



SDP expels El-Rufai for three decades

Pg 2

Tinubu rewards Super Falcons with honours, cash, housing

Pg 4



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Nigeria, global leaders urge collective action against food insecurity at UN Summit **Pg 9 & 10**



US warns against birth tourism as visa denials rise

Pg 22

WORLD

Russia launches first direct flights to North Korea

Pg 24

WORLD

Pg 25

Three dead, several injured in Germany train derailment



SDP expels El-Rufai for three decades

By Friday Omosola

The Social Democratic Party (SDP) has announced the expulsion of former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, for a period of 30 years, citing breaches of party constitution and principles.

The decision, revealed in a statement by the party's National Publicity Secretary, Araba Aiyenigba, on Monday, effectively bars El-Rufai from any association with the SDP until July 28, 2055.

The party's National Working Committee (NWC) asserted that the expulsion aligns with the SDP's foundational documents, ideology, and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which grants political parties the exclusive right to determine their membership.

The SDP warned its members nationwide and the public, advising against any dealings with El-Rufai, as he is no longer considered a member and does not represent the party's interests.

The SDP also urged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other relevant bodies to acknowledge El-Rufai's non-member status, noting his ineligibility for party membership for the next three decades.

According to the NWC, investigations into El-Rufai's membership status revealed that despite claims from the Kaduna State Executives that he had not formally joined, he had been presenting himself as an SDP member and actively promoting the activities of other political parties within the state.

The party initially gave El-Rufai the benefit of the doubt due to his status as a former minister and governor, expecting him to understand the implications of false representation.

However, further inquiry confirmed that his public assertions on social media about joining the SDP were unfounded.

The statement further accused El-Rufai of failing to register lawfully at his ward



as required by party regulations.

Instead, he allegedly "forged his own documents" and "self-registered," arrogating to himself the "number 001" in the Unguwar Sarki Ward register, a claim the SDP stated contradicted existing party records in Kaduna.

The party also levelled accusations of "illegitimately trading" with the SDP's name in various political forums and transactions related to a "so-called coalition," allegedly without the NWC's authorisation.

The SDP accused El-Rufai of orchestrating "innumerable destabilising schemes" that shattered the party's peace at national, state, and local levels.

These schemes reportedly involved "obscene dangling of cash and other inducements," along with "pure guile and utter deception," leading to widespread disunity and intrigue.

The NWC cited El-Rufai's alleged public declaration for the ADC (African Democratic Congress) as a "coalition vehicle," and confirmed attempts to "dishonestly" draw the SDP into this coalition.

His actions, the party claimed, were part of a "selfish agenda to destabilise the party" after his initial mission failed, culminating in his alleged sponsorship of "a group of dissidents to call an illegal

National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting" on July 25.

The SDP also recalled El-Rufai's alleged past intolerance and "persecution" of the SDP as an opposition party during his tenure as Governor of Kaduna State under the APC.

Consequent upon these actions, the NWC confirmed and ratified the prior denunciation by his Unguwar Sarki Ward and the Kaduna State Executive Committee.

The SDP now "disassociates, disclaims, dis-fellowships and excommunicates El-Rufai" from its membership globally.

The 30-year ban prohibits him from applying for membership, identifying with the SDP name or insignia, donating to, or participating in any of its activities.

The SDP affirmed its commitment to national patriotism, party discipline, ideological clarity, moral rectitude, honour, integrity, principled opposition, fair contest, and internal democracy.

It extended an invitation to all Nigerians who align with these ideals and possess the "revolutionary patience" to contribute to the fight against corruption, poverty, and insecurity, "without cutting corners and indulging in duplicity or insincerity."

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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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
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8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
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Tinubu rewards Super Falcons with honours, cash, housing

By Helen Okechukwu



President Bola Tinubu has rewarded Nigeria's senior women's national football team, the Super Falcons, along with team officials, with national honours, financial gifts, and housing for their triumphant performance at the 2024 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco.

At a presidential reception in Abuja, Tinubu conferred the title of Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON) on all team members.

He also approved a three-bedroom apartment for each of them under the Renewed Hope Housing Scheme.

The Special Adviser to the President, Bayo Onanuga, further disclosed that President Tinubu awarded a cash gift equivalent to \$100,000 to each player, while each member of the technical crew will receive \$50,000.

"You have inspired millions, especially young girls who now see proof that their dreams are valid and achievable," Tinubu said.

He recalled the emotional final match, noting how their performance lifted national morale.

"But you almost made me angrier because your mother (the First Lady) was in the

kitchen, nearly abandoning my dinner."

The President pledged greater investment in sports, particularly women's football, and reaffirmed his administration's commitment to youth development.

Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, also announced a N10 million reward for each player and crew member on behalf of the 36 state governors.

First Lady, Senator Oluremi, praised the team as role models and predicted their eventual global victory. "You played with passion, confidence, and an unshakeable belief in yourselves—that it is not over until it is over," she said.

Team captain Rasheedat Ajibade expressed gratitude on behalf of the team, dedicating the win to every young Nigerian girl with a dream. "This trophy is more than a title—it's hope," she said.

Chairman of the National Sports Commission, Shehu Dikko, said the Falcons' victory demonstrated the unifying power of sport and credited the Tinubu administration for its support of youth and women's development.

"This win goes beyond sport. It is a powerful symbol of our national unity and cohesion," he said.



Nigeria to sign green legacy MoU, host Africa's first South-South technology centre

By Friday Omosola



The Federal Government of Nigeria is set to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with an international consortium comprising Dalberg Group and Campo Group to advance its Green Legacy Programme.

The agreement marks a significant step towards achieving Nigeria's ambitious environmental targets, including the planting of 25 billion trees nationwide.

This development was announced on Monday during a meeting between Vice President Kashim Shettima and representatives of the Dalberg and Campo Groups on the sidelines of the United Nations Food Systems Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The two organisations had previously played a key role in Ethiopia's successful afforestation programme, which saw the planting of 46 billion trees.

Shettima expressed confidence in Nigeria's commitment to its green agenda, stating: "We are optimistic about planting 20 billion trees. If Ethiopia, with its challenging terrain,

can plant 46 billion, then 25 billion is even a modest target. I believe we should aim to start with 10 billion."

Shettima also commended President Bola Tinubu's leadership, describing him as a courageous and transformational figure determined to redefine governance and economic development in Africa.

In a related development, the Organisation of Southern Cooperation (OSC) has announced plans to establish its first-ever South-South Technology Transfer Centre for Africa in Nigeria.

The OSC also proposed Nigeria as the host of its upcoming African South-South Summit.

The Secretary General of the OSC, Manssour Bin Mussallam, made the disclosure during a meeting with Shettima, also on the sidelines of the Addis Ababa summit.

He praised Nigeria's vision and commitment to inclusive development, noting the country's early ratification of the OSC charter.

"Given Nigeria's leadership in education and innovation under President Tinubu's administration, the country is an ideal location for this initiative," said Mussallam.

"We believe Nigeria will be particularly well-suited to host the African centre alongside others in Latin America and Southeast Asia."

