiles.

The U.S. is Vietnam's largest export destination, and deepening economic ties have become a strategic pillar in Hanoi's efforts to maintain strong relationships with both Washington and Beijing amid growing U.S.-China tensions.

Lam, during the call, also urged the U.S. to formally recognize Vietnam as a market economy and lift restrictions on the export of high-tech products to the country.

Starmer bows to pressure, waters down welfare bill to prevent rebellion

By Fatimah Idera



Sir Keir Starmer's welfare bill has passed through the House of Commons, but only after a major U-turn on key proposals in an effort to calm a growing rebellion within the Labour Party.

The government dropped controversial plans to change how people qualify for Personal Independence Payments (PIP), which had sparked anger among Labour MPs. Originally, the Bill proposed stricter criteria that would have made it harder for some disabled people to receive support.

However, this clause was removed following widespread criticism, and ministers confirmed that no changes will be made until a full review known as the Timms Review is completed.

Despite this concession, 49 Labour MPs still voted against the Bill, making it the biggest rebellion of Starmer's premiership so far.

Another 149 MPs backed a separate amendment to scrap the legislation altogether.

The climbdown has drawn

heavy criticism from opposition parties, who called it a sign of weak leadership and policy chaos. Some accused Labour of failing to deliver meaningful welfare reform and warned the changes leave a significant gap in funding plans.

While the Bill has now cleared this stage in Parliament, uncertainty remains over whether the dropped PIP changes will ever be brought back. For now, the government insists that all current PIP recipients will continue to receive their payments.

Sean 'Diddy' Combs found guilty on two counts in federal trial

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



A New York jury has delivered a mixed verdict in the federal trial of Sean “Diddy” Combs, finding the music mogul guilty on two counts related to the transportation of individuals for prostitution, while acquitting him on three other charges, including the most serious, racketeering conspiracy.

Following a closely watched seven-week trial marked by emotional and graphic testimony, the 12-member jury, comprising eight men and four women, reached its decision after 13 hours of deliberation over three days.

Diddy was found not guilty of racketeering conspiracy, the sex trafficking of Casandra Ventura, and the sex trafficking of a woman identified only as “Jane”. However, he was found guilty of transporting both Ventura and “Jane” across state lines to engage in prostitution, violations of federal law that carry a maximum sentence of 10 years each.

The verdict was read out on Wednesday

morning in a Manhattan federal courtroom. In a dramatic moment, Diddy dropped to his knees and appeared to pray upon hearing the decision. He then turned to the courtroom gallery, clapping, which prompted a round of applause and cheers from supporters.

Later that day, Judge Arun Subramanian denied Combs’s request for release on bail, citing his “disregard for the rule of law and a propensity for violence”. The judge set a tentative sentencing date for 3 October but noted it could be moved forward at the defence’s request.

Diddy held in detention since 2024

Diddy has been held in a federal detention facility in Brooklyn since his arrest in September 2024. Addressing his family, including his mother and children, just before leaving the courtroom, he said: “I’ll see you when I get out. We’re going to get through this.”

Outside court, Diddy’s lawyer, Marc Agnifilo, hailed the verdict as a “great

victory”, stating the jury “got the situation right or certainly right enough”. Agnifilo added, “We fight on and we’re going to win. And we’re not going to stop until he walks out of prison a free man to his family.”

While the government initially sought life imprisonment under the racketeering charge, Combs now faces a significantly reduced sentence. Prosecutors confirmed they will pursue a custodial sentence, estimating that under federal guidelines, Combs could face four to five years in prison, citing his alleged violent history. Defence counsel, however, argued that the likely sentence would be closer to two years. Having already served nine months, Combs may see a further reduction in time served depending on sentencing outcomes.

The verdict brings to a close one of the most high-profile celebrity trials in recent years, though legal battles for Combs may not yet be over.

Senior Gaza cardiologist killed in Israeli airstrike

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

One of Gaza's most senior doctors, Dr Marwan al-Sultan, has been killed in an Israeli airstrike, in what Palestinian medical officials have described as a "catastrophic loss" to the territory's devastated healthcare system. Several members of his family were also reportedly killed in the strike.

Dr Al-Sultan, a prominent cardiologist and director of the Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip, is believed to be the 70th healthcare worker killed in Israeli attacks over the past 50 days, according to Healthcare Workers Watch (HWW), a Palestinian medical organisation that tracks violations against medical professionals.

