



**Tinubu declares data “new oil” as Nigeria launches digital skills academy** **Pg 4**

**Wike: Tinubu’s projects speak for themselves, critics are politically finished** **Pg 7**



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**Coalition: Ex-ADC national chair steps down, hands over party leadership to Mark, Aregbesola** **Pg 10**



**Trump: Israel has accepted ceasefire terms, ball now in Hamas’ court** **Pg 21**

## WORLD

**Starmer bows to backlash, u-turns alcohol advert crackdown** **Pg 22**



## SPORTS

**Chelsea signs Brazil forward Joao Pedro from Brighton** **Pg 29**



# How ex-aviation minister Sirika diverted contracts to companies linked to family

By **Damilola Olufemi**



A prosecution witness in the trial of former Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, has alleged that the ex-minister abused his position by awarding major aviation contracts worth billions of naira to companies linked to members of his immediate family.

Testifying before Justice S.C. Orijide of the Federal Capital Territory High Court in Abuja, Christopher Odofin, an investigator with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), detailed how Sirika, who served as minister from November 11, 2016, to May 29, 2023, manipulated a contract meant for terminal construction and apron expansion.

Odofin explained that what was initially a single contract listed as Serial No. 13 in a June 6, 2022, response from the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) was allegedly split into two by Sirika in a deliberate effort to bypass higher-level approvals.

“One portion of the contract was awarded to Enginos Nigeria Limited for N1.3 billion, and the other to Al Buraq

Global Investment Limited for N1.4 billion,” Odofin testified. By splitting the contract, Sirika reportedly avoided seeking clearance from the BPP and the Federal Executive Council (FEC), as the individual amounts were below the threshold that would require their consent.

EFCC uncovered properties of Sirika’s family

Further EFCC investigations uncovered that Enginos Nigeria Limited belongs to Sirika’s younger brother, Hamad Sirika, while Al Buraq Global Investment Limited is owned by his daughter, Fatima Hadi Sirika, and his son-in-law, Hamma Jalal Sule. The contracts were awarded on the same day—August 18, 2022.

According to Odofin, Fatima was listed as company secretary for Al Buraq from its registration in June 2021 until February 2024, resigning only after the EFCC opened a criminal probe into the matter. She held half the company’s shares—500,000 of a total 1 million—and had authority over the

firm’s Guaranty Trust Bank account. Despite her involvement, Fatima has been employed as a public servant with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) since 2020.

Her husband, Hamma Sule, who owns the remaining 500,000 shares in the company, also works in the public sector. He began his career at the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority in 2021 before moving to the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) in 2023, where he is still employed. The two were married on December 25, 2020, in Katsina State.

Odofin testified that both Fatima and Sule, while serving as public officials, used their company to secure lucrative government contracts under the direct supervision of their father and father-in-law, then-Minister Sirika.

He added that the Ministry of Aviation paid Al Buraq the full contract sum of N1.3 billion on November 14, 2022, crediting the company’s Zenith Bank account.

# 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
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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
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## POLITICAL COLOUR

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,200,000.00
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## POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

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HALF PAGE	184,700.00
QUARTER PAGE	95,222.50

## CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

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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
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5X6	83,850.00
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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
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CENTRESPREAD B&W	800,000.00
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DOUBLE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	432,881.00
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CENTRE SPREAD HALF PAGE B &W	550,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD B &W	725,000.00
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FULL WRAP AROUND	15,000,000.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	8,500,000.00
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## 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
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## ALLURE RATE

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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
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# Tinubu declares data “new oil” as Nigeria launches digital skills academy

By Gbenga Olaleye

President Bola Tinubu has underscored the vital importance of data in governance, declaring it “the new oil” and setting out a directive for all ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) to capture, protect, and responsibly disseminate data to drive public value and enhance Nigeria’s global standing.

The President’s announcement was made during the 2025 International Civil Service Conference in Abuja, a gathering attended by members of the Federal Executive Council, the diplomatic corps, industry leaders, and civil servants.

Unlike traditional oil, President Tinubu explained, data’s value increases with refinement and careful utilisation. He mandated all MDAs to comply strictly with the Nigerian Data Protection Act (2023), ensuring data sovereignty and privacy through secure local and allied data centres.

“We must let our data speak for us,” the President said.

“We must publish verified data assets locally and share them globally. This will enable international benchmarking and strengthen Nigeria’s standing on the world stage.”

The emphasis on data coincided with the launch of Galaxy Backbone’s 1Government Cloud Academy, an initiative aimed at equipping civil servants with the digital skills necessary for Nigeria’s transition to a paperless public sector.

The academy is designed to train selected public servants and stakeholders in technical tools that are crucial for digital transformation and improving communication across MDAs.

Programme Director of the 1Government Cloud initiative, Mr Wumi Oghoetuoma, spoke on a panel during the conference, highlighting the importance of trust and understanding in the adoption of digital tools.

“Many digital solutions have failed not because they were ineffective, but because users didn’t trust or fully understand them,” Oghoetuoma noted.

He praised the Head of the Civil Service



of the Federation, Mrs Didi Esther Walson-Jack, for her decisive reform efforts. The academy’s training programme includes both technical competencies and vital soft skills to support a successful transformation.

The 1Government Cloud Academy will serve as a central hub for training and certifying government personnel, particularly Enterprise Content Management (ECM) project managers, who act as “transformation champions” within their departments. These champions help colleagues overcome challenges and build confidence in new digital tools.

“This approach builds trust, improves usability, and encourages widespread adoption across MDAs,” said Oghoetuoma.

He explained that simple issues, such as poor WiFi connectivity, often go unresolved due to poor communication between ministry staff and IT departments, which in turn affects the perception of system failure.

To address these challenges, the academy also offers specialised certification courses for IT departments to improve responsiveness and collaboration.

Oghoetuoma emphasised that digital literacy is not the main barrier, as most civil servants are adept with smartphones and social media. Instead,

the key challenges lie in mindset, motivation, and ongoing support.

“Digital transformation hinges on people, processes, and technology,” he said.

“The missing link is often technology adoption, and the glue that holds it all together is communication.”

Mrs Walson-Jack highlighted Nigeria’s digital reforms as exemplary for other nations. She pointed to the automation of processes through the Enterprise Content Management system, the introduction of a Performance Management System, and the deployment of ServiceWise GPT, which aligns individual roles with national priorities.

British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Richard Montgomery, praised the reform agenda under President Tinubu, describing it as “bold and necessary steps for long-term development.”

He stressed that the success of these reforms depends on efficient service delivery and integrity within the civil service.

As Nigeria embraces digital transformation, initiatives like the 1Government Cloud Academy promise to strengthen governance, improve public service, and position the country more competitively on the global stage.



# Senate approves bill for bitumen regulatory body

By Friday Omosola

The Nigerian Senate has approved the establishment of the Bitumen Development Commission, following the passage of a bill to that effect on Wednesday.

The bill scaled through its third reading after the Senate Committee on Solid Minerals Development presented and reviewed its report.

While delivering the committee's findings, Senator Diket Plang (APC, Plateau Central) supported the proposal, sponsored by Senator Jimoh Ibrahim (APC, Ondo South), to set up the commission.

Mr Plang told his colleagues that the committee had organised a public hearing on the matter, which attracted



widespread approval from key stakeholders nationwide.

According to him, there was a general agreement that Nigeria urgently requires a dedicated regulatory body to oversee the management, exploration, and utilisation of the country's estimated 42 billion tonnes of bitumen

reserves—the second-largest globally

Senate President Godswill Akpabio praised Senator Ibrahim and the Solid Minerals Committee for championing the bill, describing it as a timely initiative that would contribute significantly to national development.

“This marks a vital move towards broadening Nigeria's economic base and tapping into the immense opportunities within the solid minerals sector,” Mr Akpabio said.

Once established, the Bitumen Development Commission will regulate and promote investment in bitumen production, aiming to position Nigeria as a major player in the international bitumen market.

# Atiku, Mark, Aregbesola, others move to ADC

By Alade Adisa

The African Democratic Congress, ADC, has now become the special purpose vehicle that former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, former Senate President, David Mark, former Osun State Governor, Rauf Aregbesola and others have adopted for achieving their political ambition of unseating President Bola Tinubu in 2027.

The decision was taken late on Tuesday night during a meeting of the anti-Tinubu group in Abuja.

The ADC's National Chairman, Ralph Okey Nwosu, reportedly agreed to vacate his seat to allow the new members to take charge.

As a result, new interim officers were approved for the party.

Among them were Mark as the



interim National Chairman and Aregbesola as interim National Secretary.

Other appointments include Chief Anayo Arinze as Interim Deputy National Chairman (South), Alhaji Ibrahim Manzo as Interim Deputy National Chairman (North), and former Sports Minister Bolaji

Abdullahi as Interim National Publicity Secretary.

A source disclosed that the step was to move forward in the planning and preparations for the 2027 polls as it appears the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, may foot drag in registering new political parties.

The group had earlier floated the Action Democratic Alliance, ADA, to challenge Tinubu and the All Progressives Congress, APC.

Another source close to the negotiations said: “The ADC's link to former President Olusegun Obasanjo's reformist ideals also influenced the decision. The party is widely seen as credible and capable of driving real political change.”

# Wike: Tinubu's projects speak for themselves, critics are politically finished

By Friday Omosola



**T**he Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has criticised those who continue to dismiss President Bola Tinubu's administration as ineffective.

He described them as “politically irrelevant” individuals who are unable to appreciate the progress being made.

Mr Wike made these remarks on Wednesday during the flag-off and commissioning of major road projects in the Ushafa-Bwari area of Abuja.