Shettima welcomed the proposal and urged the OSC to develop creative, home-grown solutions to address the development challenges facing member countries.

He stressed the importance of building knowledge-based societies and said the global South must seize the moment in the current knowledge-driven era.

"Africa missed the agricultural and industrial revolutions. We must not miss the post-industrial age. Now is the time to tap into innovations like artificial intelligence and biotechnology," he said.

The Green Legacy MoU and the OSC initiative underscore Nigeria's growing role in global environmental and technological cooperation efforts.

Obi accuses Tinubu's administration of misleading Nigerians with false statistics

By Friday Omosola

The Labour Party's 2023 presidential candidate, Peter Obi, has accused President Bola Tinubu's administration of consistently misleading Nigerians with inaccurate statistics.

In a statement posted on his X page on Monday, the 64-year-old alleged that the government had been peddling incorrect data—from flawed unemployment and inflation figures to a questionable GDP rebasing exercise.

The former Anambra State governor claimed these manipulated statistics were being used to present a falsely positive picture of Nigeria's worsening economic and household realities.

He recalled that during a campaign rally in Delta State in November 2022, Tinubu mocked him, expressing shame at even mentioning his name.

According to Obi, Tinubu dismissed him



as a "statistics man" and questioned whether statistics were what Nigerians would eat.

He added that Tinubu insisted his focus was simply to put food on the tables of ordinary citizens.

"Now, 2 years into his 4-year tenure, Nigeria is classified as one of the

hungriest nations in the world, with millions of Nigerians not knowing where their next meal will come from.

"Governance is not rocket science, it's not a gamble, like I have always reiterated, it requires sincerity of purpose, character, competence, capacity and compassion. A new Nigeria is possible", he said.

SDP: Presidency spokesperson mocks El-Rufai following alleged expulsion

By Gbenga Olaleye

Bayo Onanuga, a spokesperson for the Presidency, has taken a swipe at former Kaduna State governor Nasir El-Rufai over his reported expulsion from the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

In a brief post on his X account on Monday, Onanuga wrote: "Internally Displaced Again!" — a clear reference to El-Rufai's shifting political affiliations.

The comment follows reports by NEW DAILY PRIME that the SDP announced El-Rufai's expulsion from the party and imposed a 30-year ban on him.

The party's National Working Committee (NWC) stated that the decision was made in accordance with the SDP's constitution, ideology, manifesto, principles, and practices.



El-Rufai had joined the SDP after quitting the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Since then, he has reportedly aligned himself with several other political figures, including Atiku Abubakar, Rotimi Amaechi, and Peter Obi, under the banner



of the African Democratic Congress (ADC).

The ongoing political shifts highlight the fluid nature of party affiliations among Nigerian politicians as they reposition ahead of future elections.

FG says visa extension pardon for foreigners ends 30 September

By Helen Okechukwu

The Federal Government (FG) has announced that the window of opportunity for foreign nationals with expired visas or immigration documents to regularise their stay in Nigeria will close on 30 September.

This move is part of the Expired Visa Initiative (Amnesty), introduced jointly by the Ministry of Interior and the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) to improve compliance with the country's updated visa framework and bolster immigration management.

The amnesty, which began on 1 May, allows foreign residents and visitors whose immigration status has lapsed — including those with expired Visa on Arrival (VoA), Single or Multiple-Entry Visas, and those holding Combined Expatriate Residence Permit and Aliens Cards (CERPAC) that have not been renewed within 30 days of expiration — to update their records without incurring penalties.

Foreign nationals affected by this initiative are encouraged to complete their regularisation process through the official portal of the service: <https://amnesty.immigration.gov.ng>



before the deadline.

To facilitate a smooth application process, the NIS has set up a dedicated support team reachable via email at amnesty@immigration.gov.ng.

Speaking on the development, the NIS Public Relations Officer, ACI A. S. Akinlabi, stated that the initiative is a testament to the government's dedication to lawful migration, national security,

and operational transparency. He also noted that the agency is committed to enhancing the efficiency and credibility of its immigration procedures.

The notice indicated that the temporary relief is expected to ease the burden on expatriates and foreign nationals who have encountered difficulties renewing their immigration status, particularly due to bureaucratic or logistical setbacks

“Violence, voter suppression cost me the 2023 Election” – Rhodes-Vivour

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Labour Party's 2023 governorship candidate in Lagos State, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, has said that violence, intimidation, and voter suppression were the main reasons he lost to incumbent Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu in the last election.

In a post shared on his official X (formerly Twitter) account on Monday, Rhodes-Vivour criticised what he described as a culture of violence that undermined the will of the electorate during the polls.

“When you have normalised violence against a group of people, eventually that violence should meet you,” he wrote.

“You look at what happened in the State Assembly where a majority, more than 90% of them, decided that they wanted



someone else to speak on their behalf, to represent them, and they went through the entire process.”

He praised voters who, despite threats and coercion, stood firm during the State Assembly elections. “They voted, they

stood their ground, despite intimidation, despite the force that was used against them,” he said.

Rhodes-Vivour, who emerged as a strong contender in the 2023 elections, stressed that similar tactics of violence and suppression were used to derail his own bid for the governorship. “It’s a culture of violence, and intimidation and voter suppression, and I think that was the main obstacle for me in the 2023 elections,” he stated.

His comments add to ongoing debates about electoral integrity in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos, where reports of voter suppression and politically motivated attacks were widespread during the last general elections.

Tinubu's road projects based on economic value, not region - Tinubu's aide replies Kwankwaso

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Senior Special Adviser to President Bola Tinubu on Print Media, Abdulaziz Abdulaziz, has reaffirmed that the Federal Government's ongoing road infrastructure projects are being implemented based on their economic importance rather than regional considerations.

Speaking on The Morning Brief, a programme aired on Channels Television on Monday, Mr Abdulaziz responded to recent criticisms made by Rabiu Kwankwaso, presidential candidate of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) in the 2023 general election. Kwankwaso had accused the Tinubu-led administration of diverting limited national resources towards the development of roads in southern Nigeria, to the detriment of the northern region.

Dismissing the allegations, Abdulaziz maintained that the Tinubu administration views all infrastructure projects as national undertakings, not regional favours. He emphasised that the government's decisions are driven by the potential economic benefits of each project, rather than their geographical location.

"We should look at things as national projects and not as northern or southern projects, which is a major problem," he said.



"The most important thing is what value the projects bring and not because they are sited in the North or the South. What are the economic benefits of these roads?"

He went on to state that the administration is committed to fairness and equity in the distribution of infrastructure, adding that no region has been sidelined under the current government.

"Of course, there is the need for justice, there is the need for fairness, which I am sure nobody could accuse this government of being unfair to the North or being unfair to the South because projects are being sited equally," Abdulaziz said.

Addressing the claim that the Abuja-Kaduna-Kano expressway

has been abandoned, the presidential aide clarified that construction activities have resumed on the crucial route, which serves as a major artery in the North-West geopolitical zone.