Muath Alser, director of HWW, condemned the killing, stating:

"The killing of Dr Marwan al-Sultan by the Israeli military is a catastrophic loss to Gaza and the entire medical community, and will have a devastating impact on Gaza's healthcare system."

"This is part of a much longer and systematic atrocious targeting of healthcare workers sanctioned by impunity. This is a tragic loss of life, but also an obliteration of decades of lifesaving medical expertise and care, at a time when the situation facing Palestinian civilians is unfathomably catastrophic." He added.

Dr Mohammed Abu Selmia, director of Al-Shifa Hospital, expressed heartbreak at the news:

"We are in great shock and grief. He cannot be replaced. He was a prominent scholar and one of only two cardiologists remaining in Gaza. Thousands of heart patients will suffer as a result of his killing. His only fault was that he was a doctor. We have no option but to be steadfast, but the sense of loss is devastating."

Al-Sultan had recently spoken to The



Guardian about the dire conditions faced by staff at the Indonesian Hospital amid the relentless rise in casualties following the intensification of Israeli airstrikes in May.

Since the war began in October 2023, over 1,400 healthcare workers have been killed in military attacks, according to United Nations figures. These include doctors, nurses, paramedics, midwives, radiology technicians, and young medical graduates, many of whom were targeted while working in hospitals, evacuating patients, or sheltering with their families.

On 6 June, the first day of Eid, nine healthcare workers were killed in a single day in airstrikes in northern Gaza, where they were reportedly seeking refuge with their families.

Other Gaza family

Among those mourning losses is Fares Afana, who heads ambulance services in northern Gaza. His son, Bara'a, also a paramedic, was killed on 9 June when the building where he was treating victims was struck again by Israeli artillery. Everyone inside was killed.

According to Insecurity Insight, a conflict-monitoring NGO, many healthcare workers have died while

attempting to treat the wounded or evacuate patients, often in hospitals, ambulances, refugee camps, or makeshift shelters. Some were reportedly killed by Israeli sniper fire, while others died at checkpoints or in schools repurposed as temporary havens.

Meanwhile, rights groups say hundreds of healthcare professionals from Gaza remain detained in Israeli prisons. Many, including senior medical staff, have reported being tortured, beaten, and held without charge.

The US-based medical NGO MedGlobal estimates that over 300 medical personnel are currently imprisoned, including Dr Hussam Abu Safiya, director of Kamal Adwan hospital, who has been detained since December 2024.

As attacks on medical infrastructure and personnel continue, international pressure is mounting for accountability and the protection of healthcare workers under international humanitarian law. However, for many in Gaza, the loss of Dr al-Sultan is a particularly painful blow, symbolising the broader collapse of a healthcare system once supported by professionals of extraordinary calibre and dedication.

Ex-Ukip leader Paul Nuttall named Reform party deputy chairman

By Fatimah Idera



Former Ukip leader Paul Nuttall has re-entered frontline politics after being appointed vice-chairman of Reform UK.

Nuttall, who led Ukip briefly between 2016 and 2017, has largely stayed out of the public eye in recent years but is now taking on an internal role within Nigel Farage's successor party.

According to a Reform UK source, Nuttall's responsibilities will focus on election strategy and party growth rather than media appearances. "It's purely internal stuff," the source said, denying reports that he would lead a "six-week summer offensive" starting later this month. That campaign, the party clarified, will be spearheaded by Farage himself.

Born in Merseyside, the 48-year-old was elected to the European Parliament in 2009 and became Ukip's deputy leader a year later. Though he initially chose not to contest the leadership following Farage's resignation in 2016, he later took the reins after Diane James stepped down.

During his time in politics, Nuttall made six unsuccessful bids for a common seat, including in the Stoke-on-Trent by-election. He stepped down as a Ukip leader in 2017 after losing in Boston and Skegness at the general election. The following year, he left Ukip altogether, citing concerns over its ties to far-right activist Tommy Robinson.

Nuttall later joined the Brexit Party, founded by Farage in 2019, which eventually became Reform UK.

His appointment comes amid reports that Reform UK is eyeing new recruits ahead of the next political cycle. The ongoing discussions about attracting senior figures from Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party ahead of the 2027 Irish elections were reported.