He directed his comments at persistent critics who, according to him, have switched political allegiances repeatedly since 1999, yet refuse to acknowledge the visible developments.

“Those who have no vision, who have lost political relevance, who have jumped across more than ten political parties since 1999— let them open their eyes and see what is happening,”

Mr Wike said.

“Whichever TV station they tune to, they will see Mr President's work. Some people still insist that nothing is working. Do we need to visit their homes before they believe things are changing? Certainly not.”

The event, attended by Vice President Kashim Shettima on behalf of Mr Tinubu, marked the commissioning of the dualised War College/Army checkpoint road and other adjoining roads in the Ushafa-Bwari axis of the FCT.

Mr Wike commended both the contractors and the FCT project coordinator for their diligence and commitment, while reiterating his no-nonsense approach to leadership.

“Working with me is tough. If you can cope under my leadership, you can thrive anywhere. Positions are not given just for enjoyment. You must deliver.

“You must prove your capability and be ready to sacrifice. Some people are appointed and think it's an avenue for self-promotion instead of genuine service,” he added.

Emphasising the administration's focus on previously overlooked areas of the FCT, Mr Wike praised Mr Tinubu and Mr Shettima for personally engaging with residents in satellite communities.

“This is the first time we are witnessing a President and Vice President physically visiting satellite towns to connect with the people. It has never happened before. This speaks volumes about the President's commitment to these communities,” he stated.

He said the newly commissioned roads form part of a larger initiative to bring infrastructure development to underdeveloped parts of the FCT.



# ADC unveiling disrupted as Abuja hotel cancels booking last-minute

By Gbenga Olaleye

A highly anticipated event to unveil the African Democratic Congress (ADC) as a new unifying political platform for Nigeria's opposition ahead of the 2027 general elections was abruptly disrupted on Wednesday, following the sudden cancellation of the venue just hours before the programme was scheduled to commence.

The unveiling, set to take place at the prestigious Wells Carlton Hotel and Apartments in Asokoro, Abuja, was expected to mark a significant step in consolidating opposition forces against the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

However, organisers were informed early Wednesday that the hotel would no longer host the event, citing an unspecified "internal compliance matter".

A message from the hotel, shared on Instagram by media personality and politician Dele Momodu, read:

"Dear Esteemed Patron, Thank you once again for choosing the Wells Carlton Hotel and Apartments. We sincerely regret to inform you that due to an internal compliance matter that has just come to our attention, we are unable to proceed with hosting your scheduled event.

We are fully aware that the event is less than 24 hours away, and we deeply apologise for the timing and inconvenience this may cause."

The sudden reversal has drawn strong condemnation from opposition figures, with Momodu alleging political interference and intimidation by the ruling party.

"The intimidation of opposition by a jittery government continues," he wrote.

"The booking of a venue for the unveiling of the adopted party, ADC,



by the coalition has been unilaterally and suddenly cancelled by the management of the hotel due to what insiders described as fear of reprisals from APC operatives.

But this will not dampen the daredevil determination of opposition forces who are poised to hotly challenge the ruling party."

Salihu Lukman, speaking on behalf of People and Passion Consult Ltd, which coordinated the event, condemned the hotel's action as a breach of contract.

In a statement included in Momodu's post, Lukman demanded that the hotel fulfil the terms of the agreement.

"This is unacceptable. Your management has no right to unilaterally sabotage a contract validly and legally agreed to and fully paid for. You must meet the terms of the contract fully by allowing the event to hold with full compliments of all the services agreed to. This is not negotiable," he stated.

The unveiling of the ADC was

anticipated to bring together several high-profile political figures from across the spectrum, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, former Senate President David Mark, and ex-governors Aminu Tambuwal, Sule Lamido, Liyel Imoke, and Sam Egwu.

Also reportedly involved in the coalition-building efforts were Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi, former Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai, and former Minister of Transportation Rotimi Amaechi suggesting a rare moment of unity among typically rival political actors.

While the hotel has yet to offer further clarification on the nature of the "compliance matter", the timing of the cancellation has fuelled speculation of political pressure aimed at thwarting opposition momentum ahead of the next electoral cycle.

Despite the setback, organisers say they remain undeterred and are already exploring alternative arrangements for the event.

# 2027: Peter Obi submits one-term presidency proposal to opposition coalition

By Gbenga Olaleye



**T**he National Coordinator of the Obidient Movement Worldwide, Yunusa Tanko, has confirmed that Peter Obi, the Labour Party's presidential candidate in the 2023 general elections, has officially submitted a one-term presidency proposal to the newly formed opposition coalition.

Obi, who recently declared his intention to run in the 2027 presidential election, announced on Monday his willingness to serve only one term if elected.

He stated that any candidate from the southern region must be prepared to vacate office by 28 May 2031, in line with Nigeria's longstanding but informal power rotation agreement and the principle of zoning.

The former Anambra State governor made the pledge in the context of a broader political alliance aimed at

unseating President Bola Tinubu and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the next general elections.

The coalition, which includes prominent political figures such as former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, ex-Minister of Transportation Rotimi Amaechi, and former Kaduna State Governor Nasir el-Rufai, has adopted the African Democratic Congress (ADC) as its political platform moving forward.

Speaking to journalists, Yunusa Tanko revealed that Obi had presented his one-term offer for deliberation within the coalition.

"We have presented it to the coalition. It is there for them to make a decision. But we are confident it can work. This is a pronouncement rooted in integrity, and Peter Obi embodies that. What Nigeria needs

now are leaders with integrity," Tanko said.

He further noted that although the idea of a single term is not constitutionally mandated, Obi believes four years would be sufficient to implement meaningful reforms and drive his policy agenda.

Political analysts suggest that Obi's pledge may be a strategic move to build trust among coalition partners and voters wary of entrenched political interests.

The development comes amid growing calls for unity among opposition parties ahead of the 2027 elections.

As discussions continue, all eyes remain on how the coalition will formalise its plans — and whether Obi's one-term offer will be embraced as a unifying cornerstone.



# Tinubu: Functional capital key to national progress

By Friday Omosola

**P**resident Bola Tinubu has emphasised that a well-functioning capital city is the foundation for building a successful nation.

He stated that the ongoing infrastructure projects across the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) demonstrate his administration's dedication to creating an inclusive and prosperous Nigeria.

Mr Tinubu spoke through Vice President Kashim Shettima at the commissioning of the Collector Road CN8 (Asuquo Okon Way) and other connecting roads in the Dakibiyu District of Abuja yesterday.

He stressed the importance of modernising cities as a clear signal of purposeful governance.

"When a city works—when its roads are accessible, its lights remain on, and its transport routes flow smoothly—it shows the world that the government is both present and committed," Mr Tinubu said.

He assured that the newly commissioned road projects would deliver immediate and lasting benefits.

"Commutes will be faster, congestion will reduce, and economic activities will thrive. Shops will open, markets will grow, children will get to school more quickly, and emergency services will respond more efficiently," he added.

Mr Tinubu said the projects reflected his administration's 'Renewed Hope' agenda, describing it as more than mere promises but tangible progress that directly impacts people's lives.

Addressing the challenges previously faced by residents in these areas, he said, "Inadequate infrastructure has long held back the potential of these communities. Today, we are breathing



life into areas that have been neglected for too long."

The President also stressed that his vision for Abuja extends beyond its city centre, reaching the suburbs and overlooked communities.

"Every road we construct and every community we connect strengthens our pursuit of a more inclusive and fairer Nigeria," he said.

He noted that functional infrastructure builds investor confidence, inspires citizens, and restores dignity to those living in the capital.

"A capital city should reflect the strength and dignity of all its residents. We are committed to ensuring that development reaches every area without discrimination."

Mr Tinubu commended the FCT Minister Nyesom Wike, for his exceptional leadership and urgency in executing the projects.

He assured continued federal support for the FCT Administration to ensure

timely delivery of quality projects that serve all residents.

The newly inaugurated roads connect several key institutions, including the Police Service Commission Headquarters, the FCT High Court in Jabi, the Code of Conduct Tribunal Headquarters, the new FCT Division of the Court of Appeal, and the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology, among others.

However, the FCT Minister, Wike, said the roads commissioning marked the 14th in a series of completed projects under the current administration.

He recounted the poor state of the roads before the intervention and credited the President's support for the rapid completion of the work.

Minister of State for the FCT, Dr Mariya Mahmud, also thanked Mr Tinubu and Mr Shettima for their unwavering backing, expressing appreciation to the FCT team, engineers, contractors, and all who contributed to the success of the project.

# Coalition: Ex-ADC national chair steps down, hands over party leadership to Mark, Aregbesola

By Damilola Olufemi



**F**ormer National Chairman of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Chief Ralf Nwosu, has officially stepped down, handing over the party's leadership and presenting its membership card to former Senate President David Mark and ex-Osun State Governor Rauf Aregbesola. Mark will serve as the interim national chairman, while Aregbesola assumes the role of interim national secretary.

The transition was announced during a high-level gathering of opposition leaders at the Yar'Adua Centre in Abuja.

In attendance were notable figures such as Atiku Abubakar, the 2023 presidential candidate of the Peoples

Democratic Party (PDP); Peter Obi of the Labour Party; former Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai; and ex-Rivers State Governor Rotimi Amaechi.

Mark, Aregbesola announced ADC leaders

David Mark and Rauf Aregbesola, both of whom were recently announced as interim leaders of the ADC, were also present at the meeting.

Other prominent attendees included Senator Dino Melaye, former Minister of Youth and Sports Solomon Dalong, media mogul Dele Momodu, Senators Gabriel Suswam and Irete Kingibe (LP), former Deputy

Speaker of the House of Representatives Emeka Ihedioha, and former Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sadique Abubakar (retd).