He also cited the ongoing Sokoto-Badagry Road project as evidence of the government's balanced approach. The road, which traverses a large part of northern Nigeria, is being constructed alongside the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Road in the South, illustrating what Abdulaziz described as a "nationally inclusive" infrastructure agenda.

The statement comes as part of the Federal Government's broader efforts to defend its infrastructure development strategy and counter narratives of regional bias amid rising political scrutiny.

Nigeria, global leaders urge collective action against food insecurity at UN Summit

By Friday Omosola



Nigeria, alongside other African nations and the United Nations, has issued a forceful call for unified action and resolute determination to combat pervasive food insecurity on both the African continent and a global scale.

The demand for predictable concessional finance to fuel investments in agriculture, rural transformation, infrastructure, and literacy across Africa was a central theme, with leaders stressing the imperative of aligning climate finance with robust food systems.

Speaking at the opening session of the United Nations Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4) in Addis Ababa on Monday, Vice President Kashim Shettima, announced Nigeria's advanced strategy to enhance agricultural output through cutting-edge technology.

He stated that the nation is now deploying tools such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), geospatial

analytics, and satellite-driven climate intelligence to eradicate food insecurity.

The ultimate goal, Shettima emphasised, is to forge a future characterised by abundance, equity, and human dignity.

Acknowledging that food insecurity has become a universal challenge, no longer confined to remote regions, he urged African nations to defy prevailing trends amidst climate change and other global pressures.

"The Fourth Industrial Revolution has not only disrupted the old order but gifted us instruments that were once confined to the imagination," he declared.

Shettima details how these modern tools are being used to monitor production, boost transparency, connect producers to markets, and minimise waste throughout the agricultural value chain.

Rather than merely exchanging

diplomatic pleasantries, Shettima implored summit participants to depart with a resolute conviction in Africa's potential for success.

He called upon African nations to unite with shared purpose and unwavering determination to achieve continental food security.

"A broken food system in any part of the world diminishes the dignity of humanity as a whole," he stated, advocating for a world where "no child sleeps on an empty stomach, where no farmer is forgotten, and where food is not a luxury but a human right."

Shettima further elaborated on Nigeria's robust institutional reforms, including deepening inter-sectoral partnerships and prioritising agro-industrialisation as a key driver for inclusive growth.

**Continue reading
on next page**

Cont from page 9

Shettima further elaborated on Nigeria's robust institutional reforms, including deepening inter-sectoral partnerships and prioritising agro-industrialisation as a key driver for inclusive growth.

This strategic direction followed the unveiling of Nigeria's National Food Systems Transformation Pathway, which has translated into targeted investments in infrastructure and human capital development.

He clarified that Nigeria's declaration of a national emergency on food security was more than a mere alarm; it is the driving force behind the Presidential Initiative on Food Security.

This mission, he explained, is designed to significantly increase the cultivation of vital staples such as maize, rice, cassava, and wheat.

These efforts are bolstered by climate-smart innovations, financial inclusion programs for smallholder farmers, and an expansion of extension services, particularly tailored for women and youth.

Additional agricultural investments include the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZs), which are being developed in collaboration with the African Development Bank and IFAD.

Shettima highlighted these zones as not just production hubs but transformative engines, fostering job creation, attracting private capital, and forging crucial links between rural producers and both national and global markets.

"Our faith in the capacity of our people remains unshaken. But production is not enough. We believe that a sustainable food system must also be a healthy one," he added.

Extending President Bola Tinubu's and Nigeria's gratitude to the host

nations, Ethiopia and Italy, Shettima affirmed Nigeria's readiness to actively engage:

"Nigeria is ready to listen. Nigeria is ready to learn. Nigeria is ready to lead wherever leadership is required. We are here to champion food systems that are resilient in the face of climate shocks, responsive to nutritional needs, and rooted in local realities.

"We are here because we believe that the arc of history does not only bend towards justice. It bends towards food justice."

Earlier in the summit, Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed underscored the event's significance as an opportunity to review progress and renew collective commitment to building resilient and inclusive food systems.

Ahmed echoed the call for predictable concessional finance for Africa's agricultural and rural development, emphasising the vital link between climate finance and food systems, given the deep connection between hunger and environmental degradation.

He highlighted Ethiopia's launch of a comprehensive roadmap for food

system transformation since the first summit in 2021, and its deliberate choice to invest boldly in local production, reduce import dependency, and build a resilient system centred on human dignity.

Speaking via recorded videocast, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres reiterated that food systems encompass more than just food, touching upon climate, justice, and the right to a better future.

While acknowledging some progress since the last food summit, Guterres warned that it is insufficient, noting the global rise in hunger and how threats and shocks are driving up food prices.

He stated that the crisis in the African continent's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is fundamentally a crisis of justice, equity, and climate, with climate change actively disrupting harvests, supply chains, and humanitarian responses.

The summit also featured addresses from other prominent figures, including Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and Kenyan President William Ruto, among other heads of state and representatives from various multilateral organisations.



Fayose endorses Tinubu, Oyebanji for second terms, retains PDP membership

By Friday Omosola



Ayodele Fayose, a prominent figure within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and former governor of Ekiti State, announced his support for President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid on Monday.

During an event hosted by the All Progressives Congress (APC) at the Ekiti Parapo Pavilion in Ado Ekiti, Fayose also extended his endorsement to the state incumbent governor, Biodun Oyebanji, and his deputy, for a second term in office.

Addressing the gathering, which he described as a unique assembly of former Ekiti governors, state and National Assembly leaders, Fayose explicitly stated, "I want to join all well-meaning Nigerians, particularly Ekiti

leaders and followers, to endorse publicly without reservation, the President and Commander of the Armed Forces, President Bola Tinubu, for a second term and to equally endorse our Governor, Abayomi Oyebanji, and his deputy for a second term."

Despite his public backing for these APC leaders, Fayose denied any intention of defecting from the PDP.

He harked back to his own electoral history, recalling his unprecedented victory in 2014 where he swept all 16 local government areas of the state.

He then challenged future contenders, noting, "Who will for the first time again become the record holder to win in all 16 local governments of Ekiti and win in

all the 177 wards of Ekiti? That is taken for granted. But when we get to the field, we will contest and see each other."

Fayose urged all Ekiti residents to set aside differences and collectively rally support for Oyebanji in the forthcoming gubernatorial election.

Interestingly, while endorsing the APC's candidates, the former governor also took a swipe at the ruling party, suggesting that it falls short when compared to the opposition PDP, particularly concerning public welfare.

Nevertheless, he reiterated his commitment to working for the current governor, even as he maintained his allegiance to the PDP.

“Misplaced priority, wasteful spending” — PDP on Kwara’s new secretariat plan

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the main opposition in Kwara State, has expressed strong opposition to Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq’s alleged plans to construct a new Government House Secretariat in Ilorin, the state capital.

In a statement issued on Monday, Olusegun Olusola Adewara, the state Publicity Secretary of the PDP, described the proposed project as “illogical” and “a glaring example of misplaced priority,” accusing the administration of attempting to divert state resources at a time when many communities are facing serious infrastructural challenges.