Meanwhile, a Conservative insider claimed Farage may have peaked too early, noting that prominent donor Lord Bamford recently contributed £150,000 to Kemi Badenoch's campaign, despite speculation he was planning to switch allegiance to Reform,

Starmer rules out punishing rebels after welfare bill climbdown

By Fatimah Idera



Sir Keir Starmer has decided not to punish the 49 Labour MPs who defied him by voting against the government's welfare reforms, despite being forced into a major climbdown in the Commons.

The MPs will keep the Labour whip, and insiders say there are no plans to impose any further disciplinary action following the biggest rebellion of Starmer's leadership so far.

The revolt came after the Prime Minister was forced to strip out almost all key elements of his welfare Bill to appease party backbenchers, delaying changes to Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and scrapping plans to tighten eligibility for some benefits. These reforms had been expected to save billions, but their removal now leaves a near £5 billion hole in the public finances.

Rachael Maskell, one of the leading rebels, said the Prime Minister's authority was disintegrating before our eyes and warned that unless he improved engagement with MPs, further rebellions were likely.

The government had hoped to reduce the cost of PIP paid to disabled people regardless of their employment status and cut the extra Universal Credit rate for people assessed as unable to work. But following intense internal pressure, Starmer agreed to delay any PIP changes until after a full review by Disability Minister Sir Stephen Timms, due in late 2026.

This delay effectively removes any chance of cost savings before the end of the current Parliament.

Helen Miller, the incoming director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, said the government would now save nothing from the plans. Pat McFadden, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, admitted there would be a financial hit and did not rule out tax rises in the Autumn Budget.

Despite growing unease, Downing Street is resisting calls for a reset or staff changes, insisting that key advisers including chief of staff Morgan McSweeney and MP liaison head Claire Reynolds will remain in place.

The decision not to punish rebels could

encourage further dissent on future legislation. That concern is especially acute as Labour nears the one-year anniversary of its landslide general election victory. While the party won a 165-seat majority, that margin has slightly narrowed due to resignations and suspensions.

Speaking to the media Maskell said Starmer's decision not to discipline MPs was the right response and urged him to improve dialogue with his backbenchers. "We were speaking on behalf of disabled people who have been punished," she said. "The weakness comes from the lack of engagement with backbenchers as they have got to build bridges or they will struggle."

She also called on Chancellor Rachel Reeves to consider wealth taxes in the upcoming Autumn Budget to address the growing fiscal gap estimated by some at up to £40 billion. "We can't increase the burden on small businesses and households," she said, urging a review of capital gains and other wealth based tax options.

Liverpool star Diogo Jota dies in car accident

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Liverpool forward Diogo Jota has died in a devastating car crash in Spain, just days after marrying his long-term partner. The Portuguese international was 28 years old, a father of three, and had only recently wed Rute Cardoso in a ceremony in Porto on 22 June.

Portuguese media were first to report the news, which has since been confirmed by Portugal's Prime Minister, Luís Montenegro, and the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF).

Jota was travelling with his younger brother, André Silva, 26, when their vehicle veered off the road in the province of Zamora. Both brothers were killed in the accident. André, also a professional footballer, played for Penafiel, a club in Portugal's second division.

Jota joined Liverpool from Wolverhampton Wanderers in 2020 and quickly became a fan favourite. He scored 65 goals in 182 appearances and played a key role in securing the Premier League, FA Cup, and League Cup titles. With Wolves, he lifted the Championship title in 2018. On the international stage, Jota was a two-time Nations League winner

with Portugal.

Described by teammates as warm, friendly, and humble, Jota was beloved in the dressing room and admired by supporters for his work ethic and sharp attacking instincts.

His sudden passing comes less than two weeks after celebrating his wedding to Rute. In a recent Instagram post, she shared images of their special day with the caption: "My dream came true." Jota replied: "I'm the lucky one."

Portuguese PM sends tribute to Diogo Jota's family

Portuguese Prime Minister Luís Montenegro paid tribute on social media, writing:

"The news of the death of Diogo Jota, an athlete who greatly honoured Portugal's name, and his brother is unexpected and tragic. I extend my deepest condolences to their family. It is a sad day for football and for national and international sports."

Pedro Proença, President of the FPF, echoed these sentiments in an emotional statement:

"Much more than a fantastic player, Diogo Jota was an extraordinary person, respected by all his teammates and opponents. Someone with an infectious joy and a reference in the community itself."

