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# Over 500,000 Nigerians pre-register for CVR in 5 days - INEC

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has revealed that over 505,906 Nigerians have successfully completed their online pre-registration for the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) within just five days of the exercise's resumption.

This was disclosed by the INEC Chairman, Professor Mahmood Yakubu, at the official launch of nationwide sensitisation activities for the CVR held in Abuja. Represented by National Commissioner, Mrs May Agbamuche-Mbu, Yakubu hailed the strong turnout as evidence of Nigerians' commitment to democracy.

"As at midnight of Thursday, 22nd August 2025, over 505,906 citizens have pre-registered since the portal opened five days ago. For us, this is a testament that Nigerians believe in our democracy and the efforts of the Commission to further strengthen the electoral process," he said.

The online pre-registration began on Monday, 18th August 2025, and will transition into the physical registration

phase starting Monday, 25th August 2025. From then, applicants—both new and returning—will be able to complete their registration, including biometric capture, at INEC offices across local government areas and states.

As part of its awareness drive, INEC launched a colourful sensitisation roadshow, organised by the Voter Education and Publicity Department. The event began at the INEC headquarters in Maitama and moved through major areas such as Banex Plaza and Wuse Market, where officials distributed flyers and engaged directly with citizens.

Similar sensitisation activities are being rolled out nationwide to ensure broader public participation.

Professor Yakubu encouraged all eligible Nigerians, particularly the youth and first-time voters who have just turned 18, to take advantage of the opportunity.

"Your Permanent Voter Card (PVC) is key to making your voice heard," he emphasised.

He also urged political parties, civil society organisations, the media, and stakeholders to support INEC's efforts in mobilising citizens for the exercise.

The CVR will operate across 811 registration centres, including all 774 local government offices, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

Via the dedicated online portal [www.cvr.inecnigeria.org](http://www.cvr.inecnigeria.org), citizens can:

- Pre-register
- Check their PVC status
- Locate registration centres
- Request PVC replacements
- Transfer registration
- Update personal information

Special arrangements have also been made to ensure that persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups can register without barriers.

INEC concluded by calling for collective national support, reaffirming that voter registration is a shared responsibility vital to democratic participation.



# THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

## PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

## PRODUCT COLOUR

## EFFECTIVE FROM DECEMBER 1, 2024

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

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

## POLITICAL COLOUR

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

## POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

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

## CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

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

## SPECIAL POSITIONS

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

## PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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

## PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

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

## ALLURE RATE

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

## PICTURE & CAPTION

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

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# Tinubu appoints new leadership for NTA

By Ismaeel Aleem

President Bola Tinubu has appointed a new Director-General and executive directors for the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) to revitalise the agency and enhance its service delivery.

The new appointees are Rotimi Pedro (South-West) as Director-General, Karimah Bello (North-West) as Executive Director of Marketing, Stella Din Jacob (North-Central) as Executive Director of News, and Sophia Essahmed (North-East) as Managing Director of NTA Enterprises Limited.

Tinubu tasked the new leadership to collaborate and drive innovation to reposition NTA as a leading broadcast agency.



He said the appointments reflected a strategic move to strengthen the agency's operations and align with modern broadcasting standards.

fresh perspectives and expertise to elevate NTA's role in delivering quality content and services to Nigerians.

The new team was expected to bring

# FG pledges to bring killers of worshippers in Katsina to justice

By Friday Omosola

The Federal Government, FG, has condemned the recent killing of worshippers in Malumfashi Local Government Area of Katsina State, vowing to find and prosecute those responsible for the "callous and barbaric attack."

According to a statement from the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, security forces are actively pursuing the perpetrators.

He assured the public that the criminals would be held accountable and that such acts of terror would not be tolerated.

Idris described the attack as an assault on both the local community and the nation's shared values.

He noted that President Bola Tinubu offered his deepest sympathies to the victims' families, the people of Malumfashi, and the state



government.

He also highlighted recent successes in its fight against terrorism, noting the capture of several high-profile terrorist leaders, including Mahmud al-Nigeri and his deputy, Abu Abba, as well as Mahmud Muhammad Usman (Abu Baraa) of the Ansaru group.

He said the individuals were on an international wanted list.

Idris said the arrests were presented as evidence of the progress being made in Nigeria's counter-terrorism operations under Tinubu's directive.



# Japan designates city of Kisarazu as 'hometown' for Nigerians to live, work

By Friday Omosola



In a move aimed at strengthening diplomatic ties and addressing its own demographic challenges, the Japanese government has named the city of Kisarazu as a designated “hometown” for Nigerians.

This initiative, announced during the 9th Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD9), is designed to attract talented young Nigerians to live and work in the country.

The new partnership will create a special visa category for highly skilled, innovative, and talented individuals from Nigeria.

It also extends to artisans and other blue-collar workers who are ready to upskill for the Japanese workforce.

The initiative is part of Japan’s broader strategy to deepen cultural

diplomacy, promote economic growth, and boost workforce productivity.

Nigeria’s Acting Ambassador to Japan, Florence Adeseke, and Kisarazu Mayor Yoshikuni Watanabe received a certificate confirming the designation.

The move is expected to foster a two-way exchange for manpower development, providing value to both the Japanese and Nigerian economies.

Japan has also assigned “hometowns” to three other African nations: Nagai for Tanzania, Sanjo for Ghana, and Imabari for Mozambique.

This arrangement builds on existing relationships between these cities and their respective African

countries, leveraging past connections such as Kisarazu’s role as the host town for the Nigerian contingent during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The Japanese government hopes that these designations will help to increase the populations of these cities and contribute to regional revitalisation efforts.

During the conference, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba announced a new investment of \$5.5 billion in Africa, emphasising the importance of private sector-led sustainable growth, youth and women empowerment, and regional integration.

He also acknowledged Japan’s ageing population and appealed to African nations for assistance in tackling this demographic challenge.

# Obasanjo raises alarm over “deeply compromised” judiciary in Nigeria

By Gbenga Olaleye



**F**ormer Nigerian President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, has voiced grave concerns over the current state of the nation’s judiciary, warning that the courts have become plagued by corruption and now function more as “courts of corruption” rather than custodians of justice.

The elder statesman made these remarks in his newly released book titled *Nigeria: Past and Future*, published by the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library.

Obasanjo, a two-time leader who governed Nigeria as both a military Head of State and later as a democratically elected President, lamented the “steady decline” in judicial integrity, describing the situation as a threat to the country’s stability and democratic future.

“The reputation of the Nigerian judiciary has steadily gone down from the four eras up till today. The rapidity of the precipitous fall, particularly in the Fourth Republic, is lamentable,” he wrote.

In a scathing critique, the former President suggested that justice in Nigeria has become commodified, warning that such developments risk breeding instability, violence, and lawlessness.

“The great fear of most well-meaning Nigerians and good friends of Nigeria is that where ‘justice’ is only available to the highest bidder, despair, anarchy, and violence would substitute justice, order, and hope,” Obasanjo stated.

He recounted a personal anecdote from a visit to a northern Nigerian state, ten years after leaving office. According to him, a governor pointed out six duplex houses near the government guest house, claiming they belonged to a judge who had acquired them through proceeds made while chairing election tribunals.

Turning his criticism towards the electoral system, Obasanjo did not spare the current Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Professor Mahmood Yakubu. He accused Yakubu of compromising the electoral

process since assuming office in 2015.

“No wonder politicians do not put much confidence in an election which the INEC of Professor Mahmood Yakubu polluted and grossly undermined to make a charade,” Obasanjo declared.

The remarks are likely to stir renewed debate about the state of Nigeria’s democratic institutions, particularly the independence of the judiciary and the credibility of elections. Obasanjo’s intervention adds weight to ongoing concerns expressed by civil society groups, legal practitioners, and political analysts over the integrity of governance structures in Africa’s most populous nation.

As reactions continue to pour in, many will be watching closely to see whether Obasanjo’s criticisms prompt a broader reckoning within Nigeria’s judicial and electoral systems—or whether they will be dismissed as yet another political broadside from a former leader known for his outspoken views.



# CDS links rising insecurity to 2027 elections, foreign funding

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Christopher Musa, has attributed the recent upsurge in killings and insecurity across Nigeria to political manoeuvrings ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Speaking during an interview on Channels Television's Politics Today on Thursday, Gen. Musa warned that some political actors may be deliberately stoking unrest to discredit the government's security efforts.

"In 2024, we recorded the lowest number of deaths. How come this year, suddenly, everything has spiked? Politics is coming, the election is coming," Musa noted. "Some individuals don't want peace because when there is peace, the government is seen to be doing well. When there is no peace, the government is seen to be failing."

He alleged that certain politicians are enabling criminal groups, including terrorists and bandits, to foster instability and undermine governance. "What do you gain from it?" he asked. "How do you kill the people you want to govern?"

Terrorism, legal challenges, foreign funding

Gen. Musa also cited local and international funding as key enablers of terrorism, revealing that the government is actively tracking terror financiers with the help of the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), the Department of State Services (DSS), and other intelligence agencies.

He acknowledged the slow pace of progress due to legal bottlenecks. "The process of naming terrorism financiers is on," he said, adding that arrests and prosecutions have begun. "Those behind the Owo bombing are already facing trial."

Musa criticised the current legal system, calling for sweeping reforms to fast-track terrorism cases and strengthen penalties. "Our legal system is frustrating. We need to unbundle it, make it faster and more stringent. Once people know they can get away with anything, impunity sets in."

He cited incidents in the South-South region where seized vessels often return



after paying minimal fines, leading the military to resort to destroying such assets despite environmental concerns. "That has brought more peace than allowing the legal bottlenecks to continue," he remarked.

Sahel instability, open borders

Highlighting regional security concerns, the CDS warned that Nigeria's porous 4,000km border and the instability in the Sahel—particularly Libya, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso—have created open markets for arms smuggling.

"Since Libya fell, the Sahel has been open. You can buy any weapon in those markets," Musa said, stressing that Nigeria's size and resources make it a key target.

He cautioned against Nigerians' over-hospitality to foreigners, saying many infiltrators pose as kin but later emerge as threats. "We have to think of security. Boko Haram started like that—welcoming strangers who later became monsters," he warned.

The CDS added that Nigeria is cooperating with its Sahelian neighbours through the Alliance of Sahel States to counter terrorism and border threats.

Technology gaps, cost of security

General Musa lamented the high cost and limited availability of modern military technology, noting that the war in Ukraine

has made precision weapons and surveillance equipment even more expensive and scarce.

"A medium-range precision weapon costs about \$100,000. How many can we buy in Naira?" he said. "That's why we have to use them strategically." He cited a recent successful drone strike that eliminated over 100 terrorists as an example of efficient resource use.

He stressed the need for real-time satellite surveillance to improve battlefield intelligence, admitting that Nigeria lacks this capacity due to the exorbitant costs. "These terrorists know we don't have certain technologies, and they capitalise on it."

Musa praised the federal government for approving the Defence Industrial Bill, which enables local production of military equipment. "If we produce, we can get more value. With global conflicts ongoing, even with money, you may not get the equipment," he added.

The Defence Chief concluded by urging Nigerians to support the Armed Forces by refusing to harbour or aid terrorists. "These terrorists thrive because some people still support them—with fuel, money, shelter. If we don't give them space, they won't thrive," he stated.

He emphasised that defeating terrorism requires a national effort: "Everybody must be on board."

# Stockbrokers call for public-private collaboration to achieve \$1 trillion economy

By Friday Omosola

The Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers (CIS) is urging the Nigerian government to forge a stronger public-private partnership to realise its goal of a \$1 trillion economy.

In a recent communique, the Institute stated that while the target is achievable, it will require a deliberate and coordinated effort to expand capital formation across all sectors.

The CIS, through its President, Oluropo Dada, emphasised that collaboration between the public and private sectors is crucial and must be institutionalised.

The group stressed the need for urgent reforms to not only unlock domestic capital but also to attract and sustain foreign investment.