Adewara questioned the need for the new Secretariat given the “severe infrastructural deficits” across Kwara, including dilapidated roads, collapsed school buildings, under-equipped

hospitals, and rising poverty levels.

“Governor Abdulrazaq has barely two years left in office. What pressing need does a new Government House Secretariat serve at this twilight of his administration?” the statement asked.

The PDP also highlighted that the existing Government House complex remains largely underused due to Governor Abdulrazaq’s refusal to occupy it since 2019, despite the government allocating hundreds of millions of naira annually for its maintenance.

“For example, in 2021, about N3.2 billion was budgeted for the Government House renovation by Governor Abdulrazaq,” the party noted.

Calling for transparency, the PDP challenged the governor to publish full contract details and associated

costs for the project, emphasising that the people of Kwara deserve to know how their resources are being utilised amid ongoing economic hardships.

Of further concern to the opposition is the report that the contract for the new Secretariat is to be awarded to a foreign firm, contradicting the governor’s ‘Otoge’ campaign pledge to empower local contractors and stimulate indigenous enterprise.

The PDP urged residents to remain vigilant against what it described as “vanity projects” that fail to address immediate needs or provide lasting benefits to the people of Kwara State.

“Kwarans deserve better stewardship of their resources rather than waste on questionable projects that mortgage the future of our children,” the party concluded.

'Survival is our culture': What identity means to Nigerians

By Jeremiah Aminu



What does it mean to be a Nigerian? Is it our renowned resilience — the ability to navigate challenges, adapt to adversity, and still wear an undisturbed smile? Is it our popular mantra, “Naija no dey carry last,” that reflects our determination to always strive for excellence? Is it the richness of our culture, rooted in vibrant traditions and oral storytelling?

Is it our unique expressions, which mirror our lived realities and collective identity, or is it simply the honour of being called the Giant of Africa?

In response to this question, there is no single or mono-directional approach to defining who a Nigerian is or who a Nigerian is expected to be. This calls for a multi-layered perspective, one that considers language, culture, nationality, ideology, and lived experience.

To explore this complex identity,

The New Daily Prime interviewed a few Nigerians to get their views on this thought-provoking question. Among them is Christan Modupe, who was born and raised in Lagos, in the South-Western part of the country.

According to Christan, “Being Nigerian is a phenomenon defined by a ‘survival culture’ embedded at the core of our national identity. This culture has become so widely recognized that Nigerians are often described as people who can adapt to any situation, regardless of how difficult or undesirable it may be.”

He explains that this resilience is reflected in how Nigerians use humour as a coping strategy, often through satire, to mask dissatisfaction with socio-economic and political instability. “If one can make a mockery of serious situations tied to the ills of Nigerian society, they are truly Nigerian,” Christan observes. “Foreigners may not laugh at our reality — but we do.

That’s our coping mechanism.”

For Christan, this use of humour is not trivial, it is foundational. It is, in his words, “why we possess the natural ability to survive and adapt to undesirable situations we encounter daily.”

She added that it is through nationality that one becomes a Nigerian. However, many Nigerians sometimes experience a sense of disconnection due to the social imbalances in the country.

It is for this reason that Christan says many are “Nigerians by birth, but not by heart,” referring to the socio-structural instability within the nation. Nonetheless, this is not to suggest that Nigerians despise their national identity that is not the case.

**Continue reading
on next page**

Cont from page 13

NATIONALITY AND LANGUAGE

One of the ways we reinforce our identity as Nigerians is through language use. This is reflected in the unique ways we frame expressions to represent our realities, sensibilities, and everyday experiences.

Oreoluwa, a student, observes that we often use phrases like “go-slow” instead of “traffic jam” to describe the slow movement of vehicles on the road. Another example is the greeting “How far,” which contextually means “How are you?” rather than asking about physical distance. Even “Up NEPA!” serves as a uniquely celebratory exclamation marking the return of electricity, a moment worth cheering in many Nigerian households. This uniqueness in language use is also reflected in the descriptive, figurative, elevated, and humorous ways we construct expressions in both English and Nigerian Pidgin. Some notable examples include:

- “Even Google cannot find your sense”
- “The tallest man in your village dey use ladder climb Maggi”
- “You bombastic element!”

These expressions function as cultural signifiers, humorous, sharp, and distinctly Nigerian, offering insight into how we use language not just for communication, but as a tool of identity, humour, and shared experience.

CULTURE

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic geo-space, home to over 250 ethnic groups with diverse cultures and rich oratures. The products of these oral traditions such as songs, proverbs, folktales, legends, and myths, function as indicators of Nigerian identity, serving as cultural sites where “Nigerianness” is expressed and preserved.

Interestingly, one can also reference Nigeria’s economic culture, particularly the well-known price negotiation practices in local marketplaces. In this regard, it is common for Nigerians to engage in bargaining to secure a more affordable price for goods.

For instance, Augustine, a businessman based in Enugu, highlights the practice of “jara” a cultural expression whereby a seller offers a customer a small extra quantity of goods, often as a reward for persistence, friendliness, or shared banter.

This economic tradition, beyond its commercial function, also serves as a space for social bonding and relationship-building, cutting across social class and status. It reveals how everyday practices reflect deeper aspects of Nigerian identity: communalism, negotiation, and mutual respect.

So, overall, what does it mean to be a Nigerian?

Is it about nationality, culture, language, or the lived Nigerian experience, as discussed above?

The answer is simple — as reflected in the voices of those interviewed, Nigerian identity is not a fixed concept. It is multi-faceted, fluid, and deeply rooted in everyday life. It cannot be reduced to a single narrative or label. In fact, its resistance to rigid categorisation is what underscores its richness and prestige.

Ultimately, to be Nigerian is to belong to a special breed, one marked by creativity, adaptability, humour, and above all, resilience.

That is what it means to be a Nigerian. That is who a Nigerian is.



NMA issues 21-day notice of total, indefinite strike

By Alade Adisa

Medical doctors in the country under the aegis of the Nigerian Medical Association, NMA, have issued a 21-day notice of total and indefinite strike over alleged failure by the federal government to address their demands.

The decision to embark on the strike was taken at the Emergency Delegates Meeting, EDM, held in Abuja on the 26th July, 2025.

The communique signed by the NMA President, Prof Bala Audu and Secretary General, Dr. Jamin Egbo, explained that the meeting was called at the instance of the National Officers Committee, NOC, of the association.

It was in response to the recent circular released by the National Salaries income and Wages Commission, NSIWC, on the review of the Consolidated Medical Salary Scale, CONMESS, for medical doctors, the persistent delay of the Federal Government to pay the accrued seven-month arrears of the 25/35% arrears of the last CONMESS adjustment.

The association also listed the failure of the FG to respect previously signed collective bargaining agreements and the seemingly neglect of the health sector by the government at all levels, as well as other demands as itemised by the association.

“The EDM, following extensive deliberations, unanimously condemned the attitude of the Federal Government to the welfare of its members and the persistent attitude of government officials to issues affecting Nigerian doctors.