A wide array of political actors from the PDP, Labour Party, and Social Democratic Party (SDP) were also at the event.

The opposition coalition resolved to adopt the ADC as their collective political platform to challenge the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2027 general elections. David Mark has now severed ties with the PDP to take up his new role within the ADC, while Aregbesola also begins his interim leadership duties.



# Outcry as Makinde moves to rename Polytechnic Ibadan

By Gbenga Olaleye

**P**lans by Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde to rename The Polytechnic Ibadan after the late former governor, Dr Victor Olunloyo, have sparked a wave of divergent reactions from students, alumni, civil society groups, and prominent Ibadan indigenes.

Dr Olunloyo, a revered mathematician and the first Ibadan indigene to govern the old Oyo State, passed away on 6 April 2025.

He served briefly as governor from 1 October to 31 December 1983 and was the pioneer principal of The Polytechnic Ibadan.

In honour of his legacy, Governor Makinde recently announced plans to rename the institution Victor Olunloyo Polytechnic, Ibadan.

According to the governor, Olunloyo lived an impactful life, and his contribution to the state could not be captured in a single sentence.

However, this move has ignited widespread resistance.

Students, Alumni protest, block roads

On Tuesday, hundreds of students from The Polytechnic Ibadan staged a protest, effectively grounding movement along the ever-busy Sango-Eleyele Road in Ibadan.

The students blocked the entrance gates of the institution and halted vehicular traffic, leaving many commuters and staff stranded.

In a strongly worded statement, the Students' Union Government (SUG) described the renaming as "unjustifiable and degrading."

"For over 50 years, The Polytechnic Ibadan has been a beacon of academic excellence," renaming the institution would erase its identity and legacy, causing irreparable harm to its reputation and alumni," said SUG President Olamide Oladipupo.

The SUG urged Governor Makinde to reconsider the decision and open dialogue with stakeholders to explore alternative ways of honouring the late governor.

Civil society group: "Symbolic gesture won't solve real issues"

The Campaign for Democratic and Workers' Rights (CDWR), Oyo State chapter, also criticised the move, calling it a "mere symbolic gesture" that does not address the structural and operational challenges facing the institution.



"The Polytechnic Ibadan needs comprehensive reform, not a change of name," said CDWR coordinator Abiodun Bamigboye.

The group called for increased funding, infrastructural rehabilitation, democratic governance, and improved welfare for staff and students.

It also condemned the alleged casualisation of over 80% of the institution's workforce and accused the administration of stifling union activities and repressing dissent.

"The renaming exercise will remain a hollow symbolic gesture, disconnected from the urgent realities on the ground," Bamigboye stated.

Prominent Ibadan leader appeals to Makinde

Former President-General of the Central Council of Ibadan Indigenes (CCII), Chief Adeyemi Soladoye, has added his voice to the growing calls for the governor to rescind the decision.

Soladoye, who is also an alumnus of the institution, warned Makinde not to be misled by "political jobbers," noting that The Polytechnic Ibadan was founded in 1972 as an institution for the old Western Region and not just Ibadan.

"The Polytechnic Ibadan is a legacy of the entire Western Region, to rename it in honour of one individual, no matter how accomplished, is to downgrade its status," Soladoye said.

He reminded the governor of the national and continental recognition the institution commands and cautioned that the change would cause emotional disconnection among millions of Nigerians with ties to the school.

Soladoye drew parallels with the reversal of similar decisions in the past, including President Goodluck Jonathan's aborted renaming of the University of Lagos and urged Makinde to follow that precedent.

Critics also raised concerns over the financial implications of a name change amidst widespread economic hardship. Soladoye said that the cost of altering institutional records and documents was unnecessary at a time of heightened hunger and poverty.

"Makinde has already named the new park and garden at the upgraded Ibadan airport after Dr Olunloyo, to now rename The Polytechnic as well would amount to overkill," Soladoye added.

While some individuals view the move as a well-meaning tribute to a distinguished son of Ibadan, the overwhelming sentiment among students, civil society, and notable community leaders suggests that the renaming has struck a nerve.

Supporters of the name change argue that Dr Olunloyo's contributions to education and governance in Oyo State are worthy of such an honour.

But opponents insist that preserving the institution's original name upholds a broader legacy tied to regional development and collective identity.

# Lagos PPA calls for sweeping reforms in public asset disposal

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Director-General of the Lagos State Public Procurement Agency (PPA), Fatai Idowu Onafowote, has advocated for a comprehensive overhaul of the state's framework for disposing of public assets.

Speaking at a strategic retreat organized by the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (ROLAC) Programme at the Festival Hotel, Festac, Lagos, Onafowote emphasised the need to enhance transparency, accountability, and align practices with international standards.

The retreat, which focused on reviewing the existing Guidelines for the Disposal of Public Assets in Lagos State, provided a platform for the Director-General to commend ROLAC, the European Union, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Idea (IDEA) for their ongoing commitment to promoting good governance across Nigeria.

Onafowote stressed that the disposal of public assets extends beyond a mere technicality, noting it as "a governance issue that directly impacts the credibility of our procurement processes."

He acknowledged that while Lagos has established foundational guidelines, the dynamic environment, marked by technological advancements and evolving operational requirements, necessitates a thorough re-evaluation of current procedures.

"The current framework must be realigned to reflect present-day realities and international standards," he stated, describing the retreat as a "timely and strategic step toward simplifying processes, closing gaps, and improving institutional effectiveness."

The PPA Director-General reiterated the state government's dedication, under Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's leadership, to reforms aimed at ensuring value for money, reducing asset misappropriation, and bolstering



accountability within the public sector.

He underscored the crucial role of collaboration among stakeholders—including civil society organizations, procurement professionals, legal experts, and development partners—in crafting updated guidelines that are both practical and enduring.

"The integrity of our institutions is measured not just by how we acquire assets, but also by how we dispose of them. Lagos State is ready to lead by example," he affirmed.

Samson Nduleme, representing ROLAC, reaffirmed his organisation's commitment to supporting government initiatives at both federal and state levels that seek to reform justice systems and restore public confidence in governance.

He acknowledged the substantial number of assets in Lagos State requiring disposal and expressed ROLAC's confidence in the PPA's capacity to manage the process effectively.

"That is why we are working closely with the Agency to review the guidelines for disposing of government assets in a way that earns public trust," Nduleme stated.

Nduleme further emphasised that ROLAC's support for government programs is driven by the objective of fostering transformative changes that will encourage citizens to trust their leaders and institutions.

He expressed optimism that the session would build lasting confidence not only in Lagos State but also inspire similar reforms in other states, adding that "Transparency in asset disposal is key to restoring public trust in government."

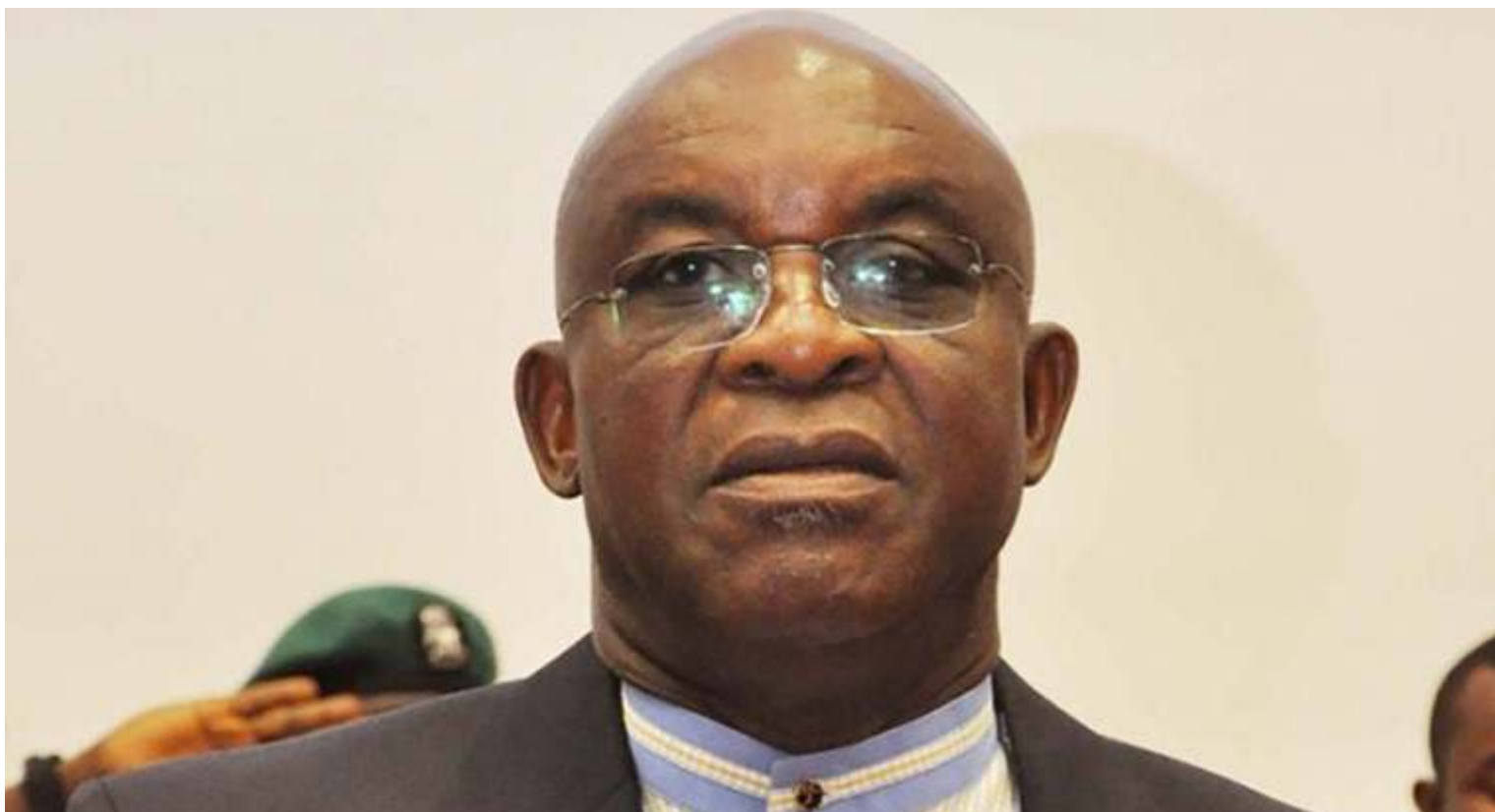
The event drew participation from representatives of various ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), civil society organizations, and the private sector.