They reiterated that a strong, transparent, and inclusive market is essential for achieving Nigeria's economic aspirations.

According to the communique, Nigeria needs a robust national savings strategy to mobilise local funds and channel them



into productive sectors like manufacturing and technology.

The Institute also recommended streamlining regulatory approvals to foster innovation and prevent delays in capital flows.

The CIS advised the Federal Government to ensure better coordination among market stakeholders to effectively implement fiscal, trade, and monetary

policies.

This, they believe, will boost investor confidence and attract long-term capital necessary for job creation and national wealth.

The Institute encouraged stakeholders to take advantage of the current positive momentum in the Nigerian capital market to contribute to the country's economic growth.

## 2027: ADC coalition deceiving Nigerians – Baba-Ahmed

By Friday Omosola

The 2023 vice-presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Datti Baba-Ahmed, says the opposition coalition floated on the platform of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) is deceiving Nigerians that it can rescue the country from the cesspool of underdevelopment.

"They are deceiving us," Baba-Ahmed said on Channels Television's Politics Today programme on Friday.

Baba-Ahmed was the running mate to Peter Obi in the 2023 presidential election, won by ex-Lagos governor Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The former LP vice-presidential candidate expressed willingness to be Obi's running mate in the 2027 presidential election.

Already, Obi, who has expressed his interest in running for president in the 2027 election, has identified with members of the ADC coalition like David Mark, Atiku Abubakar,



Nasir el-Rufai, Rotimi Amaechi and Rauf Aregbesola.

However, Baba-Ahmed said he desired that the former Anambra governor would remain in the Labour Party and be the party's flag

bearer in the next poll.

He said, "I'm in the Labour Party. I'm a Peter Obi man. I still want Peter Obi to come back to the Labour Party and contest the 2027 election."



# Alaafin cites British treaty in supremacy dispute with Ooni

By Gbenga Olaleye



A fresh controversy has erupted between two of Yorubaland's most prominent traditional rulers, the Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Akeem Owoade, and the Ooni of Ife, Oba Enitan Ogunwusi, over the conferment of the chieftaincy title Okanlomo of Yorubaland on businessman Dotun Sanusi.

During the unveiling of the 2geda media platform in Ibadan last weekend, the Ooni conferred the title on Sanusi. In response, the Alaafin issued a 48-hour ultimatum demanding the withdrawal of the title, calling the move illegitimate and warning of "consequences." The Ooni has yet to respond publicly, even as the deadline expired on Wednesday.

On Thursday, the Alaafin doubled down, asserting historical supremacy and citing a colonial-era treaty as proof. According to a statement by his media aide, Bode Durojaye, the Alaafin claimed the British signed a Treaty of Cessation with his office, recognising the Alaafin as the "Superior Head of the Yoruba Nation."

"The British... recognised lineage as

meaningful supremacy and legitimacy, preferring to sign the Treaty of Cessation with the Alaafin as the Superior Head of the Yoruba Nation," the statement read.

The Alaafin insisted he is not seeking supremacy over any Oba but has a sacred duty to uphold Yoruba tradition. "Alaafin has sworn to his ancestors to defend and add glamour to Yoruba tradition; he would never be in a supremacy battle with any king," it said.

**Olugbon, Cultural group call for calm**

In an effort to defuse the tension, the Olugbon of Orile-Igbon, Oba Francis Alao, urged both camps and their supporters to cease inflammatory remarks. Calling the title issue "speculative," the Olugbon maintained that both monarchs are committed to peace and unity.

"There is no supremacy battle. Ooni remains Ooni, and Alaafin remains Alaafin," he stated.

He appealed to Yoruba people globally to uphold the sacredness of their

traditional institutions and avoid media-fuelled division.

**Think Yoruba first warns against historical distortion**

Meanwhile, Think Yoruba First (TYF), a socio-cultural group, held a press conference warning against "distorted narratives" of Yoruba history. TYF's Lead Legal Consultant, Oluwatobi Sanwo, criticised a recently published academic work that claims Yoruba people were not original to Ile-Ife.

Calling the work "cultural defamation," TYF reaffirmed that Ile-Ife remains the undisputed cradle of Yoruba civilisation, as supported by oral traditions and the Ifa corpus.

"Yoruba history is sacred, Ile-Ife non-negotiable, and identity indivisible," Sanwo said.

TYF also called on academic institutions and government bodies to fund more research into African history and support indigenous scholarship.

# ADC coalition will collapse by September – Rep Leke Abejide

By Gbenga Olaleye



**H**onourable Leke Abejide, the sole member of the House of Representatives elected on the African Democratic Congress (ADC) platform, has predicted the collapse of the newly formed opposition coalition aligned with the party, stating that it will “crumble completely” by September.

Abejide made the remarks during an interview on Channels Television’s The Morning Brief on Friday, following the coalition’s poor performance in the August 16 by-elections, where it failed to secure a single seat.

“The coalition collapsed last Saturday; across the country, they could not even win one seat. That was the beginning of the end. By early next month, the coalition will collapse completely,” he declared.

Representing Yagba East/Yagba West/Mopamuro Federal Constituency in Kogi State, Abejide dismissed attempts by the coalition to “hijack” the ADC, asserting that he

remains the “landlord” of the party.

“I didn’t establish the party, but I am the one who kept it alive. I have never defected to a big party. I used the ADC to contest all my elections and also brought others into both the National Assembly and state assembly,” he said.

The lawmaker argued that major players in the coalition lack roots in the ADC. He pointed out that neither former Vice President Atiku Abubakar nor former Anambra Governor Peter Obi had ever been affiliated with the party.

Although prominent figures such as former Senate President David Mark and former Osun State Governor Rauf Aregbesola have recently joined the ADC, Abejide noted that they hold no official leadership roles.

In July, the coalition had named Mark as interim chairman and Aregbesola as national secretary of the party in preparation for the 2027 general elections.

The broader coalition also includes high-profile politicians such as:

- Nasir El-Rufai (former Kaduna Governor)
- Rotimi Amaechi (former Rivers Governor)
- Dino Melaye (Senator)
- Solomon Dalung (former Minister of Youth and Sports)
- Gabriel Suswam (former Benue Governor)
- Dele Momodu (publisher and political activist)

Abejide had earlier dismissed the alliance as a “gathering of selfish politicians” with no genuine plans for Nigeria, branding their ambition to use the ADC as a vehicle for the 2027 elections as mere “daydreaming.”



# "I'll keep making you proud", says Oyebanji as EKSU alumni give him APC nomination forms

By Friday Omosola

Governor Biodun Oyebanji of Ekiti State has pledged to continue making the Ekiti State University (EKSU) Alumni Association proud through impactful policies and projects that promote inclusive governance, economic growth, and educational advancement.

He gave this assurance when members of the alumni presented him with the All Progressives Congress (APC) expression of interest and nomination forms in support of his re-election bid for the June 2026 governorship election.

The presentation, held at the governor's office in Ado-Ekiti, came four days after the EKSU Alumni Solidarity Group for BAO purchased the forms at the APC National Secretariat in Abuja.

Oyebanji expressed deep gratitude to his fellow alumni for purchasing the forms on his behalf.

He highlighted his administration's efforts in rescuing the university through the strategic constitution of a governing council and management team, alongside interventions such as an increase in the institution's subvention.

He noted that further measures were underway to position EKSU as a world-class institution.

The governor also warned against the activities of certain political elements attempting to disrupt the peace of the state and discredit the achievements of the federal government.

He stressed that Ekiti people were not ungrateful and that his record of achievements would be enough to secure victory over his opponents.

Oyebanji appealed to party members to maintain peace and shun violence as political activities gather momentum.

He urged them not to retaliate when provoked, pointing out that opponents might resort to falsehoods and incitements to stir unrest.

"This is a wake-up call for me and other politicians that people are watching us,



they are watching our conduct and it is a wake-up call to APC members that there are other alternative platforms of support, even when the people decide to act otherwise, God will raise his own army.

"This is an emotional moment for me, but before I end my speech, let me appeal to all our party members that they should please be at peace with everyone. I am aware that politics is on, they are going to annoy you, lie about you, do a lot of things, don't fight with anybody. We need peace in this state, what they are trying to do is to draw you out for a fight so you can make them popular. They cannot take us out on our performance", the governor said.

Leaders of the Alumni Association explained that their gesture was motivated by Oyebanji's outstanding performance in office, which they urged him to replicate in his second term.

At the presentation of the nomination forms to the governor during a brief but colourful ceremony, the Life Patron of the Association and Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele, described Oyebanji as a trailblazer.

He commended his exemplary leadership and remarkable achievements, which have continued to attract praise and support from the association and other key stakeholders in the state.

Bamidele noted that Oyebanji's performance in critical sectors such as infrastructure, education, agriculture and human capital development had distinguished him as a visionary leader deserving of further support in the best interest of the people of the state.

He explained that these achievements were the reason the association decided to purchase the nomination forms for the governor, stressing that Oyebanji's leadership had not only brought pride to the alumni body but also transformed the fortunes of the state.

The Senate Leader further urged members of the association to serve as vibrant advocates of the Governor's achievements, noting that some political opponents had resorted to launching unjustified attacks on social media.

He added that the governor, in collaboration with National Assembly members, had been engaging relevant authorities, including the Presidency, on the deplorable federal roads in the state, which had recently led to the award of contracts for two of them.

In his remarks, the Global President of the Association, Seyi Idowu, unveiled the EKSU Alumni Solidarity Group for BAO, noting that the group's objective was to embark on house-to-house and social media campaigns in support of Oyebanji's re-election bid.

# PDP not dead, still a force to reckon with — Makinde

By Gbenga Olaleye

Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State has affirmed that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) remains alive and formidable despite ongoing internal challenges.

Speaking to journalists on Thursday after the PDP Southwest Zoning Consultative Summit in Lagos, Makinde stressed that the party is far from being a spent force and still commands significant support across the country.

"In all our states, they showed last Saturday that PDP is not dead. In most other places of the 12 states, PDP came second," he said, referring to recent electoral performances.

Makinde added that the results are a strong indication that, with sustained effort and unity, the PDP can regain the confidence of Nigerians and possibly return to power.

Focus on unity, not division

The governor also addressed internal rifts within the party, making it clear he would not engage in personal attacks or petty



disputes.

"Personally, when people go low or go into the gutters, I don't go with them. Some people are now going into the gutters. We will reach out to them," he said.

"I can disagree with people, but there shouldn't be anything personal here. That is democracy."

Makinde stressed the importance of

rebuilding the party's structure before discussing future leadership or presidential candidates.

"We haven't even gotten there. We need to have a party first before you start talking about presidential candidates," he noted. "Our efforts right now are directed towards having a vibrant and united PDP that Nigerians will be proud of and believe in again."

# Oyebanji names Olubamise Provost of Ekiti Health College

By Gbenga Olaleye

Governor Biodun Oyebanji of Ekiti State has appointed Dr Olubamise Moses as the new Provost of the State College of Health Sciences and Technology, Ijero-Ekiti.

The announcement was made in a statement signed by the governor's Chief Press Secretary, Olayinka Oyebode, on Friday.

The governor said Olubamise's selection followed a "rigorous and transparent selection process" conducted by the institution's Governing Council.

His four-year tenure is scheduled to begin on October 2, succeeding Dr (Mrs.) C.O. Adebayo, whose term concludes on September 30.

Alongside Olubamise's appointment, Oyebanji also appointed other key principal officers for the college, based on the recommendations of the Governing Council.



These include Ayodeji Sunday Emmanuel as Registrar, Dada Olaniyi Kolade as Bursar, and Folorunso Femi Joseph as Librarian.

A native of Ijan-Ekiti, Olubamise was born on December 2, 1975.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Physiology from the University of Ilorin, a Postgraduate Diploma in Education, and a Master of Science and a Ph.D. in Health Education, all from Ekiti State University.

He is also a Fellow of the College of Biomedical Engineering.