“The EDM issued a 21-day notice of a total and indefinite strike in line with the relevant labour laws, effective from 27th July 2025, should the Government fail to address its demands comprehensively within this period.

“The EDM remains optimistic that the



Government, in its concern for the health needs of Nigerian citizens, and the welfare of the patriotic Nigerian doctors working tirelessly under unpleasant conditions and economic realities, will be responsive to these concerns to avert this impending industrial disharmony in the health sector.

“The EDM mandated the NOC and the NTNT to bring their experience to bear in all engagements with the Nigerian government to deliver tangible results to the Nigerian doctor,” the communique read in part.

The NMA expressed its sincere appreciation to all delegates of the association who attended the meeting from the 36 states and the FCT and called on all Nigerian doctors to remain steadfast and committed to the shared vision and collective goal of the association.

“The EDM noted the efforts of the NOC and the National Technical Negotiating Team (NTNT) in previous and current negotiations with all responsible agencies of the Government.

The EDM expressed displeasure that none of the 19 demands of the Association have been comprehensively addressed by the

Government.

“The EDM noted that the Nigerian people who are recipients of the services provided by members of the Association are grappling with economic hardship and deserve some consideration despite the attitude of the Government negotiating team.

The EDM decried the persistent neglect of our health sector by the leadership of Government at all levels, instead seeking medical care in foreign countries, thereby encouraging medical tourism.

READ ALSO: Police arrest gunman for killing ‘lovers’ outside DC Jewish museum

“The EDM expressed concern that these actions and inactions of the government at all levels are capable of increasing brain drain and worsening our already subpar health indices in the country.

“The EDM frowned at the persistent neglect of the health sector of Nigeria and the nonchalant attitude of the government agencies in implementing already signed agreements and directives of the federal government,” it further read.

Lagos doctors embark on 3-day warning strike over salary cuts

By Helen Okechukwu



Medical doctors under the Lagos State Government have begun a three-day warning strike in protest against salary deductions they say were imposed without consultation or justification.

The industrial action, which kicked off at 8am on Monday, 28 July, is expected to last until Thursday morning, 31 July.

According to the Medical Guild, the body representing the affected practitioners, the strike is a direct response to what it describes as the government's "breach of trust" and failure to honour previous agreements.

Speaking at a press briefing in Lagos, chairman of the Guild, Dr Japhet Olugbogi, said the controversy began in April when doctors noticed unexplained cuts in their pay.

After pushback and intervention from the Guild, the deductions were reversed, and both parties agreed to maintain the status quo pending further discussions.

A six-man committee, made up of representatives from the Guild and the state government, was set up to resolve the matter.

Dr Olugbogi said the Guild provided all relevant documentation to explain how salaries were calculated under the CONMESS (Consolidated Medical Salary Structure) system.

But hopes of a resolution were dashed when the government reportedly resumed the deductions in July.

"We presented all relevant documents clarifying the calculation of the CONMESS salary scale, and it was agreed that the status quo would be maintained while the government deliberated internally and returned with a final position," said Dr Olugbogi.

The Guild is now demanding two things: an immediate refund of the July deductions and payment of 12 months' revised CONMESS arrears owed to

honorary consultants at LASUTH (Lagos State University Teaching Hospital).

A 21-day ultimatum has also been issued. If the government fails to act within that time frame, the Guild has vowed to embark on an indefinite strike.

Dr Olugbogi also criticised the state for failing to adequately reward its health workers. "Let it be known that the most senior doctor in Lagos State employment does not earn up to \$1,100. And yet, the government, in its wisdom, feels that reducing this meagre income is the best way to motivate the health workforce."

He appealed to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to intervene personally and prevent further breakdown in the healthcare system.

At the time of filing this report, the Lagos State Government had not released an official statement on the matter.

Pharmacists warn weight loss drug demand may outpace supply

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The surge in demand for weight loss drugs in the UK has reached “unsustainable” levels and could soon outstrip supply, pharmacists have warned, prompting concerns about patients turning to unsafe, unregulated sources.

The National Pharmacy Association (NPA), which represents 6,000 independent pharmacies, said supply issues surrounding popular weight loss medications such as Wegovy and Mounjaro may encourage desperate individuals to seek out online alternatives, despite the significant health risks.

More than 1.6 million packs of Mounjaro and Wegovy were purchased in Britain in April alone, with usage now estimated to have climbed well above one million people, the majority obtaining the drugs privately.

“The spiralling demand for weight loss medication risks going far beyond what is clinically deliverable,” said the NPA.

The association added that these powerful drugs may need to be reserved for those with serious medical need, rather than being distributed to the “worried well” seeking cosmetic weight loss.

New polling carried out for the NPA by research firm Savanta found that 21% of UK adults have attempted to access the medications in the past year, a figure that rises to 35% among 18 to 34 year olds.

When asked if they would use weight loss jabs if they were free on the NHS, 41% of respondents said yes, including 64% of those aged 25 to 34.

“Weight loss jabs are one of the biggest drug innovations this



century, but growing demand highlights the need to ensure this treatment is appropriate for those who genuinely need it,” said Olivier Picard, chair of the NPA.

“It’s clear from this polling that more people are interested in weight loss medication than can actually benefit from it.”

Shortages are already being felt in parts of the UK, particularly with higher doses of Mounjaro, forcing some pharmacies to limit new patient prescriptions.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has issued a warning advising the public to obtain these drugs only with a prescription from a licensed medical professional, and never from beauty clinics or unverified websites.

A spokesperson for the Department of Health said the government remained committed to widening access to weight loss treatments safely.

“Weight loss drugs are a powerful tool in tackling the obesity crisis head-on as part of our 10-year health plan,” the spokesperson said.

“We are committed to ensuring that more people can access these revolutionary treatments when needed, and crucially in a safe and controlled manner. Those most in need will receive treatment first.”

Around 220,000 people in England are expected to be offered tirzepatide, a diabetes drug that also promotes weight loss, over the next three years.

Pharmacists currently dispense about 85% of all weight loss medications and should play a central role in the rollout of the NHS weight loss programme, Picard added.

“The government should make full use of the untapped expertise of pharmacists to accelerate access to weight loss treatment for millions who need it most,” he said.

Lizzy Anjorin calls out Iyabo Ojo as Priscilla's pregnancy sparks reactions

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The long-standing feud between Nollywood actresses Lizzy Anjorin and Iyabo Ojo has taken a new turn, igniting fresh drama across social media platforms.

The latest clash began after Iyabo's daughter, Priscilla Ojo, publicly revealed that she is expecting her first child with Tanzanian singer Juma Jux. Priscilla shared the joyful news on Instagram, posting a series of elegant maternity photos that quickly went viral and drew widespread congratulations from fans and celebrities alike.

However, one notable figure remained silent, Lizzy Anjorin. Her decision not to publicly congratulate Priscilla sparked outrage online, with many social media users accusing her of harbouring jealousy and bitterness. The backlash was swift and intense, especially given the long history of animosity between the two actresses.