These stakeholders are expected to contribute significantly to the drafting of updated disposal guidelines, as part of broader efforts to promote good governance and combat corruption in public administration.



# Ex-Senate president David Mark officially quits PDP after 27 years

By Damilola Olufemi



**F**ormer Senate President David Mark has officially resigned from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), ending decades of association with Nigeria's main opposition party.

Mark's decision was communicated in a letter addressed to the PDP ward chairman in Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue State. Dated June 27, the letter became public shortly after the opposition coalition adopted the African Democratic Congress (ADC) as its unifying platform and announced Mark as its new chairman.

He stated that his departure from the PDP is with immediate effect.

"You may recall that over the years, I have remained firm and deeply committed to the ideals of the PDP," the letter reads. "Even when nearly all stakeholders departed the

party following our loss in the 2015 presidential election, I pledged to remain the last man standing."

Mark highlights roles played

Mark highlighted his role in the party's revival efforts, saying, "I have worked steadfastly to rebuild, reconcile, and reposition the party, efforts which, without sounding immodest, helped restore the PDP to national relevance and made it once again a party of choice for many Nigerians."

However, he expressed disappointment with the current state of the PDP, describing it as being plagued by "deepening divisions, persistent leadership crisis, and irreconcilable differences," which he said have left the party "a shadow of its former self" and exposed it to public mockery.

Following what he described as extensive consultations with family, allies, and political associates, Mark said he resolved to align with the emerging National Coalition of Political Opposition Movement.

He explained that the decision was part of a broader mission "to rescue our nation and preserve our hard-earned democracy."

Momentum around the coalition—which aims to mount a serious challenge to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2027—has been building since the start of the year. Key political figures like former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, ex-transport minister Rotimi Amaechi, Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi, and former Kaduna governor Nasir el-Rufai are reportedly involved in the movement.

# Supreme Court postpones judgement in Edo governorship election dispute

By Friday Omosola

The Supreme Court has postponed its judgment in the legal dispute over the Edo State governorship election.

After hearing submissions from both sides concerning the election that produced Monday Okpebholo as governor, the apex court adjourned the case indefinitely.

Justice Garba Lawal, who led the panel, stated that the date for delivering the final judgement would be communicated to all parties in due course.

Asue Ighodalo, the appellant, through his counsel Ken Mosia urged the court to nullify Mr Okpebholo's victory and declare him the rightful winner, arguing that he had secured the highest number of valid votes.

However, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), represented by Kanu Agabi, called on the court to dismiss the appeal entirely.

INEC contended that Mr Ighodalo and



the People's Democratic Party (PDP) had initially described the election as flawed and not in line with the Electoral Act 2022.

The commission argued that since Mr Ighodalo and the PDP had discredited the process as unlawful, they could not later seek to be declared winners of the same election.

INEC further accused the appellants of presenting conflicting positions in their challenge and insisted that the case lacked merit and should be struck out.

## Diesel prices rise to N1,758.26 in May 2025 — NBS

By Damilola Olufemi

The average retail price of Automotive Gas Oil, commonly known as diesel, rose by 25.24% in May 2025 compared to the same month last year, according to fresh data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Consumers paid an average of N1,758.26 per litre in May 2025, up from N1,403.96 per litre in May 2024.

The NBS report titled "Automotive Gas Oil (Diesel) Price Watch" also revealed a marginal month-on-month increase of 2.08%, as prices climbed from N1,722.45 in April 2025.

This comes amid a broader decline in inflation. Nigeria's headline inflation rate dropped to 22.97% in May 2025, marking the second month in a row of reduced inflationary pressure. In comparison, April 2025 recorded a rate of 23.71%. Year-on-year, the May 2025 figure is



significantly lower than the 33.95% recorded in May 2024 — a decline of 10.98 percentage points.

NBS breaks down diesel regional variations

Breaking down regional variations, Benue (N2,441.46), Adamawa (N2,350.32), and Plateau (N2,201.52) recorded the highest average diesel prices in May. Conversely, Ondo (N1,318.40), Kogi (N1,360.00), and Anambra (N1,361.02) posted the lowest prices.

The North-Central region, which includes seven states and the FCT, had the highest regional average at N1,920.47 per litre. The South-West zone reported the lowest average price at N1,553.19.

In other parts of the country, average diesel prices stood at N1,769.28 in the North-West, N1,767.21 in the North-East, N1,632.33 in the South-East, and N1,857.19 in the South-South.

In April 2025, diesel prices had already seen a significant annual jump of 21.72%, rising from N1,415.06 in April 2024 to N1,722.45 per litre.

States with the highest and lowest diesel prices remained consistent between April and May: Benue, Adamawa, and Plateau held the top spots for highest prices, while Kogi, Ondo, and Anambra recorded the lowest.



# Opposition joins ADC to challenge Tinubu; APC calls it 'Dead on Arrival'

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**A**s a newly formed coalition aimed at unseating President Bola Tinubu in the 2027 presidential election gathers steam, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has dismissed the alliance as "dead on arrival," reaffirming confidence that the President will secure another term.

The coalition's leaders, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, ex-Senate President David Mark, former Jigawa State Governor Sule Lamido, and other prominent figures within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), convened a meeting at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel in Abuja on Tuesday.

The group issued a strongly worded communiqué condemning the APC government as a "disaster" and called on Nigerians to support their collective effort to remove the ruling party from power.

**READ ALSO:** ADC unveiling disrupted as Abuja hotel cancels booking last-minute

In their statement, signed by David Mark, the coalition described the APC administration as having "come into being on the false and evil propaganda to save Nigeria from PDP," only to become a detriment to national progress.

The communiqué urged all well-meaning PDP members and patriotic Nigerians to join the coalition's movement, which aims to champion national unity, democracy, security, and economic revitalisation.

"The coalition partners must be united on the issues of national unity, democracy, national security, and national economy, and the political will to stamp out corruption embedded in our institutions," the statement read.

The coalition has officially adopted the African Democratic Congress (ADC) as its political platform, confirming exclusive reports by New Daily Prime. Senator David Mark has been named interim chairman, with the official unveiling of the alliance expected imminently in Abuja.

Multiple sources close to the coalition revealed that while some PDP members intend to defect to the ADC, others will maintain their PDP membership while supporting the coalition's presidential candidate.

Prominent PDP figures present at the meeting included former National



Chairman Uche Secondus; ex-Governors Aminu Tambuwal (Sokoto), Liyel Imoke (Cross River), Babangida Aliyu (Niger), and Dr Sam Egwu (Ebonyi); along with Senator Ben Obi, former National Women Leader Josephine Anenih, and others.

The coalition lamented the weakened state of Nigeria under the APC, describing the country as "a source of embarrassment in the international community" with collapsed development indices and a deteriorating quality of life for its citizens.

"The PDP, which is organic with the discipline, capacity, and history to lead and save Nigeria, is now a shadow of its old self," the communiqué added, criticising APC's tactics of "threats, blackmail, and patronage" that have reportedly caused defections from the PDP.

Despite these criticisms, the APC's Director of Publicity, Bala Ibrahim, dismissed the coalition as a futile endeavour by "politically defeated" individuals.

Speaking, Ibrahim said: "The fact that they are meeting in hotels or places at night without any fear means the APC government has improved the security situation of the country... The coalition is dead on arrival."

He maintained that President Tinubu's administration would overcome the challenge "collectively" in the 2027 polls, insisting that the coalition members were motivated by selfish interests rather than national welfare.

Meanwhile, some PDP leaders have offered measured support for the coalition's efforts. Senator Abba Moro described the meeting as "a gathering aimed at achieving a national purpose," while PDP chieftain Segun Sowunmi suggested that the party, having resolved its internal leadership crises, could now focus on the political battle ahead.

Sola Fasura, media aide to former Interior Minister Rauf Aregbesola, called the coalition a "good indication of progress," noting that the alliance aligned with broader efforts to unify opposition parties ahead of 2027. He also addressed Labour Party leader Peter Obi's single-term presidency proposal, asserting that the coalition shared a common vision despite individual ambitions.

"This is a realignment of forces to form a formidable opposition," Fasura said. "Tinubu has virtually destroyed the political party system in the country. Now, you really cannot tell which one is the ruling party or opposition."

Former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Babachir Lawal, expressed optimism about the coalition's trajectory but declined to comment in detail on PDP affairs.

The unfolding political realignment underscores the volatile and fluid nature of Nigeria's opposition landscape ahead of the next general election. While the APC remains confident in its grip on power, the opposition coalition's attempt to consolidate forces under the ADC banner marks a significant development in the country's democratic contest.