Olubamise's career at the College of Health Sciences and Technology began in 2006 as a Scientific Officer/Tutor.

He steadily rose through the ranks, achieving the position of Chief Lecturer in 2024. Before his new role as Provost, he served as the institution's Director of ICT.

Oyebanji urged Olubamise and the newly appointed principal officers to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to transform the college into a world-class institution.



# Adeleke vows to reopen Osun LGs, blasts opposition for stalling development

By Friday Omosola



**G**overnor Ademola Adeleke of Osun State has pledged to reopen and restore full operations in all local government areas (LGAs) across the state, following months of political gridlock and suspended activities.

Speaking on Thursday at a reception organised by the Osun State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Osogbo, Governor Adeleke likened the opposition to the Biblical Pharaoh, accusing political rivals of attempting to sabotage the state's progress.

"We will get our local government back and running. They want to hold Osun down. They are shocked with our delivery and transformation of Osun," Adeleke told a cheering crowd.

"We must sustain good governance. The good work must continue. We shall overcome the Pharaohs facing us."

## Ongoing LG crisis

Local government activities in Osun have remained paralysed since February 17, due to a fierce tussle between the PDP and the All Progressives Congress (APC) over control of council seats.

The APC cites a February 10, 2025, ruling by the Court of Appeal in Akure, which it says reinstated council officials elected during the October 15, 2022, elections, previously sacked by a Federal High Court in Osogbo.

However, the ruling PDP maintains that the chairmen and councillors elected during the February 22, 2025, elections are the legitimate occupants of the offices, insisting they hold the people's mandate.

## Call for voter mobilisation

Governor Adeleke also used the platform to rally citizens to participate in the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise, ahead of the 2026 governorship election.

"We must sustain the tempo. Osun people are with us. God is with us," he said.

"We must not return to bad governance again."

## Party leaders urge unity

In their remarks, Speaker of the Osun State House of Assembly, Adewale Egbedun, and Deputy Senate Minority Leader, Senator Lere Oyewumi, called on PDP members to remain united and focused.

They echoed the governor's appeal for residents to get their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) in preparation for the next election cycle.

# Benue assembly suspends four lawmakers over failed speaker impeachment plot

By Ismaeel Aleem



**T**he Benue State House of Assembly on Friday suspended four lawmakers for three months over an alleged secret plot to impeach the Speaker, Hyacinth Dajoh.

Those suspended include Terna Shimawua (Kian Constituency), Cyril Ekong (Obi Constituency), Alfred Berger (Makurdi North), and James Umoru (Apa Constituency).

The Assembly accused them of attempting to destabilise proceedings under Dajoh's leadership by initiating an unauthorised impeachment plan.

Their suspension was announced during plenary in Makurdi.

House leaders said the actions of the lawmakers violated Assembly

rules, particularly by bypassing due process in their impeachment bid.

The suspension bars them from legislative activities for the next six months, a move that has stirred public debate and heightened speculation of deeper political tensions in the state.

This is not the first time such action has been taken.

On August 5, five members—including Shimawua—were suspended for three sittings over alleged tampering with a committee report on misconduct by the Otukpo Local Government Chairman, Maxwell Ogiri.

Political observers suggest the repeated suspensions reflect

internal power struggles within the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and broader strains between the legislature and the executive.

The decision has also drawn criticism from constitutional experts. Lawyer Terna Tahav argued that suspensions exceeding the 14-day limit stipulated in House rules may be unconstitutional.

Meanwhile, constituents in the affected areas have raised concerns over reduced representation.

Advocacy groups such as Guardians of Democracy have urged the National Assembly to intervene, warning that the current suspension could impair the Assembly's ability to form a quorum for legislative business.



# House of Rep calls for provision of specialised ambulances for hard-to-reach areas By Helen Okechukwu

The chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Health Services, Hon Amos Magaji, has called for the introduction of specialised ambulances to serve communities in remote parts of the country due to the high rate of maternal mortality.

Magaji made this utterance on Friday, when the committee paid a courtesy visit at Sir Kashim Ibrahim House.

Reacting to the chairman demands, the Deputy Governor, Dr Hadiza Balarabe described maternal deaths as a tragedy that must not be normalised, stressing the need for targeted national interventions to save women's lives during childbirth.

She maintained that the Kaduna State government remains steadfast in its investment in human capital development and continues to prioritise measures aimed at reducing maternal



mortality.

Earlier, Hon Magaji had commended Kaduna State for consistently dedicating more than 15% of its yearly budget to health, in line with the Abuja Declaration.

He noted that beyond the impressive allocations, the state government had also ensured prompt release of funds, a move he said reflects genuine commitment to financing healthcare.

The committee chairman further applauded the state's top ranking in healthcare delivery nationwide in the previous year, attributing it to the strengthening of systems that support human development.

Nonetheless, he voiced concern about the persistently high maternal mortality rate in Nigeria, describing it as a matter of urgent national attention.

Dr Balarabe praised the lawmakers for embarking on an on-the-ground review of the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund (BHCPF), noting that such oversight fosters accountability and better health outcomes for citizens.

# Diri calls on politicians to improve Nigeria's healthcare By Helen Okechukwu

Bayelsa State Governor Douye Diri has said Nigeria's healthcare system can be significantly improved if political leaders and stakeholders show greater commitment and adopt modern approaches to medical practice.

Mr Diri gave the charge on Friday in Yenagoa while receiving members of the Ministerial Monitoring Committee on the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) High-Impact Intervention in Medical Sciences.

He was represented at the event by his deputy, Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, says News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) report.

The governor observed that the country's health sector still relied on traditional methods and urged institutions to embrace emerging fields such as biomedical engineering and emergency medicine.

He noted that doing so would enhance healthcare delivery and reduce the number of professionals seeking opportunities



abroad.

According to him, Bayelsa is determined to strengthen both health and education, stressing that the two sectors remain central to improving people's welfare.

"We have been looking for partnerships such as this to enable us to do better. Again, I think we should start looking at modern trends in medicine because Nigeria is still very traditional in medical practice," he

said.

The governor pledged that his administration would continue investing resources in health and education to build human capacity and improve service delivery.

Earlier, the leader of the monitoring team, Dr Saad Ahmed, explained that the federal government launched the high-impact project to revitalise medical schools and expand the production of healthcare professionals.

He disclosed that 18 medical schools across Nigeria had been selected to benefit from the initiative, which focuses on upgrading infrastructure and equipment for programmes in medicine, dentistry, nursing sciences, and pharmacy.

Dr Ahmed added that the intervention was designed as a strategic response to the growing trend of medical personnel leaving the country for work opportunities abroad.

# NGO urges Rivers community to take charge of energy future

By Helen Okechukwu



In a bid to secure healthier living conditions and economic self-reliance, a Non-governmental organization (NGO) has called on the people of Erema, an oil producing community in Rivers State to embrace renewable energy, describing it as the key to overcoming the damaging legacy of oil exploration.

The Quest for Growth and Development Foundation made the call during a one-day sensitisation meeting organised to mark the 2025 Africa Week of Action, themed “Kicks Total Out of Africa.”

The forum, held between 18 and 24 August, sought to draw attention to energy justice and the need for communities to reclaim control of their environment.

Coordinator of the Foundation, Mr Smith Nwokocha, said the dominance of fossil fuels had come at a heavy cost for Niger Delta residents, leaving behind degraded farmland, polluted waterways, and worsening health conditions.

“We want to give the community a strong voice and sensitise them to know their rights and educate them to own their energy system. With the same energy used to promote fossil fuels that destroy lives and health, why not switch it to renewable alternatives?,” he said.

Nwokocha maintained that renewable energy could provide local empowerment, open up new economic opportunities, and ensure safer living conditions for residents who continue to bear the brunt of oil exploration.

Traditional ruler of Erema, His Royal Highness Eze Alexander Osa, backed the call, describing the toll of oil activities on the community as devastating.

“Our community needs help. The oil company that come have remove everything from our ground,” the monarch lamented. “Our ground is not yielding any food again. So many things

are causing harm to us.

Some residents echoed his concerns, stressing that oil dependence had outlived its usefulness. They called for a new focus on agriculture, renewable energy, and small-scale enterprises as a way of securing sustainable livelihoods while mitigating the long-term health and social consequences of petroleum exploitation.

The Africa Week of Action is marked annually across the continent as part of efforts to mobilise communities against the harmful impacts of fossil fuels and to promote cleaner energy systems in line with global climate goals.





# Experts warn 1.27m die yearly from infections

By Helen Okechukwu



**T**he World Animal Protection (WAP) has raised alarm that antibiotic-resistant infections are already claiming about 1.27 million lives yearly, with the figure projected to rise to 10 million annually by 2050 if urgent action is not taken.

Patrick Mvinde, WAP's Research and Planning Manager, made the disclosure in Abuja during a media workshop on "Implication of Industrial Animal Farming in Nigeria" convened by the Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF).

Mvinde attributed the trend to industrial animal farming, where animals are confined in overcrowded and highly controlled environments.

He explained that about 75% of the 80 billion animals reared globally, mainly chickens, pigs and cattle, are raised under such intensive systems, which he said compromise both animal welfare and human health.

He noted that three-quarters of all antibiotics produced worldwide are used in farming, particularly in factory-style operations, and that residues from these drugs enter the food chain and the environment, fuelling antibiotic resistance in humans.

Mvinde highlighted that these practices not only cause animal suffering but also heighten the risk of zoonotic diseases such as Avian Influenza, Swine Flu, and even outbreaks like COVID-19.

World Health Organisation (WHO) identify zoonotic disease as an infectious disease that jumps from a non-human animals to humans. It is transmitted through food, water and environment

The researcher urged governments to shift support from industrial livestock systems to smallholder farmers, emphasising that local production offers safer, more sustainable food systems.

Also speaking, Programme Manager at HEDA Resource Centre, Mr Mayowa Shobo, warned against the spread of global industrial farming models into Africa.

Citing a study conducted across five Nigerian states, he said industrial farms degrade ecosystems, undermine community rights, and offer poor-quality jobs with low wages, says Businessday report

Shobo further stressed that large-scale land acquisitions for industrial farms often sideline women and vulnerable groups, while leaving communities with little say in decisions affecting their livelihoods.

The programme manager of HEDA Resource Centre called on government to prioritise investments in health facilities, flood control, early warning systems and support for smallholder farmers through access to seeds and farm inputs.

# No Oba rules beyond his domain, says Law Professor as Alaafin, Ooni supremacy dispute deepens

By **Fatimah Idera**

For some days, the Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Abimbola Owoade, and the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, have dominated headlines amid an alleged supremacy dispute. The rift reportedly began after Oba Owoade issued a 48-hour ultimatum to Oba Ogunwusi, demanding that he revoke the chieftaincy title of "Okanlomo of Yorubaland," which was conferred on businessman Dotun Sanusi.

According to the report, Oba Abimbola Owoade claimed that the Ooni of Ife lacked the exclusive right to bestow such a chieftaincy title. Oba Abimbola Owoade further asserted that the right to confer Yoruba chieftaincy titles is exclusive to the Alaafin, while the Ooni of Ife's authority is restricted to Ile-Ife and its surrounding areas, including Ife Central, Ife North, and Ife South.

However, the Alaafin of Oyo has denied being involved in any supremacy battle with the Ooni of Ife or any other Yoruba monarch. In a statement released by his Director of Media and Publicity, Bode Durojaiye, in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, the monarch stated that, as a custodian of Yoruba culture and tradition, he does not need to engage in a battle for supremacy with any Oba. The statement added that the Alaafin has always prioritised the safety and welfare of his subjects, and would never compromise tradition, culture, and the development of his people for personal gain.

Despite this clarification, speculation about a supremacy battle between the two prominent Yoruba kings continues to dominate newspapers across Nigeria. To de-escalate the crisis, Yoruba elders have intervened. Speaking with Punch on Tuesday, the Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland, Iba Gani Adams, stated that he had reached out to Yoruba leaders to mediate in the crisis.