In response, Lizzy Anjorin took to Instagram with a fiery video, unleashing a barrage of insults and accusations directed at Iyabo Ojo and her daughter. In the now-viral video, Lizzy did not hold back, making shocking statements that left viewers stunned.

"If she gives birth to 20 children, they will all perish," she said, referring to Priscilla. "Iyabo is a disgraceful human being."

The outburst triggered an immediate wave of criticism, with many calling out Lizzy for her harsh words and personal attacks. Critics labelled her comments as insensitive and dangerous, especially considering they were directed at a young woman celebrating a milestone moment in her life.

In the same video, Lizzy also addressed the online trolls who questioned her silence. She accused them of hypocrisy, claiming that people were quick to judge her for not celebrating Priscilla's pregnancy despite the past issues she had with Iyabo.

"I don't have to congratulate someone I



don't talk to," Lizzy said. "People who were against me yesterday suddenly want me to act like we're friends."

But the drama didn't end there.

Iyabo Ojo reacts to Lizzy's statement Iyabo Ojo soon fired back with a response of her own. While she maintained a more composed tone, she did not shy away from addressing the seriousness of Lizzy's comments. In an Instagram post, Iyabo warned that she would no longer tolerate any form of verbal abuse or threats, especially when her children are involved.

"I'm a peaceful person, but I will not stay silent when my child is dragged into senseless fights," Iyabo wrote. "If anything happens to me or my children, hold Lizzy responsible."

Iyabo also brought up past instances where Lizzy had allegedly defamed her, insisting that there is a clear pattern of targeted harassment. She said she was tired of being bullied online and hinted that legal action might be considered if the attacks continued.

Fans of both actresses have since taken sides, turning social media into a battleground of opinions. While some defend Lizzy, saying she had every right to stay silent about Priscilla's

news, others argue that her reaction was extreme and deeply inappropriate.

This latest dispute is only one chapter in a long-running rivalry between the two Nollywood stars, who have clashed multiple times over the years.

Their feud has often played out in public, with both women accusing each other of lies, betrayal, and character assassination.

Despite the growing calls for reconciliation from fans and industry colleagues, neither side appears ready to back down. The situation has reignited debates around celebrity behaviour, online bullying, and the responsibility public figures have when engaging with each other on social media.

As it stands, Lizzy Anjorin has not issued an apology, nor has she removed the video. Iyabo Ojo, on the other hand, continues to receive support from fans and fellow actors who praise her for standing up for her daughter.

With emotions still high and no signs of peace in sight, this latest flare-up serves as another reminder of how quickly personal grudges can escalate into public battles, especially in the age of social media.

Shaffy Bello tired of dating younger men

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



Veteran Nollywood actress Shaffy Bello has opened up about her experience with dating, her stance on younger men, and the kind of relationship she is now looking for.

Speaking during a recent episode of the *Dear Ife* podcast, the 54-year-old actress shared candid details about her love life, revealing that younger men still message her frequently. While she admitted the attention is flattering, she criticised the way some of them approach her.

“Yes, men still slide into my Dms,” she said. “When you’re over 50 and young men still reach out to you, it’s flattering. But some of them have no manners. They start with things like, ‘Hi dear.’ At that point, you just feel like insulting their mothers. It’s really annoying.”

Despite the attention, Bello made it clear that she is not interested in dating younger men anymore. She explained that while she once dated a younger man for fun, her focus has now shifted.

“I can’t date a younger man again,” she stated firmly. “There’s no point. I’ve done it before, and that chapter is closed.

At the time, it was fun. It suited the season I was in. But that season has passed.”

Shaffy Bello speaks on her intention

The actress stressed that she is now more intentional about what she wants in a relationship.

“What I want now is very different. I’m not looking for fun anymore, I’m looking for something meaningful,” she said. “I want marriage. I’m not against marriage. In fact, I know for sure that marriage is something I now desire.”

However, Bello added that her idea of marriage may not align with traditional Nigerian beliefs. She expressed concern about how rigid society can be when it comes to relationships and expectations within marriage.

“I have a very different opinion about what marriage should be,” she said. “I think a lot of people here are too rigid about it. They expect women to follow certain outdated rules. That’s why I’d rather not say too much,, I’ll just leave it at that.”

Shaffy Bello’s openness has sparked conversations online, especially among fans who admire her confidence and clarity.

The actress was previously married to Akinrimisi, a union that lasted 25 years. The couple got married in 1995 and officially separated in 2020. They share two children together.

In previous interviews, Bello has spoken about the sacrifices she made for her career and how distance played a role in the breakdown of her marriage. Her husband and children lived in the United States while she pursued acting in Nigeria a decision she said was not easy but necessary for her personal growth.

Now, with her children grown and her priorities realigned, the seasoned actress is focused on building a new chapter, one where love is rooted in maturity, mutual respect, and lasting commitment.

For Bello, age may be just a number, but her desires have matured with time, and she is no longer entertaining distractions.

Ayra Starr shines at Coldplay concert in Miami, performs before Lionel Messi

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



Nigerian Afrobeats star Ayra Starr thrilled fans as she took the stage during British band Coldplay's 'Music Of All Spheres' tour at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami on Sunday night.

The young singer delivered a memorable performance, sharing the spotlight with the world-famous band.

Midway through the concert, Coldplay invited Ayra Starr as a special guest performer. She sang her collaborative hit with the band, "Good Feelings," and also performed her latest track, "Hot Body," alongside Coldplay's lead vocalist, Chris Martin. The crowd was electrified by the unique fusion of sounds and Ayra's powerful voice.

The concert attracted a star-studded audience, including soccer

legend Lionel Messi and his wife, Antonela Rocuzzo. The couple was warmly welcomed by fans when their images appeared on the stadium's big screen, sparking loud cheers and excited screams from the crowd.

Ayra Starr excited

Ayra took to social media soon after her performance to express her excitement about sharing the stage with Coldplay and performing in front of Messi.

She posted, "I just performed 'Hot Body' on stage with Coldplay!! And Messi was in the audience."

Her post quickly gained traction, with fans celebrating her big moment and congratulating her on the international exposure.

This appearance marks a significant milestone in Ayra

Starr's rising career. She has been gaining global recognition for her fresh sound and energetic performances. Collaborating with an internationally acclaimed band like Coldplay gives her music wider reach and connects her to diverse audiences around the world.

The 'Music Of All Spheres' tour has been a major success, drawing huge crowds in several cities. By featuring artists like Ayra Starr, Coldplay continues to showcase diverse talents and genres, blending different musical styles into one spectacular experience.

For her, performing alongside Coldplay in front of a global audience and football superstar Messi was a dream come true. Fans will no doubt be eager to see what the singer does next as she continues to rise on the international stage.

Meet 29 contestants of BBNaija season 10

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The much-awaited Big Brother Naija Season 10, tagged “10/10”, finally made its grand debut, ushering in 29 vibrant housemates into the luxurious BBNaija mansion.

This season promises to be bigger, bolder, and more unpredictable than ever, as the show kicks off with a new format, major twists, and a record-breaking prize pool.