"The Portuguese Football Federation and the entire Portuguese football community are completely devastated by the deaths of Diogo Jota and André Silva. On my behalf, and on behalf of the FPF, I express my deepest condolences to the family and friends of both men, as well as to Liverpool FC and FC Penafiel."

The FPF has requested that Uefa observe a minute's silence ahead of Portugal's Women's Euro clash with Spain on Thursday, in honour of the two players.

"We have lost two champions," Proença added. "Their passing represents irreparable losses for Portuguese football, and we will do everything we can to honour their legacy every day."

Liverpool FC and the global footballing community are expected to pay tribute in the coming days as they mourn the loss of one of the game's most respected figures.

Diogo Jota: Liverpool to 'immortalise' number 20 shirt

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Liverpool Football Club, on Thursday, said Diogo Jota's No. 20 jersey at Liverpool will be "immortalised" by the club in memory of the Portuguese forward who tragically passed away in a car accident in Spain.

In a statement, Liverpool said: "And what cruelly has proved to be his final flourish in football saw Jota become a Premier League champion and a UEFA Nations League winner.

"The No. 20 will be rightly immortalised for his contributions as part of Liverpool's 2024-25 title-winners – the club's 20th – with his trademark shimmy and strike in front of the Kop to seal victory in April's Merseyside derby a poignant last goal of his life," the club announced in a tribute to its former player.

Tributes from all around the football community and otherwise have poured in for the Jota, 28, and his brother Andre Silva, 26, who also passed away in the accident.

Born in Porto, Jota started his playing career through Paços de Ferreira's youth setup before moving to Atlético Madrid in 2016, followed by a loan spell at Porto and a transfer to Wolverhampton Wanderers in the Premier League.

But it was at Liverpool that he had his best professional stint, winning the FA Cup and League Cup under manager Jurgen Klopp before being victorious in the Premier League under Arne Slot in the 2024/25 season.

He was also part of the Portugal squad that won the UEFA Nations League in 2019 and 2025.

Liverpool has never retired a jersey number in tribute to a player before. Details of the tribute to Jota are unclear, but fans have called for the club to make an exception for the gifted late forward.

Tributes pour in for Diogo Jota
Here are some of the tributes for the 28-year-old Portuguese forward.

"Liverpool Football Club are devastated by the tragic passing of Diogo Jota." —



club statement.

"It makes no sense. We were just together with the national team (they won the Nations League title last month), you had just gotten married. To your family, your wife, and your children, I send my condolences and wish them all the strength in the world. I know you will always be with them. Rest in Peace, Diogo and Andre. We will all miss you." — Cristiano Ronaldo.

"My prayers goes out to his loved ones during this time! May you all be guided and protected! YNWA (You'll Never Walk Alone) JOTA!!" — Basketball legend and Liverpool shareholder LeBron James.

"The news of the death of Diogo Jota, an athlete who greatly honoured Portugal's name, and his brother is unexpected and tragic." — Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro.

"I'm sure I speak for everyone in saying our first thoughts are going to be with his family and his friends in particular, but there are millions of Liverpool fans, but also football fans, who will also be shocked by this." — British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

"We have lost two champions. The passing of Diogo and Andre Silva represents irreparable losses for Portuguese football, and we will do everything to honor their legacy daily." — Portuguese Football Federation (FPF),

Diogo Jota won 49 senior caps and won the Nations League title twice, most recently last month.

"We are heartbroken. Diogo was adored by our fans, loved by his teammates and cherished by everyone who worked with him during his time at Wolves. The memories he created will never be forgotten. You will be truly missed, and always remembered." — Premier League side Wolverhampton Wanderers where Diogo Jota played from 2017-2020.

"Everyone at the Premier League is shocked and devastated to learn of the tragic passing of Diogo Jota and his brother Andre. Football has lost a champion who will be forever missed. We will continue to support our friends and colleagues at the club." — English Premier League.

"Porto are in mourning. It is with shock and deep sorrow that we send our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Diogo Jota and his brother Andre Silva. Rest in peace." — Porto statement, Diogo Jota spent a season there on loan (2016/17) and Andre was a youth player.

"Atletico de Madrid are deeply saddened by the tragic news of the passing of Diogo Jota, former player of the club, and his brother Andre." — statement from La Liga side where Diogo Jota played 2016-18.