"It is an issue between two fathers," Adams said. "I have been calling Yoruba leaders to look for a way to resolve it. We don't want the unity of Yorubaland to be tampered with now. I will be in touch with the two fathers. I will talk to them, but I have talked to some of the Yoruba leaders that we should weigh in on the issue. Before I became Aare Ona Kakanfo, I had been very, very close to the palace of Ooni. At the same time, I

was very close to the late Alaafin."

Speaking in an exclusive interview with New Daily Prime, Professor Sesan Fabamise, a law lecturer at Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, clarified that "no Yoruba Oba has jurisdiction that extends beyond the town he governs."

He said: "There is no basis for the rivalry between the Alaafin and the Ooni. Both of them are well-respected Obas in Nigeria and in the diaspora. The sky is big enough for birds to fly without hitting one another."



"As far as I am concerned, there is no conflict that can threaten the unity of Yorubaland. If you want to write the names of two people on a paper, one name must come first, as long as you do not want to juxtapose the names with each other."

Professor Fabamise observed that the two monarchs are young men who should not be drawn into perpetuating old rivalries. He stressed that they ought to be counselled to concentrate on the progress and development of their respective domains, noting that their legacies would be remembered with honour if they made a positive impact on their people.

Furthermore, Professor Fabamise stated that he was not aware of any Supreme Court judgment establishing the supremacy of a particular Oba in Yorubaland, cautioning that no ruling

should be taken out of context.

"If we see such a judgment, we will be able to analyse it and make dispassionate comments. The claim of superiority by an Oba simply because the name of his ancestors appeared in one document or the other is just a happenstance. Anyone could have been picked by the colonialists, and more often than not, they chose the most vulnerable to sign those phantom documents."

"Any Oba claiming his superiority from a British-signed treaty or agreement is just being disingenuous. Superiority can only be ascertained through oral history, and as far as this is concerned, there is no controversy as to who the most superior Oba is in Yorubaland."

According to him, the institution of traditional rulership is regulated by the Chieftaincy Laws of individual states.

He explained that no law grants any traditional ruler overarching authority across the entire Yoruba nation.

"It is, therefore, superfluous to confer a pan-Yoruba chieftaincy title on anybody because there is no town called Yorubaland. Even during the Oyo Empire's suzerainty, no Oba could confer any pan-Yoruba chieftaincy title. Perhaps the Alaafin could confer a pan-Oyo Empire title like Aare Ona Kakanfo of the Oyo Empire on a person. But one must recall that it was not the whole of Yorubaland that was under the dominion of Oyo."

"The Akokos, the Owos, Ikale, Ondo, and so on were never under Oyo suzerainty. The Ekitis resisted Oyo incursion, and this led to the Ekiti Parapo War, which ended in a 'no victor, no vanquished' settlement on March 14, 1893. So, effectively, you can say that Ekiti was not a part of Oyo Empire suzerainty. No Yoruba Oba has jurisdiction beyond the town he governs."

"On 6 August 1861, King Dosunmu (Docemo) ceded Lagos Island to the British, and this was taken as ceding the whole of Southern Nigeria. Even the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria was done by some chosen individuals who signed the treaty on behalf of all of us," he noted.



# Burna Boy reveals shocking alternatives if music had failed

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigeria's Grammy Award-winning singer, Damini Ogulu, widely known as Burna Boy, has stunned fans with a startling revelation about what he might have become if music had not worked out.

In an interaction with one of his followers, the Afrobeats star listed several unusual, and in some cases troubling, alternatives he might have pursued outside of music.

Burna Boy said that without a career as a singer, he could have ended up as an oil thief, a fraudster, a suicide bomber, or even a prostitute. He also mentioned the possibility of becoming a basketball player.

"There are many options," Burna Boy explained during the exchange. "I could be stealing oil. I could be playing basketball. I could be a fraudster, a suicide bomber, anything, including a prostitute."

His words, though said with a tone that some fans believe was playful or sarcastic, have stirred reactions online. Many listeners expressed shock, while others argued that the singer was using exaggeration to highlight how uncertain life can be without a clear path.

For Burna Boy, music clearly provided that path. Over the past decade, he has built a reputation as one of Africa's most successful and influential artists. His rise from Port Harcourt to the global stage has been marked by bold lyrics, genre-bending sounds, and a commanding stage presence that earned him the title "African Giant."

His recent achievements show how far he has come. The singer now holds the record as the African artist with the most entries on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 chart.

This milestone came after his latest collaboration with American rapper Gunna entered the prestigious chart. Their joint track, WGFT, from Gunna's new album *The Last Wun*, debuted at number 96 on the Hot 100 this week.

That entry raised Burna Boy's



Billboard total to seven songs, a feat no other African artist has achieved. Even more remarkable is the fact that he has managed to debut on the Hot 100 for five consecutive years, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and now 2025.

The consistency speaks to his global reach. Burna Boy is no longer only an Afrobeats star; he has become a fixture in the international music scene. His collaborations with global acts, from Beyoncé to Ed Sheeran, and now Gunna, have positioned him at the centre of Afrobeats' worldwide expansion.

Still, his comments about what might have been if music had failed cast light on the thin line between success and obscurity for many young Africans. Growing up in Port Harcourt, a city known both for its oil wealth and its struggles with crime and unemployment, Burna Boy witnessed firsthand the challenges young men face when opportunities are scarce. Some analysts believe his comments, however provocative, reflect that harsh reality.

Others argue that the artist was using humour and exaggeration to underline his gratitude for where music has brought him. By mentioning extreme and controversial alternatives, Burna Boy may have been reminding fans of

the risks he avoided by finding his purpose in music.

Whatever the case, his story remains one of resilience and reinvention. From releasing his breakthrough single *Like to Party* in 2012, to winning a Grammy in 2021 with *Twice As Tall*, Burna Boy has proven himself as an artist capable of blending African rhythms with global sounds. His ability to cross boundaries has not only expanded his audience but also reshaped how the world views Afrobeats.

His comments may have shocked many, but they also sparked conversations about choices, environment, and destiny. For millions of his fans, they serve as a reminder that without determination and opportunity, even the most gifted individuals can easily take dangerous paths.

For Burna Boy, music was the lifeline. Today, rather than living the life of a criminal or a drifter, he commands global stages, wins international awards, and continues to put Nigerian music on the world map.

As he celebrates his new Billboard entry, one thing is clear: Burna Boy chose the right path, and the world is listening.

# Ayra Starr fires back at 'Dancing with the devil' accusation after Roc Nation deal

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian Afrobeats star Ayra Starr has responded sharply to an American woman who accused her of "dancing with the devil" following her recent signing with Jay-Z's Roc Nation.

The controversy began after Ayra Starr shared photos of herself on her X handle, joking about her body changes. In the pictures, the 22-year-old singer appeared in a dress that highlighted her chest. She captioned the post: "Really dnt knw hw to act with these new tiddiesss."

While many fans reacted with laughter and compliments, one American woman turned the conversation in another direction. The woman claimed that Ayra Starr's playful post was proof of a deeper agenda linked to her new record deal.

"One thing about working with Jay Z, you gotta dance with the devil baby... literally," the woman commented, suggesting that signing with Roc Nation required compromising one's faith or morals.

Ayra Starr wasted no time in shutting down the claim. Replying directly to the comment, she wrote: "Back to sender babyyyy."

Since signing with Jay-Z's Roc Nation in July, Ayra Starr has found herself at the centre of online rumours and conspiracy theories. The global deal, which was celebrated by fans and fellow artists as a major milestone for Afrobeats, has also fueled speculation from critics who link American music executives to occult practices.

Last month, blogs circulated an unverified claim that Ayra Starr's five-year Roc Nation contract barred her from having a boyfriend or starting a family during the duration of the agreement. The rumour suggested that her career growth would come at the cost of her personal life.

Ayra Starr quickly debunked the story, dismissing it as baseless gossip. She wrote on X that no such clause existed in her contract and urged fans not to believe



false reports.

Despite the controversies, Ayra Starr's career continues to soar. Known for hits like *Away*, *Rush*, and *Bloody Samaritan*, she has become one of the leading female voices in Afrobeats. Her energetic performances and bold style have earned her a loyal fanbase across Africa, Europe, and America.

The Roc Nation deal, announced in July, was seen as a strategic move to expand her influence globally. The partnership gives her access to international resources, promotional opportunities, and collaborations that could elevate her to the level of Afrobeats superstars like Burna Boy, Wizkid, and Tems.

For Ayra Starr, the journey has been rapid. From being signed to Mavin Records by Don Jazzy in 2020 to performing on some of the world's biggest stages within three years, her rise has been remarkable. With Roc Nation now backing her, industry experts believe her reach will only grow wider.

Following the latest accusation, many of her fans rushed to defend her online. Some praised her for responding with humour rather than anger. "Ayra's clapback was short and classy. No need to

explain yourself to people who don't believe in you," one fan posted.

Others criticised the tendency to link African artists' success with occult practices. "Why is it that every time a Nigerian artist makes it big, people start shouting 'Illuminati' and 'devil'? Let's just celebrate her wins," another wrote.

For rising stars like Ayra Starr, global recognition often comes with scrutiny. As Afrobeats continues to dominate charts worldwide, artists are increasingly targeted with rumours, conspiracy theories, and online criticism. Industry analysts say learning to navigate this spotlight is now part of the job.

Ayra Starr appears unfazed. Her lighthearted response, "Back to sender babyyyy", shows she is not willing to let conspiracy theories distract her from her music.

With her Roc Nation deal in full swing and her career gaining momentum, Ayra Starr seems focused on bigger goals. As she prepares for new music releases and international tours, one thing is clear: the singer is determined to rise above the noise.



# Naira Marley offers relationship advice to singles

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Controversial Nigerian singer and rapper, Azeez Fashola, popularly known as Naira Marley, has offered relationship advice to single people.

The Marlian Records boss took to his X handle to urge singles to be cautious about who they choose to date or marry. According to him, peace in the home is more important than appearances, wealth, or status.

He wrote: “Be careful who you date and marry, the toughest prison is a home without peace.”

The advice immediately sparked conversations among fans, many of whom noted that it was unusual for the outspoken singer, often associated with controversy and street anthems, to share such reflective words about family and relationships.

Despite his high-profile lifestyle and reputation in the music industry, Naira Marley has remained secretive about his private life. He has publicly revealed that he is a father to twin daughters, Aishat and Simiat, but the identity of their mother has never been confirmed.

In April this year, Instagram model and TikToker, Sandra Benede, claimed that she was the mother of the twins. The claim drew significant public attention, but she later denied it, leaving fans puzzled about the true story.

Naira Marley himself has never addressed the issue directly, preferring to keep his family matters away from the spotlight.

Rumours of a romantic relationship between Naira Marley and Sandra Benede first circulated in 2022. The speculation began when Sandra posted a cozy video of herself and the singer in bed while celebrating his birthday.

The video went viral, fueling assumptions that the two were romantically involved. However, neither of them officially confirmed the relationship. Over time, the rumours died down as both stopped appearing



together in public or posting about each other on social media.

Their apparent separation further blurred the lines between speculation and reality, leaving fans with unanswered questions about Naira Marley’s love life.

Naira Marley’s latest advice has been interpreted as a rare glimpse into his softer side. Known for his bold and often controversial statements, the singer has built his career around the “Marlian” brand, a movement that celebrates freedom, rebellion, and street credibility.

Yet, in this case, his message highlights values of peace, stability, and careful decision-making in relationships. Fans noted that the statement stood out because it contrasts with his usual persona as the unapologetic street king of Afrobeats and rap.

Since rising to fame with his breakout hit Issa Goal in 2017, Naira Marley has become one of the most talked-about figures in Nigerian entertainment. Beyond his music, his lifestyle, legal battles, and outspoken personality have

made him a polarising figure.