The first group of housemates includes 15 dynamic women, each bringing a unique personality, background, and flair to the game:

Meet the 29 contestants of BBNaija
Zita, 24, from Kaduna State, described herself as a “baddie with pastoral roots.”

Mide, 23, from Ondo state joined the show among the first 15, though details about her background remain under wraps.

Sultana (Farida Sultana Auduson Ibrahim), 25, from Adamawa, is a bold plus-size model and beautician who studied Mass Communication at ABU Zaria.

Doris, 24, from Ogun state, made it into the house, but her full bio is yet to be released.

Big Soso, 28, a UK-trained lawyer and chef from Kaduna, aims to inspire others through her journey.

Tracy, 27, from Anambra, presents herself as calm and composed with a sharp mind and quiet intensity.

Imisi (Opeyemi Ayanwale), 23, from Oyo, is a fashion designer and actress known for her humorous, storytelling vibe.

Ivatar (Ifeyinwa Adewumi), 37, from Anambra, is a media personality and mother noted for her elegance and wit.

Sabrina (Idukpaye), 32, from Edo, is an actor and spoken-word artist who is also the first in her family to earn a master’s degree.

Gigi Jasmine (Nicole Simon-Ogan), 31, is a DJ from Akwa Ibom State.

Thelma Lawson, 26, from Rivers, is a skincare entrepreneur and single mother.

Ibifubara (Davies), 27, also from Rivers, is a psychologist and therapist with a reflective nature.



Isabella (Esther Georgewill), 29, from Rivers, is an entrepreneur with a spicy and layered personality.

Joanna (Josephine Iwoh), 21, from Benue, is the youngest contestant and a fashion creator who describes herself as a “solitary sass.”

Dede (Precious Ashiogwu), 23, from Delta, is a Gen-Z contestant who claims she handles drama with ease.

The second batch of housemates introduced 14 equally compelling male contestants:

Koyin, 21, from Ogun, is a model and singer who calls himself a “street boy” full of energy.

Danboskid (Daniel Olatunji), 25, from Ekiti, is a confident model and actor, crowned Mr. Ideal Nigeria.

Bright Morgan, around 27-28, from Imo, is a calm Nollywood actor with a laid-back charm.

Rooboy (Olatunde Kayode Samuel), 29, from Ogun, is a hype man known for his direct personality.

Faith (Adewale), 25, from Osun, is a doctor who blends professional seriousness with lively energy.

Kaybobo (Kayode Oladele), 26, from Ekiti, is a model and athlete with culinary ambitions, even comparing himself to celebrity chef Hilda Baci.

Denari (Ekwenem Arinze Bens), 27, from Anambra, is a confident salesman and storyteller with a flair for creativity.

Kayikunmi (Oluwakayikunmi Ajibade), 25, from Ekiti, is a banker and playful royal twin.

Victory (Okokon), 28, from Akwa Ibom, is a psychologist who enjoys intense debates.

Jason Jae (Ayomide James), 29, from Ondo, is a charismatic dancer and musician.

Kola (Kolapo Omotoso), 28, from Ekiti, is a content creator and analyst with a thoughtful and stylish personality.

Otega (Oghenetega Eritomi), 32, from Delta, is a tech professional turned chef with a reserved yet dramatic flair.

Kuture (Godswill Ameh), 27, from Kogi, is an interior designer and musician who believes success will bring love.

Mensan (Mensan-Awaji James), around 28-29, from Rivers, is a confident law student eager to make a mark.

This season isn’t just about glitz and glamour, it’s also about grit. Biggie has rolled out a major twist: housemates will now work for the money.

Each week, they must earn parts of the grand prize through tasks and competitions, adding a strategic and high-stakes layer to the show.

The prize this year includes a whopping ₦150 million, a brand-new SUV, and other sponsored rewards. But no one gets it for free.

Adding to the excitement, the house now features the largest closet in BBNaija history, setting the tone for fashion and flair.

US warns against birth tourism as visa denials rise

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



The United States government has reiterated that using a tourist visa with the primary intention of giving birth in the country is not permitted, warning that such actions may result in visa denial and long-term immigration consequences.

This cautionary message was delivered via an official statement posted on the X (formerly Twitter) page of the country's Mission in Nigeria on Monday. It forms part of a broader effort by the government to clamp down on what is commonly referred to as birth tourism, a practice in which foreign nationals travel to the US on temporary visas with the main goal of giving birth, thereby securing American citizenship for their child.

"Using your visa to travel for the primary purpose of giving birth in the United States so that your child will have U.S. citizenship is not permitted," the statement read. "Consular officers will deny your visa application if they have reason to believe this is your intent."

US govt seeks transparency

The government stressed that all visa applicants must be transparent about their travel intentions, adding that misrepresentation could result in serious immigration consequences, including future ineligibility for visas.

This latest reminder follows the enforcement of a 2020 rule that restricts birth tourism. The regulation, first introduced during the Trump administration, bars foreign pregnant women, including Nigerians, from obtaining the country's visas if the sole purpose of travel is to give birth for citizenship benefits.

In January 2025, American authorities reaffirmed their commitment to closing immigration loopholes and tightening visa scrutiny, particularly around the exploitation of the birthright citizenship clause under the 14th Amendment.

President Donald Trump, in a recent statement, questioned the legitimacy of granting citizenship to babies born to undocumented immigrants, suggesting the practice undermines the integrity of the American immigration system.

Although the country's immigration law currently grants automatic citizenship to any child born on American soil, regardless of the parents' immigration status, the government maintains that this should not be the driving reason for issuing a tourist visa.

In addition to warnings about birth tourism, authorities of the country have also cautioned travellers against overstaying their visas, stating that offenders risk a permanent ban from the country and could face criminal prosecution.

These moves signal a more aggressive stance by country's immigration officials in monitoring visa applications, especially in regions like West Africa, where rates of visa misuse and overstaying have raised ongoing concerns.

As visa regulations continue to tighten, applicants are urged to remain honest and transparent to avoid severe penalties and long-term immigration repercussions.

Starvation: Israel announces limited aid measures for Gaza

By Fatimah Idera



Amid mounting the global outcry over widespread malnutrition and starvation-related deaths in Gaza, Israel has announced new humanitarian measures, including daily tactical pauses and expanded aid corridors. The move comes as international agencies and governments demand urgent action to address what aid groups describe as a deepening humanitarian catastrophe.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) confirmed it will implement daily “tactical pauses” in military operations from 10:00 to 20:00 local time to allow aid to enter Gaza. These corridors, the IDF claims, aim to refute the false claim of intentional starvation.

Speaking from an Israeli air base, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu defended Israel’s military strategy, insisting the war effort would continue but with limited humanitarian relief. “There are secure routes. There have always been, but today it’s official,” he said. “There will be no more excuses. We will continue to fight until complete victory.”

Netanyahu also criticized the United Nations, claiming delays in aid delivery were not Israel’s responsibility. The IDF echoed this, saying designated routes for aid were being established, and efforts were underway to ensure safe distribution

despite growing reports of civilian casualties during aid deliveries.