# 'I'm really sorry,' 2Baba apologies for claiming men aren't wired for monogamy

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian music legend Innocent Ujah Idibia, popularly known as 2Baba, has issued a heartfelt public apology following a wave of criticism sparked by his recent comments about male sexuality.

In a viral interview with popular broadcaster Nedu Wazobia, the 49-year-old singer made a statement that stirred widespread outrage. He claimed that men are not naturally built to remain sexually committed to just one woman, a remark many found offensive and irresponsible.

The comment quickly triggered a backlash on social media platforms. Many Nigerians, including fans and fellow celebrities, criticised the singer for promoting harmful stereotypes and disrespecting women. Several users questioned the example he was setting as a public figure and family man.

## 2Face responds to outrage

On Wednesday morning, 2Face responded to the criticism through a video posted on his official Instagram page. He began his message by acknowledging that he had made a serious error in judgment.

"I know I have messed up with what I said," he admitted. "I really, really messed up in the way I said it. I'm going to pay the price, and I will face the consequences."

He clarified that he intended to express a personal viewpoint in a way that would spark understanding, but he now realises the message came out wrong and offensive.

"I said it because I wanted people to understand something personal," he explained, "but maybe I didn't say it appropriately. I accept my mistake."

## Direct apology to his wife

In a particularly emotional part of the video, 2Face offered a direct apology to his wife, Annie Idibia, whom he referred to as "Natasha", possibly a nickname or private term of endearment.

"I'm sorry to my wife, Natasha," he said. "Calling me a legend is an honour, but



this my talk is quite unlegendly."

He went on to say that the intense reactions from fans have shown him how much people admire and respect him, which makes his blunder even more painful.

"The amount of response I've gotten has made me see how much people love and respect me," he noted. "For me to now use a stupid statement to throw that away, that's not who I am. I'm sorry."

## Public reaction continues

While some fans have welcomed the apology and praised the artist for taking responsibility, others have maintained that words alone are not enough. Some social media users expressed concern about the potential impact of such statements, especially on younger audiences who look up to celebrities like 2Face.

Still, many commended the singer's willingness to face the public and admit he was wrong. His apology video has garnered thousands of comments, with opinions divided between those who believe in second chances and others who demand more accountability.

## A career marked by highs and lows

2Face, widely regarded as one of Africa's most successful and influential

musicians, has often made headlines, both for his musical achievements and his personal life. Known for hits like African Queen and True Love, he has enjoyed a career spanning over two decades, earning multiple awards and international recognition.

However, his personal life, including reports of infidelity and a complex family structure, has frequently placed him under public scrutiny. The recent interview and resulting backlash appear to have reopened old wounds, prompting renewed discussions about gender, responsibility, and fame.

## A lesson in accountability

In a culture where celebrities often deflect criticism, 2Face's decision to publicly acknowledge his misstep may serve as a lesson in accountability. Whether his apology will be enough to repair the damage remains to be seen, but his words suggest a man who, at the very least, is trying to make amends.

"I'm not perfect," he concluded. "But I want to do better. I have learned from this."

As the debate continues online, fans and critics alike will be watching closely to see how the singer follows up his apology, not just in words, but in actions.

# Mohbad: Court rejects move to overturn legal advice clearing Naira Marley, others

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**T**he Lagos State High Court in Ikeja has dismissed an application filed by Mr. Joseph Aloba, the father of late Nigerian singer Ilerioluwa Aloba, popularly known as Mohbad.

Mr. Aloba had sought to challenge and quash the legal advice issued by the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), which led to the release of singer Naira Marley, music promoter Sam Larry, and others initially linked to his son's death.

Justice Taiwo Olatokun, who presided over the matter, ruled on Wednesday that the Attorney General of Lagos State acted within the law in exercising prosecutorial discretion through the DPP.

According to Justice Olatokun, the powers of the Attorney General, whether exercised directly or through the DPP, are constitutionally protected. As such, the court found no grounds to question the legal advice or the decision not to prosecute the individuals named in the DPP's report.

She stated that the reliefs requested by Mr. Aloba could not be granted. Consequently, the application was dismissed in its entirety.

## Mohbad's father reacts

Mr. Aloba, who attended the hearing alongside supporters of his late son, appeared visibly displeased with the court's verdict. Although lawyers representing the DPP declined to comment after the ruling, Mr. Aloba's counsel, Senior Advocate of Nigeria Wahab Shittu, told reporters that his client would appeal the judgment.

"We are not satisfied with the outcome. We believe there are valid legal issues that deserve attention at the appellate level," Shittu said.

## Background to the case

Mr. Joseph Aloba filed the suit on behalf of the Aloba family. The Attorney General of Lagos State and the DPP were named as respondents in the matter. Through his lawyer, Aloba argued that the DPP's legal advice, which cleared



Naira Marley, Sam Larry, and others, violated the principles of fair hearing.

He claimed that the legal advice was premature and interfered with the ongoing Coroner's inquest into the cause of Mohbad's death. The inquest, which was still gathering testimonies and reviewing evidence, had yet to conclude when the DPP issued its report.

Aloba further argued that individuals named and implicated during the Coroner's proceedings had already been released by the DPP, potentially affecting the integrity of the investigation.

## DPP defends legal advice

In response, the office of the DPP filed a counter affidavit on June 24, deposed to by legal officer Ayinde Ibrahim. The DPP's office stated that the suspects were not acquitted but merely discharged, meaning they could still face legal action if new evidence emerged.

The DPP explained that its legal advice was based on a comprehensive review of the criminal case file, which included evidence and witness statements not available to the Coroner or the applicant.

The affidavit emphasised that the legal advice was not meant to pre-empt the Coroner's inquest but was guided strictly by the facts presented in the case file. The

DPP concluded that no evidence directly or indirectly linked Naira Marley, Sam Larry, Prime Boy, or Babatunde Opere to Mohbad's death.

## Why the court rejected the application

In her judgment, Justice Olatokun found that the DPP had acted within the scope of its legal duties. She reaffirmed the legal principle that the Attorney General, acting through the DPP, has the sole authority to determine whether or not a person should be prosecuted, based on available evidence.

Since the DPP found no link between the suspects and Mohbad's death, the court ruled there was no basis to overturn the decision.

## What's next?

With the court dismissing the application, the legal advice that cleared Naira Marley, Sam Larry, and others stands. However, the applicant's legal team has indicated plans to file an appeal, suggesting that the legal battle may not be over.

Meanwhile, the Coroner's inquest into Mohbad's death continues, with the public awaiting its findings and any potential new developments that may follow.



# Nigerian musician jailed for 3 years in U.S. for alleged \$140,000 tax fraud

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**A** Nigerian musician, Onomen Uduebor, has been jailed for three years and four months in a United States federal prison for his involvement in a complex \$140,000 tax fraud scheme.

The 39-year-old, also known by the alias Onomen Onohi, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft. The U.S. District Court in Seattle handed down the sentence on Monday, July 1, 2025.

Extradition from the UK

Uduebor was arrested in the United Kingdom in September 2023 and later extradited to the United States in March 2025 to face charges. Just a month later, in April 2025, he entered a guilty plea in a U.S. federal court.

The case was investigated and prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Washington in collaboration with the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) and international law enforcement agencies.

Details of the fraud scheme

According to court documents and a statement released by the U.S. Attorney's Office, Uduebor took part in a fraud ring that targeted Human Resources departments of companies across the United States. The scheme involved tricking HR staff into releasing W-2 forms, which contain sensitive tax information for employees.

Using this stolen data, the group filed over 300 fake tax returns to claim more than \$1 million in federal refunds. The fraudulent returns were filed in the names of the identity theft victims.

Investigators revealed that Uduebor personally submitted at least 150 of these false returns. He also monitored the refund process and directed payments into bank accounts opened under stolen identities.

While the IRS intercepted most of the claims, about \$140,000 in fraudulent refunds slipped through. Uduebor admitted to receiving \$10,000 for his part in the operation.



The judge condemns his actions

At the sentencing, U.S. District Judge James L. Robart noted that Uduebor played a "substantial role" in the operation. The judge said the musician "freely participated in the fraud" and was well aware of the consequences of his actions.

"He should have known better," Judge Robart said, adding that the fraud had real victims and long-term consequences.

Victims faced financial and emotional pain

Acting U.S. Attorney Tessa Gorman also condemned the fraud, emphasising the lasting harm it caused. She said the scheme not only defrauded the IRS but also brought emotional distress and financial loss to ordinary workers whose identities were stolen.

"Victims suffered delays in receiving their tax refunds and had to spend time and money fixing their records," Gorman said in a press statement. "This fraud disrupted lives and stole from the public."

Ordered to repay stolen funds

As part of the sentence, Uduebor has been ordered to forfeit the \$10,000 he received and pay \$122,720 in restitution to the IRS. Prosecutors said the money will help offset some of the losses caused by the scam.

To be deported after sentence

Following the completion of his prison term, Uduebor is expected to be deported to Nigeria. U.S. immigration authorities have placed a removal order on him as part of the case's resolution.

International crime, global consequences  
The case is part of a broader trend of cross-border financial crimes, including cyberfraud and identity theft, and highlights the importance of international cooperation.

Officials praised the efforts of law enforcement agencies in the U.S., U.K., and Nigeria for helping bring Uduebor to justice.

"Tax fraud may seem like a paper crime, but it hurts real people," said an IRS investigator involved in the case. "This sentence sends a strong message to anyone who thinks they can commit fraud from overseas and get away with it."