Still, his fanbase, the “Marlians”, remain loyal, often rallying behind him in times of controversy. This latest post shows that, while he thrives in chaos, he also recognizes the importance of peace in personal relationships.

For many young Nigerians navigating modern relationships, Naira Marley’s words resonated as timely advice. With rising divorce rates, stories of domestic conflict, and social media-driven relationship pressures, his reminder about choosing the right partner struck a chord.

Whether inspired by his personal experiences or simply shared as general wisdom, his message stands as one of the few moments where the artist steps away from his controversial image to embrace a reflective tone.

As Naira Marley continues to balance his music, business, and private life, fans will no doubt keep watching for the next chapter in his ever-dramatic journey.

# Jaywon slams billboard, says his song 'This Year' outshines afrobeats classics

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian singer Jaywon has sparked a heated debate after declaring that his 2012 hit single, *This Year*, deserves far more recognition than it has received.

The singer, whose real name is Iledare Oluwajuwonlo, accused both Afrobeats and gospel artists of copying the template of the record while Billboard ignored its lasting impact.

The controversy began when Billboard released its list of the Top 50 Best Afrobeats Songs of All Time earlier this week.

The ranking placed 2Face Idibia's *African Queen* at number one. The list also featured some of Afrobeats' most popular anthems, including Wizkid's *Ojuelegba*, Flavour's *Nwa Baby*, Rema's *Calm Down*, and CKay's *Love Nwantiti*.

Jaywon was not impressed. He took to his social media page on X to air his frustrations and defend the cultural weight of *This Year*.

"*This Year* by Jaywon had more viral moments and cultural impact than some tracks Billboard decided to rank," he wrote.

The singer argued that the song's influence remains unmatched, even more than a decade after its release. He pointed out that, unlike many tracks on the Billboard list, *This Year* has continued to trend every December, becoming a theme song for celebrations, crossovers, and New Year's prayers.

"Trending since 2012 and still going strong. Tell me, who else has pulled that off? Hate is inevitable. Year after year, both gospel and Afrobeats acts copy the same vibe, yet we remain unshaken," he posted.

Jaywon did not hold back. He insisted that no track on Billboard's list can rival the cultural impact of his song. He went as far as daring critics to "cry harder" if they disagreed.

For many Nigerians, *This Year* is more than just a hit single. The record, often described as a prophetic anthem, has become a soundtrack to end-of-year festivities.



Churches play it during crossover services. Party DJs spin it at December concerts. Families sing along to it during New Year's Eve gatherings. Its chorus, filled with hope, prayer, and celebration, continues to resonate with fans from different walks of life.

This timeless appeal, Jaywon argues, is what makes the record stand out. Unlike some of the Billboard picks, which may dominate charts briefly before fading, *This Year* enjoys annual revivals and fresh moments of virality. The singer believes that alone should have earned it a place among the greatest Afrobeats songs ever.

The exclusion has reignited discussions about how Afrobeats' history is being documented by global platforms.

While Billboard's list aims to celebrate the genre's global rise, critics say it often overlooks songs that hold deep cultural meaning within Africa.

For instance, *This Year* might not have charted internationally like *Calm Down* or *Love Nwantiti*, but its spiritual and celebratory tone has given it an evergreen status in Nigeria and beyond.

Jaywon's frustration also highlights a recurring theme in the Afrobeats community: the struggle between global recognition and local cultural relevance.

Artists often feel that songs which shaped

communities at home are sidelined in favour of tracks that gained international streams and chart success.

Industry observers note that while Billboard relied on metrics such as global chart performance, streaming numbers, and cultural exports, songs like *This Year* demonstrate that influence cannot always be measured by numbers. Its yearly resurgence speaks to its emotional power and spiritual connection with audiences.

Jaywon, who rose to fame in the late 2000s, has built a career on blending Afro-pop rhythms with soulful, prayerful lyrics. *This Year* remains his signature track and has outlived many of his peers' hits.

His insistence that it deserves a spot among Afrobeats' greatest reflects both pride and frustration with how global institutions define the genre's legacy.

As debates continue, one fact remains clear: *This Year* has etched itself permanently into Nigeria's cultural calendar.

Every December, it returns like clockwork, uniting fans across churches, streets, and parties. Few Afrobeats songs can claim that kind of longevity.

Whether Billboard acknowledges it or not, Jaywon's *This Year* is already an all-time anthem in the hearts of millions.



# DJ Tunez hints Wizkid is secretly married to Jada Pollock

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



**W**izkid's official disc jockey, DJ Tunez, has sparked fresh conversations about the singer's private life after hinting that the Afrobeats superstar may already be married.

The revelation came during a joint livestream with popular TikTokker, Peller, where DJ Tunez was asked directly about Wizkid's marital status.

"You've been saying Wizkid has a family, is he married?" Peller inquired.

In response, DJ Tunez smiled and replied: "Something like that."

Pressed further, the DJ described Jada Pollock, Wizkid's manager and the mother of three of his children, as the "Chairlady of the house," a phrase that many fans

interpreted as confirmation of a marital relationship.

Wizkid, born Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun, and Jada Pollock have shared both a professional and personal relationship for several years. Pollock, who doubles as his manager, is the mother of his two sons and daughter.

Despite being one of the most talked-about celebrity couples in Nigeria, the pair have never publicly announced an engagement or wedding. DJ Tunez's comments have therefore reignited speculation that the two may have tied the knot privately.

Wizkid has built a reputation for guarding his personal life. Unlike many of his peers, he rarely shares details about his relationships or family online. His posts often focus on music and performances,

leaving fans to piece together details of his private affairs.

This approach aligns with how his relationship with Pollock has evolved, often away from the limelight yet occasionally surfacing through subtle social media exchanges or family sightings.

As of now, neither Wizkid nor Jada Pollock has confirmed DJ Tunez's statement. The couple has also not addressed the growing speculation about a secret marriage.

Whether DJ Tunez's comment was a slip, a playful tease, or a genuine confirmation remains unclear. What is certain, however, is that Wizkid and Jada share a strong bond as both co-parents and business partners, a dynamic that has fueled admiration and curiosity in equal measure.

# Six Productions of fifty on Billboard's Afrobeats All-Time list, Don Jazzy boast

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



**V**eteran Nigerian music producer and Mavin Records boss, Don Jazzy, has expressed pride after securing six production credits on Billboard's Top 50 Best Afrobeats Songs of All Time list.

The list, released earlier this week, highlights the most iconic tracks that shaped Afrobeats into a global phenomenon.

Among the chosen songs are several produced by Don Jazzy during his years leading Mo'Hits Records and later Mavin Records.

Taking to his X handle, the 41-year-old producer reacted with excitement. "Inside the 50 I sha produced 6. I try Abi I no try," he wrote, drawing praise from fans and fellow artists who lauded his enduring influence on the genre.

Don Jazzy's fingerprints are all over the list. His production credits include Wande Coal's 'Bumper 2 Bumper' and 'Kiss Your Hand', D'banj's 'Oliver Twist' and 'Fall In Love', and two of his celebrated works with Tiwa Savage, 'Eminado' and 'Dorobucci.'

With six entries, Don Jazzy stands out as the Afrobeats producer with the highest number of production credits on Billboard's list.

Read Also: Terry G claims Billboard "robbed" him over afrobeats list snub

The recognition reinforces Don Jazzy's role as a cornerstone of Afrobeats. Since co-founding Mo'Hits Records in the mid-2000s alongside D'banj, he has been behind some of the most enduring records in Nigerian music history. From club anthems to soulful love songs, his versatility has made him one of the most respected figures in the industry.

Wande Coal's Bumper 2 Bumper and Kiss Your Hand helped define an era of Afropop that bridged the late 2000s and early 2010s. D'banj's Oliver Twist, which became an international smash, introduced global audiences to Afrobeats before the genre's full explosion. Fall In Love, another D'banj classic, remains one of Nigeria's most beloved wedding songs.

With Tiwa Savage, Don Jazzy helped shape the sound of modern Afropop. Eminado and Dorobucci were chart-topping hits that cemented Mavin Records as a powerhouse after the Mo'Hits split in 2012.

Billboard's Top 50 list ranked 2Face Idibia's timeless ballad African Queen as the greatest Afrobeats song of all time. Other tracks in the top five include Wizkid's Ojuelegba, Flavour's Nwa Baby, Rema's Calm Down, and CKay's

Love Nwantiti.

While the list has sparked debate among fans and artists over exclusions and rankings, Don Jazzy's inclusion six times underscores his consistent impact across decades. For many, it is a fitting acknowledgement of his role in laying the groundwork for Afrobeats' global rise.

Beyond nostalgia, Don Jazzy continues to shape the future of Afrobeats. Under Mavin Records, he has launched the careers of new stars such as Rema, Ayra Starr, Ladipoe, and Crayon. These artists are carrying Afrobeats into new global territories, a testament to Don Jazzy's ability to evolve with the times.

Even as the genre expands worldwide, his legacy remains central to its story. From Lagos nightclubs to international charts, Don Jazzy's productions have defined eras and bridged generations.

For a producer who often downplays his achievements, his quiet acknowledgement of Billboard's recognition resonated deeply. In his own words, he simply asked, "I try Abi I no try?"

For fans and industry observers alike, the answer was unanimous: Don Jazzy did more than try, he set the standard.



# Mr Eazi says music alone couldn't fund his wedding to Temi Otedola

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

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His insistence that it deserves a spot among Afrobeats' greatest reflects both pride and frustration with how global institutions define the genre's legacy.

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# Jay-Z crowned world's richest musician with \$2.5b fortune

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

American rapper and business mogul Sean Carter, better known as Jay-Z, has officially been named the richest musician in the world.

According to the latest report by Forbes, the Roc Nation founder now holds a staggering net worth of \$2.5 billion, making him not only the wealthiest figure in music but also one of the richest entertainers on the planet.

Jay-Z's fortune does not come from music sales alone. Instead, it reflects decades of diverse investments and carefully built business ventures. The 54-year-old rapper has transformed his career from a Brooklyn lyricist into a global empire that spans fashion, beverages, sports, streaming, and real estate.

His wealth includes stakes in Roc Nation, his all-in-one entertainment company that manages artists, athletes, and produces major cultural events. He also owns Armand de Brignac, a luxury champagne brand popularly known as Ace of Spades, and D'Ussé, a premium cognac brand. Both beverage companies are highly profitable and continue to grow their global market share.

Jay-Z further expanded his portfolio by selling stakes in some of his companies at record profits. He made a major payday from the sale of his music streaming platform Tidal, which was acquired by Square (now Block, Inc.), a company owned by Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey. In addition, the sale of his clothing line Rocawear, which once defined hip-hop fashion in the early 2000s, added hundreds of millions to his fortune.

Outside of entertainment, Jay-Z has investments in real estate, hospitality, technology, and startups, further solidifying his reputation as one of the sharpest business minds in entertainment. His influence stretches from luxury hotels to Silicon Valley, where he has quietly backed fast-rising tech companies.

Jay-Z's journey from the Marcy Projects of Brooklyn to becoming the world's richest musician has been



described as the ultimate rags-to-riches story. Once hustling to sell his music independently, he now stands as a billionaire whose wealth rivals that of global tycoons.

Meanwhile, fellow superstar Taylor Swift remains the world's richest female musician, with an estimated fortune of \$1.6 billion. Swift achieved billionaire status in 2023, becoming the first artist in history to reach that milestone solely from her songs and tours.

Her wealth is fueled by record-breaking global tours, album sales, streaming dominance, and her ongoing project to re-record and re-release her earlier albums under Taylor's Version. Forbes noted that Swift's rise is unique because, unlike Jay-Z, Rihanna, or other music billionaires, she did not rely on side businesses. Instead, she built her fortune directly from her artistry and relentless touring schedule.

The combined wealth of Jay-Z and Taylor Swift reflects the growing power of musicians as global business leaders. Beyond topping charts, today's most successful artists are building empires that stretch across industries, from fashion to technology.

Music analysts say Jay-Z's achievement is especially significant

because he pioneered the modern blueprint of the "artist-entrepreneur."

His career demonstrated that musicians can move beyond contracts with record labels to become full-scale business executives. Many of today's younger stars, including Rihanna and Drake, have followed a similar model by building business empires alongside their music careers.

Fans and industry figures reacted to the news of Jay-Z's \$2.5 billion fortune with admiration and surprise. Many pointed out that the rapper, who once rapped about hustling in the streets, now symbolises global wealth and influence.

Jay-Z himself has often spoken about his focus on building wealth that lasts beyond music. In interviews, he has emphasised ownership, investment, and creating opportunities for the next generation. His success story continues to inspire entrepreneurs, artists, and fans worldwide.

With \$2.5 billion to his name, Jay-Z has set a new benchmark for musicians who dream of turning fame into lasting financial power. And as Taylor Swift continues to rewrite music history with her own billion-dollar empire, the future of the music business looks richer than ever, literally.



# Selena Gomez opens up on motherhood dreams despite health struggles

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

American singer, songwriter, and actress Selena Gomez has expressed optimism about becoming a mother one day, despite health challenges that prevent her from carrying a pregnancy.

The 33-year-old entertainer, who has battled lupus for several years, said she remains hopeful about building a family through surrogacy or adoption.

Speaking in a recent interview with Harper's Bazaar, Gomez said she is grateful that people are willing to help make her motherhood dream a reality.

"I find it a blessing that wonderful people are willing to do surrogacy or adoption, which are both huge possibilities for me," she said.

Gomez acknowledged that her path to becoming a mother might not look traditional, but she emphasized that it would not change her feelings about her future child.

She explained: "It'll look a little different, but I don't care. It'll be my baby."

The Only Murders in the Building star has long been candid about her health struggles. In 2015, she revealed she had been diagnosed with lupus, an autoimmune disease that attacks healthy cells and organs. In 2017, she underwent a kidney transplant after the disease affected her kidneys.

Last year, Gomez admitted that doctors had advised her that pregnancy could endanger her life due to complications tied to lupus and her ongoing treatments.

Despite the challenges, her latest comments reflect her resilience and determination to pursue motherhood in her own way.

Gomez's remarks come just months after she and her boyfriend, record producer Benny Blanco, got engaged in December 2024. The couple have been open about their affection for



each other, with Blanco often speaking publicly about their relationship.

Blanco has also shared that he looks forward to raising children with Gomez, a sentiment that has reportedly strengthened her hopes about starting a family.

Their engagement has drawn attention not just because of Gomez's celebrity status, but also because fans see Blanco as a source of emotional stability for the singer, who has often been in the spotlight for both her music and her personal struggles.

Selena Gomez has become a voice of resilience in Hollywood. Beyond her music and acting career, she has used her platform to advocate for mental health awareness, body positivity, and chronic illness visibility.

She has been transparent about her battles with anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder, often using her story to inspire others facing similar challenges.

Motherhood, she admitted, has always been a dream. Her openness about the difficulties of achieving it naturally only underscores her

willingness to explore alternative ways to fulfill that dream.

Gomez's comments also highlight broader conversations around surrogacy and adoption in the entertainment industry and beyond. Increasingly, celebrities and public figures have opened up about taking non-traditional routes to parenthood due to medical, personal, or lifestyle reasons.

For Gomez, the decision is deeply personal but not without hope. Fans and advocates alike see her willingness to speak out as an encouragement to women who may feel pressured or judged for choosing alternative motherhood paths.

For Gomez, the future remains filled with possibilities. While her health limits certain choices, her optimism about surrogacy and adoption shows that her dream of motherhood is alive and well.

With a supportive fiancé by her side and millions of fans rooting for her, Gomez is determined to embrace motherhood, on her own terms.

As she put it simply: "It'll be my baby."

# Lil Nas X arrested after altercation with police in L.A

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Rapper Lil Nas X has been arrested in Los Angeles following an early-morning altercation with police, and briefly hospitalised after officers suspected a drug overdose.

Police said they encountered the 26-year-old artist, whose real name is Montero Lamar Hill, walking along Ventura Boulevard in Studio City shortly before 6am on Thursday. He was reportedly wearing only underwear and cowboy boots.

According to authorities, video footage obtained by TMZ appeared to show the two-time Grammy winner claiming he was on his way to a party.

Los Angeles police spokesperson Charles Miller said the singer was booked on suspicion of misdemeanour battery after charging at officers who confronted him. He was first taken to hospital for evaluation before being transferred to Valley Jail in Van Nuys a few hours later. He now faces a further charge of obstructing an officer.

About Nas x

Lil Nas X rose to prominence with his 2019 single *Old Town Road*, which spent 19 weeks at the top of the US charts, and has since had hits with *Industry Baby* and *Montero (Call Me By Your Name)*.

The rapper is preparing to release his new album *Dreamboy* later this year, following the release of several singles this spring. In recent weeks he returned

to social media, sharing snippets of new music and posting images of himself in costumes under the Instagram name “Queen Madeleine”.

This is not the first time the musician has required hospital treatment. In April, he revealed he had suffered sudden facial paralysis, sharing a video with fans in which he said he had “lost control” of half his face.





# 1,209 arrested, \$97M recovered in INTERPOL's Africa cybercrime crackdown

By Eniola Amadu

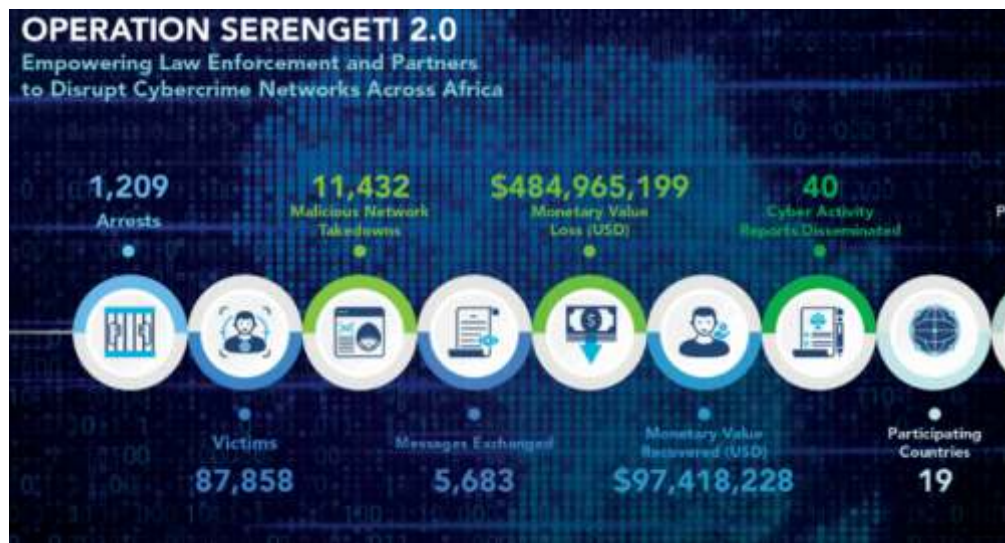
INTERPOL has arrested 1,209 cybercrime suspects across 18 African countries in a coordinated operation that ran from June to August 2025, recovering USD 97.4 million and dismantling more than 11,000 malicious infrastructures in a major crackdown on online scams, ransomware, and business email compromise (BEC).

Codenamed Operation Serengeti 2.0, the exercise brought together law enforcement agencies from Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, with support from the United Kingdom.

The joint effort focused on tackling high-impact cybercrime.

INTERPOL confirmed that it dismantled 11,432 malicious infrastructures and intercepted illicit transactions worth millions.

"The crackdown recovered USD 97.4 million and dismantled 11,432 malicious infrastructures, underscoring the global



reach of cybercrime and the urgent need for cross-border cooperation," the agency said.

Authorities in Angola reported shutting down 25 illegal cryptocurrency mining centres operated by 60 Chinese nationals, seizing equipment worth USD 37 million along with 45 unauthorised power stations.

In Zambia, officials broke up a crypto fraud syndicate that defrauded 65,000 victims of about USD 300 million,

arresting 15 suspects and seizing critical evidence.

Another raid uncovered a scam centre linked to human trafficking, resulting in the confiscation of 372 forged passports.

Meanwhile, police in Côte d'Ivoire disrupted a transnational inheritance fraud connected to Germany, arresting the ringleader and seizing cash, jewellery, vehicles, and documents valued at USD 1.6 million.

# US to review 55 million visa holders for possible violations

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The United States government has announced that it is reviewing more than 55 million foreign nationals who hold valid visas for possible violations of entry and residency rules.

According to the Associated Press, the State Department confirmed that all tourists and other visa holders are subject to "continuous vetting" to determine whether they remain eligible to enter or stay in the country.

Officials said that if new information is discovered showing a holder is ineligible, the visa will be revoked. Those already present in the US would



face deportation.

The State Department noted that factors under review include

overstaying the authorised period of stay, records of criminal activity, posing a threat to public safety, or links to terrorist organisations.

"We review all available information as part of our vetting, including law enforcement or immigration records, or any other information that comes to light after visa issuance indicating a potential ineligibility," the department said.

The measure forms part of President Donald Trump's broader crackdown on foreigners in the United States.

# Government poised to scrap mandatory GCSE resits in English and Maths

By **Fatimah Idera**

**T**he Government is considering scrapping compulsory GCSE resits in English and maths, in what could mark the most significant reform to post-16 education in a decade.

At present, pupils who fail to achieve a grade 4 (equivalent to a C under the old system) in either subject at 16 are required to resit them if they remain in education.

The policy was designed to ensure school leavers met the minimum standards needed for work and further study, since most employers demand passes in both subjects.

However, the approach has come under growing criticism amid falling pass rates. This summer, only 23.1 per cent of those retaking English achieved a pass, with the figure falling to 18.2 per cent in maths. Overall, GCSE results released this week showed pass rates in both subjects at their lowest levels in a decade.

## GSCE proposals set

Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson has already warned that four in five white working-class pupils are failing to secure the English and maths skills essential for success. While she has not confirmed the future of resits, an independent review of the curriculum commissioned by Labour is expected to recommend scrapping the current system.

A Whitehall source told the media that ministers are “considering all options” but accepted that ending mandatory retakes was “likely to be on the cards”.

Among the proposals being studied are:

**Incremental testing:** assessing pupils in stages on core skills rather than requiring them to pass a full GCSE



resit.

**Driving licence-style certificates:** issuing credentials to prove competence in fundamental literacy and numeracy.

**Dual retake system:** offering academic students the chance to resit GCSEs while directing others towards practical “functional skills” qualifications.

## Concerns Over Current Model

Experts say the current resit policy is failing students. Many colleges push pupils into November retakes immediately after GCSE failure, giving little time to improve. Schools also face funding incentives that tie post-16 places to ongoing English and maths study.

One review panel member said colleges had become “stuck in a flawed mindset” that assumes students will eventually “strike lucky” with repeated resits. “You only pass if you actually have the knowledge and skills to meet the standard,” they said.

Professor Becky Francis, who is leading the review, branded the

persistently low resit pass rates indefensible. While she insists English and maths should remain part of post-16 education, she has called for greater nuance to ensure learners achieve positive outcomes.

## Pressure on Ministers

Labour is expected to face questions over whether reforming the system risks lowering standards. But supporters argue the current model is leaving tens of thousands of pupils behind.

Last year, only 35 per cent of white British pupils on free school meals passed English and maths at GCSE. Almost two-thirds around 57,000 children were forced into resits this summer, with many likely to fail again.

Ms Phillipson has warned the impact goes far beyond individual pupils. “It’s not just the life chances of those children that are being damaged it’s also the health of our society as a whole. Swathes of human capability and productivity lost,” she said.



# Home office to stop accommodating asylum seekers at hotel

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

**T**he Home Office has scrapped plans to use a Norfolk hotel to house asylum seekers after weeks of controversy and the threat of legal action from the local council.