# “He’s being forced to pretend”, Do2dtun reacts to 2Face’s apology video

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**P**opular Nigerian On-Air Personality, Oladotun Ojuolape Kayode, widely known as Do2dtun, has shared his concerns over singer 2Face Idibia’s recent public apology.

According to Do2dtun, the apology seems unnatural and forced, suggesting that someone might be manipulating the music icon during a vulnerable period.

2Face, in a now-viral video, had tendered an emotional apology to his wife, Annie Idibia, and their children. The apology followed his controversial statement during an interview where he said, “Men are not built to be with only one woman.” His comment drew widespread backlash online, prompting the singer to publicly retract his words.

“Something is not right,” Do2dtun says

Reacting to the video, Do2dtun expressed deep concern for 2Face’s well-being. In a series of posts shared via his official X (formerly Twitter) account, the energetic media personality said the apology didn’t reflect 2Face’s usual character.

“Please, I don’t like this 2Face I’m seeing. Something is not right at all,” he wrote. “He can express himself however he wants, but why is he always made to retract statements or apologise like a child? He is vulnerable, and someone is taking advantage of it. Whoever is holding that camera is wicked.”

“He’s being controlled,” Do2dtun alleges Do2dtun didn’t hold back in his comments. He accused an unnamed individual of forcing the singer to act out of character. According to him, 2Face has never been one to publicly address controversies or respond to scandals in such a way.

“Someone is forcing him to be who he’s not. 2Face hardly reacts to anything, even in his worst scandals. Now suddenly he’s making apology videos? It’s unlike him. Something is seriously wrong. He’s not himself, and I hate seeing him like this.”

The OAP emphasised that 2Face might be regressing emotionally or mentally and that the public display of repentance appeared more like pressure than sincerity.

“He spoke his truth,” says Do2dtun



While many have condemned 2Face’s original statement, Do2dtun argued that the singer was simply expressing his truth. According to him, there was no need to drag the artist or force him into public apologies when he was only being honest.

“People are attacking him for saying what many people feel but are afraid to say. The apology might serve a purpose, but it doesn’t seem like it’s for his benefit. It feels more like damage control for someone else’s brand, not his.”

Do2dtun insisted that the singer’s voice should be respected, even if his views are unpopular. He said forcing someone to apologise repeatedly could do more harm than good.

Do2dtun recommends therapy for 2Face

In a compassionate tone, Do2dtun concluded his remarks by urging 2Face to seek professional help. He suggested therapy might be necessary, especially if the singer is truly struggling.

“He needs help. Real help. Therapy might be a good start,” Do2dtun wrote.

The radio host’s reaction has sparked discussions on social media, with fans split over whether 2Face’s apology was genuine or staged under pressure. Some praised Do2dtun for speaking up, while others felt the singer’s apology was necessary, given the nature of his

statement.

2Face’s controversial comment

The controversy began when 2Face appeared on a podcast hosted by comedian and media personality Nedu Wazobia. During the conversation, 2Face remarked that men are not naturally wired to be monogamous. The clip quickly spread online, with critics accusing him of promoting infidelity and disrespecting his wife.

Following the uproar, 2Face posted a video where he took back his words and apologised to Annie, his children, and fans who felt disappointed.

While the apology calmed some of the backlash, it also raised new questions, especially after Do2dtun’s public reaction.

The bigger conversation

Do2dtun’s comments have opened up a larger discussion about mental health, celebrity image control, and the pressure to please the public. Many are now asking: Was 2Face genuinely sorry, or was he forced into making the video to protect a carefully crafted public image?

For now, the legendary singer has remained silent since the apology, leaving fans and observers to speculate on what’s really going on behind the scenes.

# Australia revokes Kanye West's visa over 'Heil Hitler' lyrics controversy

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The Australian government has revoked the visa of American rapper Kanye West, also known as Ye, after the release of a controversial song titled "Heil Hitler."

The track, released in May, is accused of promoting Nazi ideology. The country's Home Affairs Minister, Tony Burke, confirmed the decision on Tuesday, saying West's latest actions crossed a line.

The decision marks a significant escalation in Australia's stance against hate speech and comes after the artist's previous history of antisemitic remarks. West had already stirred outrage with earlier posts on social media platform X, where he declared statements like "I love Hitler" and "I'm a Nazi."

## Song sparks fresh scrutiny

Although the rapper's earlier comments did not result in immediate visa consequences, the release of "Heil Hitler" triggered renewed concern among Australian immigration officials. Minister Burke explained that the content of the song was simply too extreme to ignore.

"It was a lower-level visa," Burke told reporters. "But the officials reviewed it and said, 'If you're going to release a song that promotes Nazism, that's not something we need in Australia.'"

He continued, "We have enough problems in this country already without deliberately importing bigotry."

The minister emphasized that promoting Nazi views, whether through speech or art, goes against Australian values of tolerance and inclusion. He said the government would not hesitate to deny entry to anyone spreading hate, regardless of their fame.

## West's ties to Australia

West, who is married to Australian-born architect Bianca Censori, has long-standing ties to the country. He has visited Australia several times and was known to spend time with Censori's family.

However, his recent behaviour has strained public and political patience.



The visa cancellation makes it clear that even high-profile individuals will face consequences for promoting harmful ideologies.

When asked about the specific date of the visa cancellation, Burke's office declined to provide details. Still, the move reflects the growing discomfort with West's rhetoric and artistic choices.

## Not the first entry ban

The decision to block West from entering the country follows a pattern of recent entry bans aimed at individuals accused of promoting division and hatred.

Just last month, Australia denied entry to pro-Israel social media influencer Hillel Fuld, citing concerns over public safety. In October, U.S. conservative commentator Candace Owens was also barred after making controversial remarks about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Australia's immigration laws allow the government broad discretion in denying entry to foreign nationals who are seen as threats to public harmony. Minister Burke and his department have signalled a tough stance on this issue, especially when it involves inflammatory or extremist views.

## Global backlash against Kanye

Kanye West has faced increasing

backlash around the world for his antisemitic rhetoric. His comments have resulted in the loss of several brand partnerships, widespread condemnation from civil rights groups, and growing isolation in the entertainment industry.

The song "Heil Hitler" has been widely criticised for glorifying one of history's darkest figures. Jewish organisations in Australia and abroad have strongly condemned the track, urging authorities to take action.

Several Australian Jewish leaders welcomed the visa ban, calling it a "necessary step" to prevent the normalisation of hate speech.

## A message on Australian values

The visa cancellation sends a clear message about the kind of society Australia aims to be. While the country maintains freedom of expression, officials have drawn a line when that freedom is used to promote racism and bigotry.

"We're not just talking about someone expressing a political opinion," Burke said. "This is someone who, through their platform, is spreading messages that glorify one of the vilest ideologies the world has ever seen."

Kanye West has not publicly responded to the visa cancellation at the time of this report.



# Trump: Israel has accepted ceasefire terms, ball now in Hamas' court

By **Damilola Olufemi**



**P**resident of the United States of America, Donald Trump, announced on Tuesday that Israel has agreed to the terms of a proposed 60-day ceasefire in the ongoing Gaza conflict, placing the responsibility on Hamas to accept the offer.

In a message posted on his Truth Social platform, the 79-year-old said the United States will use the two-month window to engage all stakeholders in efforts to bring the war to a definitive end.

Qatar and Egypt, both of which have played key roles in previous mediation efforts, are expected to present the latest proposal to Hamas, which the U.S. continues to label a terrorist organisation.

"I hope, for the good of the Middle East, that Hamas takes this Deal, because it will not get better – IT WILL ONLY GET WORSE," the U.S president wrote.

**Progress within reach – Trump**

He also disclosed that U.S. officials had held a "long and productive" meeting with representatives from the Israeli government earlier on Tuesday, with Gaza dominating the discussions.

However, Israeli authorities have yet to issue an official response to Trump's claims.

Trump had previously hinted that a breakthrough in ceasefire talks was near. He is scheduled to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington next week, where the conflict is expected to be a central topic.

Trump reaffirmed his belief that progress is within reach. "I expect an agreement to be reached next week," he said, noting that the United States has been working behind the scenes for several weeks to push for a 60-day truce as a first step toward a broader resolution.

Israel has not confirmed it agreed to the conditions. A Hamas official told the BBC the group was "ready and serious" to reach a deal if it ended the war.

A Palestinian official familiar with Hamas's negotiations with mediators told the BBC the proposal offered no substantive changes to an earlier offer the group rejected in June.

"The core issues remain unresolved," the Palestinian official said, referring to the

talks currently taking place with Qatari and Egyptian mediators.

Earlier, Hamas official Taher al-Nunu told the BBC that the group was "prepared to agree to any proposal if the requirements for ending the war are clearly met or if they lead to its complete end".

In a statement the group said it was aiming to reach an agreement that "guarantees an end to the aggression, the withdrawal [of Israeli forces], and urgent relief for our people in the Gaza Strip".

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar posted on X that there is majority support in the government "for a framework to release hostages," and this opportunity "must not be missed".

For Israel, the key component of any deal will have to be the release of most, if not all, hostages still being held in Gaza.

Of the 50 or so hostages remaining in captivity, more than 20 are still thought to be alive and their plight has been at the forefront of regular demonstrations in Israel calling for an end to the war.



# Starmer bows to backlash, u-turns alcohol advert crackdown

By **Fatimah Idera**



**S**ir Keir Starmer has abandoned plans to ban alcohol advertising following pressure from US trade officials and warnings from the British drinks industry about potential economic fallout.