The Park Hotel in Diss, currently accommodating women and children seeking asylum, was earmarked for conversion to accommodate single men. The proposal sparked protests in the town last month and drew sharp criticism from South Norfolk Council, which argued the move would disrupt families who had begun to integrate into the local community.

On Friday, the Conservative-run council said it had been told by the Home Office that the hotel would no longer be used beyond the current contract. A Home Office spokesperson confirmed: "We are not planning to use this site beyond the end of the current contract," adding that the decision was part of wider efforts to reduce reliance on hotels.

Council leader Daniel Elmer welcomed the decision but accused ministers of mishandling the process. "The Home Office thought it could just impose this change and that we would accept it. But there is a right way of doing things and the decision by the Home Office was just plain wrong," he said.

He added: "Although I welcome the decision, in reality it does mean that the women and children who we fought so hard to protect will now be moved elsewhere, and that is a shame. South Norfolk, and Diss in particular, has always opened its arms to people in need and that should make us all very proud."

The hotel's owners had warned they would rather shut the premises than accept the transfer of single men, while local campaigners argued the move risked inflaming community tensions.

Wider legal challenges



The Norfolk decision follows a separate development earlier this week when the High Court granted Epping Forest District Council a temporary injunction preventing asylum seekers from being placed at The Bell Hotel in Essex. That case has prompted other councils to consider legal action against the Home Office.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has said the government will appeal the injunction, insisting ministers remain committed to closing asylum hotels but that it must be done "in a properly managed way."

Pressure on asylum housing

The dispute highlights the continued strain on Britain's asylum system. Official figures show there were 32,059 asylum seekers in UK hotels at the end of June, up 8% on the same period in 2023, though lower than the peak of more than 56,000 in September last year.

The Home Office said that since summer 2023, the number of hotels used for asylum accommodation had been cut from more than 400 to fewer than 210, saving millions of pounds

each day.

Adrian Ramsay, Green Party MP for Waveney Valley, which covers Diss, said the decision provided "welcome clarity" after weeks of uncertainty. "I feel for the families who have been living in the hotel who have been caught in the middle of the arguments about its future. Poor planning from the Home Office has resulted in weeks of uncertainty, and I hope they will now be given proper support and information," he said.

Ongoing controversy

The Home Office has faced mounting criticism over its use of hotels, which at one point were costing the taxpayer nearly £9 million a day. While ministers insist they are working to close all asylum hotels, refugee charities warn that sudden relocations risk further disruption for vulnerable families.

With the Park Hotel decision, the government has avoided another legal battle with a local authority. But as councils across England signal growing resistance to the policy, the struggle over asylum housing shows little sign of easing.

# Labour loses 200,000 members under Keir Starmer as party reports £3.8m deficit

By **Fatimah Idera**



**L**abour membership a political party in the UK has fallen by nearly 200,000 since Keir Starmer became leader, according to the party's latest accounts. Despite Labour's landslide general election victory in July 2024, one in ten members left the party over the course of the year, with 37,215 departing in 2024 alone.

Labour's membership stood at 333,235 at the end of last year, down significantly from its peak of 532,046 under former leader Jeremy Corbyn in 2019.

Despite the decline, Labour remains the largest political party in the UK. Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, has seen a surge in support since the election, claiming 234,460 members via its website, though this figure was not verified in its official accounts.

Other parties also saw changes in membership:

**Liberal Democrats:** Fell slightly from 86,599 to 83,174

**Green Party:** Gained around 5,000 members

**Conservatives:** Do not routinely publish membership figures, but saw a £500,000 rise in income from membership fees. Around 131,680 members voted in last year's Tory leadership contest, down 40,000 from the 2022 race.

**Financial losses for Labour and Tories**

Labour also reported a £3.8 million loss after spending £94.5 million during the most expensive general election in UK history. The Conservative Party spent £52 million and posted a loss of £1.9 million.

By contrast, smaller parties recorded surpluses:

**Reform UK:** £1.5 million surplus

**Liberal Democrats:** £1.1 million surplus

**Green Party:** £232,457 surplus

**Corbyn Launches Rival Party**

Jeremy Corbyn, now expelled from Labour, has launched a new left-wing party alongside former Labour MP Zarah Sultana — a possible challenge to Starmer's leadership from the left.

Labour submitted its accounts late to the Electoral Commission, instead publishing them on its own website. A party spokesperson blamed administrative delays and said the documents would be published by the Commission imminently. The Commission confirmed it would consider the late submission in line with our enforcement policy.



# Britain braced for autumn of strikes as public sector unrest escalates

By Fatimah Idera

Britain is heading into an autumn of strikes that threaten to disrupt essential services, with industrial action planned across transport, healthcare, and local government.

The RMT union confirmed on Thursday that the London Underground will face a week of strikes starting September 5, just as schools reopen and passenger numbers surge. Signallers, engineers, and service control staff will walk out on staggered days, causing severe disruption across the capital.

The strike follows members' rejection of a 3.4 per cent pay offer, with union leaders also citing demands over Boxing Day payments, shorter working weeks, and long-standing grievances about fatigue and shift patterns.

While tube drivers are not joining the action, the walkouts are expected to bring large parts of the network to a standstill.

Economists warned that the disruption could cost London's economy up to £250m, with lost revenue for Transport for London (TfL), heavier congestion, and extended travel times.

Eddie Dempsey, RMT's general secretary, defended the action: "Our members are not asking for a king's ransom. Fatigue and extreme shift rotations are damaging their health and well-being – issues ignored for years by London Underground management."

Sadiq Khan, the Labour Mayor of London, urged both sides to resume talks, insisting: "Nobody wants to see strike action or disruption for Londoners."

## Public Sector Unrest Deepens

The tube strikes are set to trigger a wider wave of industrial unrest this winter.

Healthcare: GPs are threatening winter



walkouts over funding and demands for greater control of new community hubs. Resident doctors, despite securing a 22 per cent pay deal, retain a mandate to strike until January. Nurses have also rejected a 3.6 per cent offer, with the prospect of joining fresh walkouts alongside paramedics and cleaners. NHS strikes have already led to 1.5 million cancelled appointments since 2022.

**Local Government:** In Birmingham, bin collectors are locked in a dispute with the city council and could extend a five-month strike through Christmas, leaving rubbish piling up on the streets. Unite, Labour's biggest donor, has threatened to withdraw financial support from the party over the row and suspended Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner's membership for "failing to back workers."

## Political and Economic Pressure

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer had sought to prevent a new wave of strikes by approving £10bn in backdated public sector pay rises after Labour's election victory. But the concessions

have not curbed unrest, with more than 280,000 working days lost to strikes in the first half of 2025 alone.

The unrest adds to pressure on Chancellor Rachel Reeves, who faces a £50bn hole in the public finances, and risks overshadowing Sir Keir's planned political reset next month to show Britain is not broken.

Wes Streeting, the Health Secretary, said ministers had a duty to resist excessive pay demands: "We can't do everything for everyone, everywhere, all at once."

Critics accuse Labour of weakness, with the Conservatives charging the government with putting "union bosses ahead of working people." Shadow transport secretary Richard Holden said: "Rachel Reeves blew £10bn on inflation-busting pay rises, and the unions have smelt weakness ever since."

The UK's public sector pay bill is now forecast to rise by nearly £7bn next year, £3bn more than economists had anticipated.

# Ukraine strike on Druzhba pipeline cuts Russian oil to Hungary and Slovakia

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Ukraine has struck a key pumping station on the Druzhba oil pipeline, cutting Russian oil supplies to Hungary and Slovakia, the only EU states still dependent on the route.

The Unecha pumping station, located in Russia's Bryansk region, was hit in a combined attack involving HIMARS rockets and drones, according to Bryansk's governor, Alexander Bogomaz. Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces commander, Robert Brovdi, confirmed responsibility for the strike.

Hungary and Slovakia warned the European Commission that supplies could be suspended for at least five days. "Without this pipeline, the safe supply of our countries is simply not possible," their foreign ministers, Péter Szijjártó and Juraj Blahár, said in a joint letter.

Budapest condemned the strike, with Szijjártó writing on Facebook that the Druzhba pipeline had been attacked "for the third time in a short time". He called it "another attack on the energy security

of our country. Another attempt to drag us into war."

Hungary's prime minister, Viktor Orbán, who has resisted EU sanctions against Moscow and maintained ties with Vladimir Putin, criticised Kyiv directly. In a message posted online, Orbán accused Ukraine of hostility: "Hungary supports Ukraine with electricity and petrol, in return they bomb pipeline that supply us. Very unfriendly move!"

The post was accompanied by a handwritten note apparently signed by Donald Trump, reading: "Viktor, I do not like hearing this, I am very angry about it. Tell Slovakia. You are my great friend, Donald."

Hungary and Slovakia remain outliers in the EU after refusing to join the bloc's ban on Russian oil imports following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The EU has pledged to phase out Russian energy entirely by 2027, but both governments argue their economies depend on continued supplies.

The latest disruption marks the second interruption to Druzhba flows this week. The Soviet-era pipeline, which also transports Kazakh oil to Germany, was not affecting German deliveries, officials in Berlin said.

The strike comes as the war entered its fourth year with no sign of resolution. Despite attempts by Trump to broker talks between Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky, Russia has intensified its assault, launching a wave of air strikes near Ukraine's EU border and continuing bombardments of major cities.

Ukraine has in turn targeted Russian oil facilities, driving wholesale petrol prices in Russia to record highs.

Slovakia's pro-Russian prime minister, Robert Fico, has backed Orbán in opposing tougher EU measures against Moscow. Earlier this year, Fico became the only EU leader to attend Russia's 9 May military parade in Moscow, and met Putin at the Kremlin in May.



# Judge orders closure of Florida's Alligator Alcatraz'

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A federal judge in Miami has ordered the closure of the Trump administration's controversial immigration detention centre known as "Alligator Alcatraz", ruling that the facility must be shut down within 60 days.

District Court Judge Kathleen Williams delivered her decision late on Thursday, prohibiting any further detainees from being transferred to the site while it is wound down. The ruling follows a temporary restraining order issued two weeks ago halting construction at the remote tented camp, which has faced heavy criticism over poor conditions, alleged abuse of detainees and lack of due process.

In her 82-page judgment, released on Friday, Williams concluded that the detention camp was causing severe and irreparable harm to the fragile Everglades ecosystem. She noted that proposals to develop the same site into a large airport had been rejected in the 1960s for similar environmental reasons.

"Since that time, every Florida governor, every Florida senator, and countless local and national political figures, including presidents, have publicly pledged their unequivocal support for the restoration, conservation and protection of the Everglades," she wrote. "This order does nothing more than uphold the basic requirements of legislation designed to fulfil those promises."

Williams ordered that no new construction may take place at the site, and that no increase in detainee numbers, currently estimated at about 700, would be permitted. After the 60-day period, all construction materials, fencing, generators and fixtures must be removed.

The ruling marks a significant victory



for environmental groups and a Native American tribe that brought the lawsuit against the state of Florida and the federal government. They argued that the rapid eight-day construction of the jail at a disused airfield in June had caused extensive damage to wetlands and further endangered protected species.

"This is a landmark victory for the Everglades and countless Americans who believe this imperilled wilderness should be protected, not exploited," said Eve Samples, executive director of Friends of the Everglades, one of the groups involved in the case. "It sends a clear message that environmental laws must be respected by leaders at the highest levels of our government, and there are consequences for ignoring them."

The ruling represents a setback for the Trump administration's immigration agenda. The camp, which at its peak held around 1,400 detainees, was

promoted by the former president as a facility for "some of the most vicious people on the planet", despite the fact that hundreds of detainees had no criminal record or pending charges.

Florida Department of Emergency Management, others mum

The Florida Department of Emergency Management, which operates the camp on behalf of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Department of Homeland Security have not yet commented. However, state lawyers indicated in court last week that they would appeal any ruling against them, according to the Miami Herald.