The proposed restrictions originally set to be part of the government's upcoming 10-year NHS plan were quietly removed after US drinks companies raised concerns that such a move would amount to a non-tariff trade barrier. American producers argued that the policy would unfairly disadvantage new brands trying to enter the UK market, potentially breaching the terms of a future trade deal with Donald Trump's administration.

Domestically, the UK's £40 billion alcohol industry warned that the ban would lead to a loss of investment, damage international trade, and jeopardise vital sports sponsorships. Industry figures welcomed the government's reversal, describing it

as a pragmatic decision that protects a sector seen as a global British success story.

A source from the industry commented: "A ban never made sense. We welcome the government's support for a vital sector that brings investment, innovation, and world-class products to markets worldwide."

While Health Secretary Wes Streeting championed the restrictions as part of a wider public health agenda, the government will now focus on education and behavioural change strategies. The revised approach described by Mr Streeting as nudge, not nanny, will include public information campaigns and work with supermarkets to promote healthier choices without imposing heavy-handed regulation.

Whitehall insiders confirmed that the 10-year NHS plan, expected to be published this week, will contain no new limits on alcohol advertising,

sponsorship, or marketing. Instead, it will outline measures to reduce alcohol related harm in line with the government's lighter-touch strategy.

The decision marks the latest in a string of policy climbdowns by the government, following reversals on disability benefits and winter fuel payments.

The US government had reportedly been preparing to escalate the matter formally if a ban were included in the NHS blueprint. Shadow business secretary Andrew Griffith had earlier criticised the proposed ban as recklessly short-sighted.

A government spokesperson confirmed: "The 10-year health plan will not include a ban on alcohol advertising. We'll always back our food and drink sector, and our recent trade deal with India, which slashed tariffs on iconic products like whisky and gin, shows our commitment to supporting the British industry."

# US halts weapon shipments to Ukraine amid stockpile concerns

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The United States is suspending certain promised arms shipments to Ukraine due to concerns over depleted stockpiles, according to senior officials, a decision that marks a significant shift under President Donald Trump's administration and poses a setback for Kyiv amid intensified Russian attacks.

Munitions previously pledged under President Joe Biden's tenure have now been paused following a Pentagon review of US military reserves. Officials concluded that certain critical weapons systems were too low in supply to be sent abroad without compromising national security.

"This decision was made to put America's interests first following a review of our nation's military support and assistance to other countries across the globe," said White House spokesperson Anna Kelly. "The strength of the United States Armed Forces remains unquestioned, just ask Iran." The remark referenced Trump's recent missile strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities.

While the Department of Defence has not publicly detailed which specific weapons are being withheld, a US official speaking anonymously confirmed that pending deliveries of several items have been suspended.

Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell emphasised the continued strength of the US military: "America's military has never been more ready and more capable." He also pointed to a sweeping tax cut and defence spending bill currently advancing through Congress, designed to modernise America's weapons systems and enhance preparedness against emerging global threats.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine



in February 2022, the US has provided more than \$66 billion in military aid. The halt, however, comes at a time when Russia has stepped up its bombing campaign, carrying out some of the most intense aerial strikes since the war began. Peace negotiations, long promoted by President Trump, have stalled.

The decision to pause the shipments was first reported by Politico.

Trump meets president of Ukraine  
At last week's NATO summit, President Trump met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and left open the possibility of sending additional US-made Patriot air defence missile systems, which Zelenskyy has repeatedly requested.

"They do want to have the anti-missile missiles, OK, as they call them, the Patriots," Trump told reporters. "And we're going to see if we can make some available. We need them, too. We're supplying them to Israel, and

they're very effective, 100% effective."

These remarks signal a broader shift within the administration, which has gradually distanced itself from the level of military support seen during the previous presidency.

In June, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth testified before lawmakers that he had curtailed what he described as "wasteful programmes" and was reallocating funds to support the administration's core strategic aims. He argued that a negotiated peace between Ukraine and Russia projects strength for the United States, even as Moscow remains the aggressor.

"The defence budget reflects the reality that Europe needs to step up more for the defence of its own continent. And President Trump deserves the credit for that," Hegseth said.



# Migrants may be denied asylum in UK under proposed France deal

By Fatimah Idera

Migrants who cross the English Channel in small boats could be barred from claiming asylum in the UK under new plans being developed as part of a returns agreement with France.

The proposed one-in, one-out deal would see the UK return illegal Channel crossers to France, in exchange for accepting a similar number of pre-approved asylum seekers from French territory. The aim is to undercut people smuggling networks by removing the incentive for dangerous and illegal crossings.

According to immigration advisers, enforcing such a system would likely require UK ministers to deny migrants arriving via the Channel the right to claim asylum a move enabled under the 2022 Nationality and Borders Act. The legislation allows the Government to declare a claim inadmissible if the individual passed through a safe third country like France.

The policy shift comes as Channel crossings surge to record levels. By the end of June, 19,982 people had arrived in small boats 48 percent higher than the same period last year and setting a new first-half-year record.

The evolving agreement includes a joint UK-France system to vet and approve asylum seekers for resettlement in the UK, potentially prioritising those with family connections in Britain. However, some experts warn that verifying family ties may be complex and suggest focusing instead on migrants from countries with historically high asylum acceptance rates.

While still in development, the scheme could be trialled as early as next week during the Anglo-French summit, scheduled from July 8 to 10 in London, coinciding with President Emmanuel Macron's state visit. If successful, the agreement would mark the first bilateral



returns arrangement since Brexit ended the UK's participation in the EU's Dublin regulation, which previously allowed for returns of asylum seekers to the first EU country they entered.

The UK Government plans to pilot the scheme to resolve any legal or logistical issues, including how quickly inadmissible claims can be processed and whether migrants would be allowed to appeal.

Currently, enforcement remains limited: only 23 migrants whose asylum claims were deemed inadmissible have been removed under the Tories' post-Brexit rules. Migrants returned to France would be relocated away from the northern coast, with biometric records helping to prevent re-entry attempts.

The plan has drawn scrutiny from EU member states and the European Commission, particularly over concerns that countries such as Italy, Spain, and Greece could face increased pressure if the UK sends back migrants who initially entered the EU through those nations.

"We are in contact with the French and

the UK authorities to ensure the necessary clarifications are made," said a European Commission spokesman.

Meanwhile, France has agreed to a significant policy shift by authorising its elite police forces to intercept migrant taxi boats at sea within 300 metres of its shores. This is a reversal of its previous stance, which avoided such operations for fear of violating maritime safety.

Separately, the UK Government announced it is shutting down two major Afghan refugee resettlement schemes, which have brought over 30,000 people to the UK since the Taliban's return to power in 2021.

Charities have condemned the move, saying it cuts off a crucial lifeline for Afghans still at risk.

"Four years on from the Taliban takeover, people in Afghanistan are still in need of protection," said Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council. "This sudden closure comes with no clear plan for people at real risk and in need of safety."

# Trump hints at stripping Mamdani of US citizenship

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



US President Donald Trump has once again labelled New York State Assembly member Zohran Mamdani a “communist” and questioned the legitimacy of his citizenship during a press conference at the unveiling of a new immigration detention centre in Florida’s Everglades.

Speaking to reporters, Trump suggested that Mamdani may have obtained his American citizenship “illegally”, and pledged to keep him under close scrutiny.

“We don’t need a communist in this country, but if we have one, I’m going to be watching over him very carefully on behalf of the nation,” Trump said. “We send him money, we send him all the things that he needs to run a government.”

He continued: “We’re going to be watching that very carefully. A lot of

people are saying he’s here illegally. We’re going to look at everything, but ideally, he’s going to turn out to be much less than a communist. Right now, he’s a communist, that’s not a socialist.”

The remarks come amid growing tensions over Trump’s increasingly inflammatory rhetoric ahead of the 2026 midterm elections. His comments have drawn sharp criticism from Democratic politicians and civil rights advocates, who argue that Trump’s language fuels xenophobia and political intimidation.

Mamdani replies

In response, Mamdani, a progressive lawmaker known for his advocacy on housing and immigration issues, posted a statement condemning Trump’s remarks, particularly his praise of New York City Mayor Eric Adams.

Trump described Adams, who is currently running for re-election as an independent after leaving the

Democratic Party, as a “good person” and claimed to have “helped out a little bit” with the US Justice Department’s decision in April to dismiss a federal corruption case against him.

Mamdani wrote in a social media post: “That Trump included praise for Adams in his authoritarian threats is unsurprising.”

Trump’s renewed attack on Mamdani has been widely interpreted as part of a broader strategy to rally support among far-right voters by targeting progressive elected officials. Critics have warned that such rhetoric risks inciting harassment and undermining democratic norms.

So far, Mamdani has not commented further, but political observers expect the dispute to fuel continued debate over Trump’s influence on immigration and civil discourse in the United States.



# Smell detectors to be installed in offenders' homes to monitor illegal activity

By **Fatimah Idera**



**S**mell detectors capable of identifying illegal drugs such as spice and fentanyl could soon be installed in the homes of criminals and prison cells as part of a radical shake-up of how offenders are monitored.

The high-tech sensors designed using synthetic brain cells and artificial intelligence to mimic the human sense of smell are among a wave of new technologies being considered by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to tackle drug use and reoffending. The devices were unveiled at a presentation to Lord Timpson, the probation minister, by tech firms shortlisted in a government competition to modernise the criminal justice system.

The smell detectors are part of a wider vision to use emerging technologies to impose what ministers have called a digital prison for those serving sentences in the community. Alongside the detectors, AI-powered cameras could be installed in offenders' homes to monitor behaviour and ensure compliance with licence conditions.

The initiative follows recommendations from an independent sentencing review, accepted by the Labour government, to reduce prison overcrowding by shifting more offenders onto community-based

sentences.

Lord Timpson said the justice system was “working in analogue while tech drives forward a new digital age,” adding: “That’s why we have invited companies to present bold new ideas to help us deliver tough punishment and enhanced surveillance. Embracing new technologies will help us to protect victims, reduce reoffending and cut crime as part of our change plan.”

Smell detectors among shortlisted innovations

Among the shortlisted innovations were; AI smell detectors for identifying banned substances in prisons and homes, behaviour-tracking cameras in offenders' residences, alcohol tags, which have already helped 97% of wearers stay sober, software to streamline offender data input and admin tasks, subcutaneous tracking devices, rehabilitation bots, and driverless prisoner transport vehicles

The proposals came from a pool of more than 90 ideas submitted by tech firms, with seven finalists selected for further consideration and potential pilot schemes.

The push marks a growing alignment

between the Labour government and the tech industry. At a recent meeting chaired by Justice Secretary Shabana Mahmood and attended by representatives from Google, Amazon, Microsoft, and Palantir, ministers called for “deeper collaboration between government and tech to solve the prison capacity crisis, reduce reoffending and make communities safer.”

Ms Mahmood said she wanted technology not only for surveillance, but also to support rehabilitation: “We’re scaling and improving tagging to reduce crime and transform public services.”

The meeting, hosted by Tech UK, asked participants to imagine what a fully digital justice system might look like by 2050. Ideas include: AI advisers to support offender rehabilitation, robotics and self-driving vehicles to manage prisoners, Subcutaneous tracking to monitor location and wellbeing.

This tech-forward approach echoes Sir Keir Starmer’s broader public sector strategy, unveiled earlier this year, where he positioned AI as a tool to rewire government and improve efficiency across schools, hospitals, and now the justice system.

# Ex-British nurse Lucy Letby faces fresh allegations in baby deaths case

By Fatimah Idera



**A** former British neonatal nurse, Lucy Letby, may be charged in connection with further baby deaths after police submitted new evidence to prosecutors.

Cheshire Constabulary confirmed on Tuesday that it had handed over a full file to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), which will now decide whether to authorise additional charges against the former neonatal nurse.

Letby, 35, from Herefordshire, was convicted of the murders of seven infants and attempted murders of seven others between June 2015 and June 2016.

Letby came under investigation following a high number of unexpected infant deaths that occurred at the neonatal unit of the Countess of Chester Hospital three years after she began working there.

Letby already is serving a whole-life sentence after being convicted of murdering seven babies and attempting to kill seven others while working at the Countess of Chester Hospital between 2015 and 2016.

The fresh file reportedly relates to more than a dozen other infant deaths and collapses at the Countess of Chester Hospital and Liverpool Women's Hospital, where Letby trained and also worked. She was previously questioned by detectives in connection with these incidents, which occurred between 2012 and 2016.

The CPS said it would carefully consider the evidence to determine whether any further criminal charges should be brought, stressing that any decision would be made independently and in accordance with its legal standards.

Meanwhile, the legitimacy of Letby's original convictions is under increasing scrutiny. A group of leading medical experts has challenged the evidence used in her trial, concluding after reviewing hospital notes that no crimes were committed and that the deaths were likely due to natural causes or substandard medical care.

The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) is currently assessing these claims. However, both the CPS and police have maintained that Letby was fairly convicted.

As part of the broader investigation, named Operation Hummingbird, detectives are also examining the role of others who worked at the hospitals during the relevant period. On Monday, three senior hospital staff at the Countess of Chester Hospital were arrested on suspicion of gross negligence manslaughter. The individuals whose names have not been released held leadership roles during the time of Letby's crimes.

A CPS spokesperson said: "We can confirm that we have received a full file of evidence from Cheshire Constabulary asking us to consider further allegations relating to deaths and non-fatal collapses of babies at the Countess of Chester Hospital and Liverpool Women's Hospital. We will now carefully consider the evidence to determine whether any further criminal charges should be brought."

Cheshire Constabulary added "The file of evidence was submitted as part of our ongoing investigation into the neonatal units of both hospitals, under Operation Hummingbird."



# Jury deadlocked on key charge in Diddy's sex trafficking trial

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The jury in the high-profile federal trial of music mogul Sean “Diddy” Combs ended a second day of deliberations on Tuesday without reaching a verdict on one of the five charges he faces, prompting the judge to urge them to continue their efforts.

After more than 13 hours of deliberation across two days, the 12-member panel, comprised of eight men and four women, informed the court that they had come to a decision on four of the counts. However, they remained divided on the racketeering conspiracy charge, with some jurors reportedly holding “unpersuadable views”.

US District Judge Arun Subramanian, presiding over the case, instructed the jury to “keep deliberating”, adding, “If you decide you are done for the day, send me another note and I’ll bring you back out to end the day.” Shortly after 5 pm, the jurors sent a final note stating they were adjourning and would resume deliberations on Wednesday morning.

Combs, 55, was arrested in September and stands accused of five felony charges: one count of racketeering conspiracy, two counts of sex trafficking, and two counts of transportation to engage in prostitution. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges and denies any wrongdoing.

If convicted, Combs could face a life sentence.

Jurors have expressed particular difficulty with the racketeering charge, which requires them to determine not only whether Combs oversaw a criminal enterprise, but also whether he committed or facilitated crimes such as kidnapping and arson. The charge is considered the most complex of the five.

Deliberations began on Monday following closing arguments and comprehensive instructions from Judge Subramanian. However, just an hour into discussions, the jury submitted a note raising concerns about Juror 25, who was allegedly struggling to follow the judge’s legal instructions. In



response, the judge reminded all jurors of their duty to deliberate and adhere strictly to the law and instructed them not to include details of their discussions in future notes.

## Jury demands clarity of drug distribution

On Tuesday, the jury sent several more notes, including a request for clarification on the definition of drug distribution. The judge pointed them to a passage in the charging document, which defined distribution as including “actual, constructive, or attempted transfer” and clarified that “distribution does not require a sale”.

Later in the morning, jurors requested transcripts of testimony from two key witnesses: singer Casandra “Cassie” Ventura, one of Combs’s former girlfriends and the prosecution’s central witness, and Daniel Phillip, who claimed he was hired to participate in so-called “freak-offs” allegedly orchestrated by Combs.

The trial, which began on 12 May, featured testimony from 34 witnesses, including former girlfriends, employees, male escorts, stylists, hotel

staff, law enforcement officers, and celebrities such as rapper Kid Cudi and singer Dawn Richard.

Prosecutors have painted a disturbing portrait of Combs as the ringleader of a criminal enterprise that used intimidation, violence, and power to coerce women into sex acts and to silence witnesses. The charges span a broad range of alleged criminal activity over two decades, including sex trafficking, forced labour, drug distribution, arson, and obstruction of justice.

The defence has strongly refuted the claims, maintaining that all sexual activities were consensual and part of a “swingers lifestyle”. While acknowledging past instances of domestic violence, Combs’s legal team has denied any acts of coercion or sex trafficking, arguing instead that the case is an unfair prosecution of his private life.

With the jury deadlocked on the racketeering count, discussions are expected to resume on Wednesday, as both the prosecution and defence resist declaring a mistrial and hope for a full verdict.

# Chelsea signs Brazil forward Joao Pedro from Brighton

By New Daily Prime



Chelsea signed Brazil striker Joao Pedro from Brighton in a deal worth a reported £60 million (\$79 million) on Wednesday.

Pedro jetted to the United States, where Chelsea are playing in the Club World Cup, on Sunday after the terms of his eight-year contract were agreed.

With the transfer now confirmed following a medical, Pedro is available to play for Enzo Maresca's side in their Club World Cup quarter-final against Palmeiras in Philadelphia.

FIFA has given clubs involved in the Club World Cup knockout phase until July 3 to register new players for the tournament.

"Everyone knows this is a big club with a great history," Pedro said.

"They had brilliant players in the past and have brilliant players now, so I am excited to join and you know when you are a Chelsea player you must think one thing — win."

Pedro said: "Everyone knows this is a big club with a great history.

"They had brilliant players in the past and have brilliant players now. So I am excited to join and you know when you are a Chelsea player you must think one thing — win."

Pedro, who joined Brighton for £30 million from Watford two years ago, scored 30 goals in 70 appearances for the Seagulls and has been capped three times by Brazil.

The 23-year-old missed Brighton's final two matches of the season after being dropped due to a training ground altercation with team-mate Jan Paul van Hecke.

Pedro is the fourth player Chelsea have signed from Brighton in recent years after Moises Caicedo, Marc Cucurella, and Robert Sanchez.

Chelsea, who qualified for next season's Champions League, have already splashed out on striker Liam Delap, midfielder Dario Essugo and defender Mamadou Sarr since the end of last term.

Brazilian rising star Estevao Willian, 18, will join the Blues after his Club World

Cup campaign with Palmeiras.

Borussia Dortmund winger Jamie Gittens could also be a Chelsea player soon after a deal worth up to a reported 65 million euros (\$76 million) was agreed for the 20-year-old on Saturday.

Pedro scored 30 goals in 70 appearances for Brighton, whose head coach Fabian Hurzeler said: "This is a good move for the club, and a good return on a significant investment in an area of the pitch where we have a lot of competition and are already well served in terms of our attacking talent.

"It's also an exciting move for Joao: it gives him the opportunity to play Champions League football this coming season, and he will of course be keen to cement his position in the Brazil team ahead of the World Cup next summer.

"Joao has given us some wonderful moments — during my time and before I came to the club — so on behalf of everyone I would like to thank him for his service over the past two seasons and wish him the best for the future."