Hundreds of detainees were transferred out of "Alligator Alcatraz" last weekend in anticipation of the court's decision. Florida's Republican governor, Ron DeSantis, has already announced plans to open a new immigration detention centre at a disused prison near Gainesville.

# Kim Jong-un praises North Korean troops fighting in Ukraine as heroes

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**K**im Jong-un has praised North Korean soldiers sent to fight alongside Russian forces in Ukraine, describing them as “heroes” during a ceremony in Pyongyang to honour troops who recently returned from the conflict.

According to state media, the North Korean leader said his forces had demonstrated the “fighting spirit of the heroes” in their role in retaking Russia’s Kursk region from Ukrainian troops, who had gained a foothold there last year.

“The combat activities of overseas operational forces ... proved without regret the power of the heroic [North Korean] army,” Kim was quoted by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) as saying.

The ceremony, held earlier this week, included tributes at a memorial for soldiers killed in Ukraine, as well as a concert and banquet attended by relatives of the dead. KCNA reported

that Kim personally met officers of the overseas operation and expressed “warm militant encouragement” to the commanders and troops.

The events mark the latest public display of gratitude from Pyongyang, in contrast to the secrecy that surrounded the initial deployment of North Korean forces to Russia last autumn.

The tributes also came days after Russian president Vladimir Putin praised North Korean troops in a message to Kim marking the anniversary of Korea’s liberation from Japanese colonial rule. Putin described them as “heroic”, recalling that Soviet and Korean forces had fought together against Japan during the second world war.

“The bonds of militant friendship, goodwill and mutual aid which were consolidated in the days of the war long ago remain solid and reliable even today,” Putin said.

Russia and North Korea have strengthened their military and diplomatic ties over the past year, raising international concern that Pyongyang’s troops are gaining valuable combat experience which could later be used against South Korea.

The two countries signed a mutual defence pact last year, and in April North Korea confirmed for the first time that it had sent soldiers to the frontline in Ukraine. Intelligence agencies in South Korea and the West estimate that Pyongyang deployed more than 10,000 troops to Russia’s Kursk region in 2024, along with artillery, missiles and long-range rocket systems.

South Korean lawmakers said in April that around 600 North Korean soldiers had been killed from a total deployment of 15,000, citing intelligence briefings.



# Indonesia considers hosting 2,000 Palestinians for medical care

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Indonesian government is drawing up plans to provide temporary treatment for 2,000 Palestinians from Gaza, holding high-level discussions on logistics, legality and foreign policy implications of the sensitive proposal.

Earlier this month, Jakarta announced its intention to extend medical assistance, with Galang island, south of Singapore, identified as one possible site. The island previously hosted a camp for Vietnamese refugees and more recently served as the location of a pandemic hospital.

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation and a longstanding supporter of Palestinian statehood, does not have diplomatic relations with Israel. Officials have disclosed few details, but the matter has been discussed across several ministries, including security, health and foreign affairs.

"These discussions have focused on logistical feasibility, medical readiness, and legal frameworks," said Dave Laksono, deputy chair of parliament's commission I, which oversees defence and foreign affairs. "Commission I has also been briefed on the strategic implications, particularly regarding Indonesia's foreign policy posture and regional stability."

Galang remains under consideration because of its history as a humanitarian site and existing infrastructure, but other locations in West Java and Central Java, closer to major hospitals, are also being studied. The use of large military hospitals in Jakarta and even facilities in Jordan, where President Prabowo Subianto maintains close ties, have been raised as alternatives.



Officials admit the plan is politically delicate. Some Islamic leaders have accused the government of being "deceived" by Israel and questioned what guarantees exist to ensure the Palestinians' eventual return.

"One of the issues is how to make sure the right to return of the Palestinians can be respected," said Abdul Kadir Jailani, director general for Asian, Pacific and African affairs at the foreign ministry. "We have to make sure it is consistent with international humanitarian law. Approval and support from Palestinian authorities and regional countries are essential."

Jailani stressed no final decision had been made, citing the "high level of complexity" surrounding both political and technical aspects.

Indonesia has in recent days conducted humanitarian airdrops of aid into Gaza, coordinated with

Jordan. The proposal comes amid reports that Israel has sought US backing to persuade other countries to accept Palestinians from Gaza, with Indonesia named as one of those approached.

While permanent relocation would be highly controversial, domestic criticism of the plan has so far been muted. "At the moment there are so many issues in the headlines that the Gaza issue is not widely reported," said political analyst Kennedy Muslim.

Laksono emphasised that any initiative would be temporary and coordinated with international agencies such as UNRWA and the ICRC. "Our objective is to provide care, not resettlement, and to support their eventual return once conditions in Gaza allow," he said.

"This is a delicate undertaking, and we are fully aware of the geopolitical sensitivities involved."

# Sri Lanka's ex-president, Wickremesinghe, arrested over misuse of funds

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Sri Lanka's former president Ranil Wickremesinghe has been arrested in connection with the alleged misuse of public funds, police confirmed on Friday.

The 76-year-old faces three charges relating to foreign trips he undertook during his tenure as president between 2022 and 2024. He appeared before magistrates in Colombo after providing a statement to the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) earlier in the day.

According to investigators, Wickremesinghe made 23 foreign trips while in office at a cost exceeding 600 million rupees (£1.4m). Friday's arrest is linked to a stopover in the United Kingdom in 2023, following his attendance at a G77 summit in Cuba. On that occasion, he and his wife participated in a ceremony at the University of Wolverhampton. The CID alleges the visit was private and financed using state funds, a claim Wickremesinghe has rejected.

The case was first referred to court in June. Wickremesinghe is the first former president to be arrested in the island nation's history.

A seasoned political figure, he has held office as prime minister six times since the 1990s and became president in 2022 after Gotabaya



Rajapaksa fled the country during a mass uprising sparked by the worst economic crisis in Sri Lanka's history. He was widely credited with steering the nation towards recovery but was defeated in the 2024 election by left-leaning candidate Anura Kumara Disسانayake.

Wickremesinghe, a lawyer by profession from a prominent family of politicians and businessmen, has been a fixture of Sri Lankan politics since first entering parliament in 1977. As leader of the United National Party

(UNP) from 1994, he introduced a disciplinary commission aimed at removing corrupt figures and was often praised for attempting to restore the party's credibility.

Despite repeated bids for the presidency, Wickremesinghe only secured the role after Rajapaksa's dramatic departure. His party, having been nearly wiped out in the 2020 elections, was left with him as its sole parliamentary representative before his sudden elevation to the presidency

# Russian missiles strike US electronics firm in Ukraine

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Russia launched one of its largest aerial assaults of the war overnight, striking an American electronics manufacturer in western Ukraine, officials in Kyiv have said.

The Ukrainian air force reported that 574 drones and 40 missiles were fired, largely targeting regions far from the eastern and southern front lines. The bombardment killed one person and injured 15.

Among the sites hit was a facility belonging to Flex Ltd, a Texas-based multinational firm, in the city of Mukachevo in Zakarpattia. Video footage showed a large fire engulfing the premises. Around 600 workers were inside at the time of the strike.

Flex produces a range of electronic goods, including laptops, game consoles and



automotive components. Ukraine's foreign minister, Andrii Sybiha, confirmed the attack, describing it as a strike on a "major American electronics manufacturer".

The assault was Russia's third-largest drone attack this year and its eighth-largest in terms of missiles launched, according to Ukrainian officials.

Poland scrambled aircraft to secure its airspace during strikes on nearby Lviv, less than 50 miles from the border. Warsaw said there was no breach of its territory.

The attack came only days after President Vladimir Putin travelled to Alaska to meet US President Donald Trump to outline his conditions for peace, including a demand that Ukraine withdraw from the entire Donetsk region.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned the strikes, accusing Moscow of showing no genuine interest in negotiations. "Russia wasted several cruise missiles against an American business," he said, noting the plant produced ordinary consumer goods such as coffee machines. "And that too became a target for Russia. Very telling."



# Legendary Super Eagles goalkeeper Peter Rufai laid to rest

By Boluwatife Kehinde

Former Super Eagles goalkeeper, Peter “Dodo Mayana” Rufai, was laid to rest on Friday at the Ikoyi Cemetery.

Rufai, who died on Thursday, 3 July, at the age of 61 after a brief illness in a Lagos hospital, was honoured by family, colleagues and friends who gathered for his funeral.

The ceremony, however, drew criticism towards the Federal and Lagos State Governments, as well as the Nigerian Football Federation (NFF), over their lack of support in organising the burial.

Colleagues and friends paid glowing tributes, describing Rufai as a principled and dedicated individual whose absence will be deeply felt.

During his illustrious career, Rufai earned



65 caps for Nigeria and featured in three Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) tournaments, where he proved decisive in three semi-final penalty shootouts.

He was Nigeria's first-choice goalkeeper at the 1994 and 1998 FIFA World Cups and played a pivotal role in leading the Super Eagles to their historic triumph at the 1994 AFCON in Tunisia.

# NPFL 26: Remo Stars, Rivers United battle to 1-1 draw in season opener

By Boluwatife Kehinde

The 2025/2026 Nigeria Premier Football League, NPFL, kicked off with a familiar rivalry as Remo Stars and Rivers United played out a 1-1 draw in the season opener.

The M.K.O. Abiola Sports Complex, temporary home to the Ikenne-based Remo Stars, hosted a lively encounter as both sides found the net in the first half.

Aniekeme Okon gave Rivers United the lead with the league's first goal of the new campaign, but Mbaoma Victor equalised just five minutes later, marking his return to Remo Stars with a goal.

Both teams, established among the league's elite in recent seasons, battled fiercely until the final whistle, but neither could convert late chances to seal victory.



Tomorrow, Abia Warriors will host Kano Pillars in Umuahia, while Wikki Tourists face Plateau United.

Katsina United will clash with Warri Wolves, and Kun-Khalifat will take on record champions Rangers

International in Enugu.

Elsewhere, Kwara United will meet Ikorodu City, El-Kanemi Warriors will test Bendel Insurance in Maiduguri, and Shooting Stars will square off against Bayelsa United in Ibadan.

# Bayern Munich, Chelsea thrill fans with weekend goal fest

By Boluwatife Kehinde



The weekend witnessed an exciting display of football in both the English Premier League and the Bundesliga, highlighted by a total of 12 goals scored across two prominent venues: the Allianz Arena and the London Stadium.

In the Bundesliga, the season commenced with the defending champions, Bayern Munich, delivering a dominant performance by defeating RB Leipzig with a score of 6-0 where Manager Vincent Kompany ensured that their team maintained a clean sheet in this opening match.

A key focus of the match was the newly signed player, Luis Diaz, who contributed significantly by scoring a goal and providing two remarkable assists.

England's captain, Harry Kane, also made headlines by securing a hat-trick, marking his eighth hat-trick in the Bundesliga, equaling his record in the Premier League.

Since joining Bayern, Kane has achieved an impressive tally of 65 goals in 64 matches, outpacing all other players in Europe's top five leagues.

Moreover, Michael Olise made his mark on the scoreboard with a brace, alongside Kim Min-Jae and Serge Gnabry, who

both delivered outstanding assists.

In the English Premier League, the newly crowned World Champions, Chelsea FC, achieved a resounding victory against West Ham United, winning 5-1 in front of West Ham home supporters.

After facing an initial challenge with West Ham scoring the opening goal, Chelsea quickly regained control of the match.

The newly signed Joao Pedro showcased his skills by finding the net shortly thereafter.

Pedro Neto and Enzo Fernandez both excelled during this match, scoring the second and third goals, respectively. Additionally, 18-year-old Estevao Willian provided an assist, contributing to the team's success.

On the occasion of Moises Caicedo's 100th appearance for Chelsea, he also found the back of the net, marking the fourth goal for the team, while Trevoh Chalobah ended the match with a fifth goal, securing a comprehensive victory for Chelsea.