According to the Gaza Health Ministry, more than 133 people have died from malnutrition since the conflict began. International aid groups, including Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), say current aid efforts fall drastically short. “After five months of starvation, people need to be sure that they are going to be receiving something at the end,” said Amande Bazerolle, MSF’s emergency operations director. She welcomed the IDF’s pause but stressed the need for structured distribution. “With enough therapeutic food, we can treat more people,” she warned, adding that the long-term health consequences of malnutrition are severe.

The international response has been swift and sharply critical.

UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy described the tactical pause as “essential,” but warned it alone would not ease the suffering. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz urged Netanyahu to implement an immediate ceasefire. Pope Leo XIV called the humanitarian situation in Gaza extremely grave, saying people were being crushed by hunger. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa went further, accusing Israel

of genocide and demanding full, unrestricted access for aid. Spain’s Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares called the situation an induced famine and offered to send immediate support.

Some regional efforts are underway. Jordan has launched air drops and dispatched 60 trucks of aid, while Egypt continues to deliver supplies by land. But aid agencies warn these efforts are far from sufficient. Air drops are mostly symbolic, one aid group said, noting that it would take 160 air drops just to feed each person in Gaza once.

The World Health Organization has warned of impending mass starvation, and the World Food Programme estimates that one in three Gazans is going days without food. Israel, meanwhile, blames Hamas for obstructing aid and creating artificial shortages. The United Nations counters that Israel frequently delays or blocks aid trucks at crossings, preventing timely delivery.

Although aid is beginning to arrive at Gaza’s border, much of it remains stalled. UN officials say they still need formal Israeli approval to distribute it safely. Until then, they warn, the humanitarian disaster will likely worsen.

Russia launches first direct flights to North Korea

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Direct flights between Moscow and Pyongyang have officially commenced this week, marking a symbolic deepening of diplomatic and military relations between Russia and North Korea, as well as offering Russian travellers a rare new international route.

The inaugural flight, operated by Russia's Nordwind Airlines, departed from Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow on Sunday and arrived in the North Korean capital approximately eight hours later, according to the airport's official website.

Russia's transport ministry confirmed that the route would initially operate on a monthly basis, with the first return flight from Pyongyang to Moscow scheduled for Tuesday.

Tickets for the route were priced at 45,000 roubles (around £350), according to Nordwind Airlines. The airline, once known for flying Russians to European holiday destinations before EU sanctions halted those operations, is now

serving destinations in countries still open to Russian aviation.

"This is a historic event, strengthening the ties between our nations," said Oleg, a Nordwind employee overseeing the flight. He declined to provide his surname or the number of passengers aboard the plane.

Russia and North Korea have significantly tightened their cooperation in recent years, particularly in military matters. Pyongyang has reportedly provided troops and weapons to aid Russia's war in Ukraine. In 2024, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited North Korea, during which the two countries signed a mutual defence pact.

"For the first time in more than 70 years of diplomatic relations, we are launching direct flights between the capitals of our countries," said Russia's deputy transport minister, Vladimir Poteshtkin, via the ministry's Telegram channel.

The launch also comes as North Korea cautiously reopens its doors to foreign visitors after years of strict pandemic-related border closures. While regular tourism remains largely off-limits, select Russian tourists have been permitted to visit on tightly controlled group tours. In April, foreign athletes participated in a marathon in Pyongyang, signalling a tentative revival of tourism.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is also seeking to boost domestic tourism. In June, he unveiled a new beach resort on the country's eastern coast, with hopes of attracting up to 20,000 visitors annually.

The new Moscow-Pyongyang route is a rare travel corridor for Russians, whose international options have shrunk dramatically since the invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent sanctions and airspace restrictions imposed by Western nations.

Thailand, Cambodia agree to immediate ceasefire

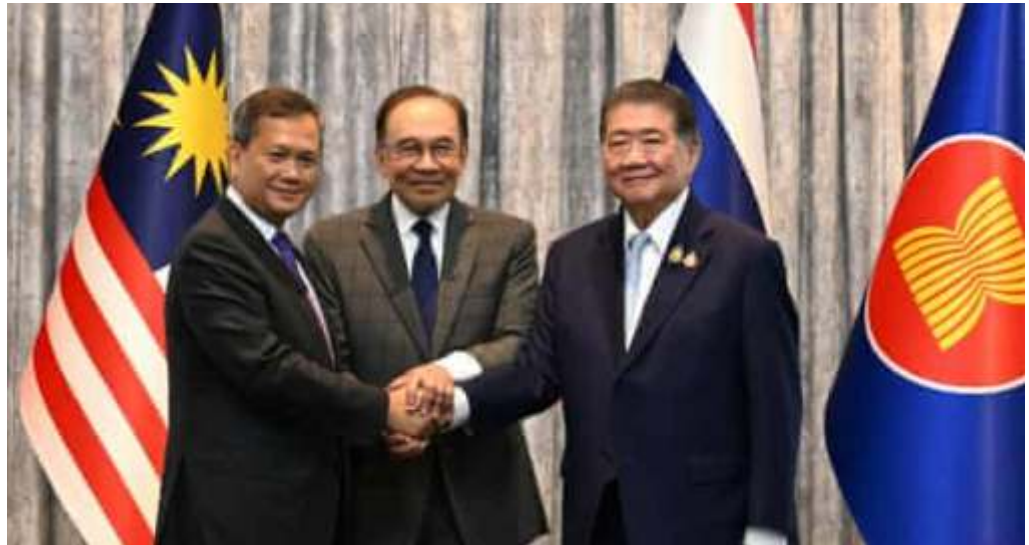
By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Thailand and Cambodia have reached an “immediate and unconditional” ceasefire agreement following high-level peace talks hosted by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

The announcement came on Monday after intense mediation efforts in Malaysia’s administrative capital, Putrajaya. The ceasefire is set to begin at midnight local time, marking a significant step towards ending what has become the worst bout of violence between the neighbouring nations in over a decade.

Common understanding between Thailand and Cambodia reached
“Both Cambodia and Thailand reached a common understanding,” Ibrahim stated during a press briefing at his official residence, where the talks were held. He chaired the meeting in his capacity as current chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

At least 35 people have been killed and more than 270,000 displaced since hostilities erupted, drawing widespread



regional and international concern. Clashes continued into the early hours of Monday, just before negotiations were due to commence.

In a show of global support, the ambassadors of both the United States and China to Malaysia were present at the talks, a rare diplomatic move underscoring the significance of the crisis and the push for a peaceful resolution.

The ceasefire agreement is expected to

usher in a cooling of tensions and pave the way for longer-term diplomatic dialogue between the two Southeast Asian countries. However, the situation remains fragile, with both sides urged to exercise restraint and honour the terms of the deal.

Observers say the success of this ceasefire could be a litmus test for Asean’s ability to mediate regional conflicts, particularly as the bloc faces growing pressure to act more decisively in matters of peace and security

Three dead, several injured in Germany train derailment

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Three people were killed and several others injured when a regional passenger train derailed in a forested area of southwestern Germany on Sunday evening, according to police.

Approximately 100 passengers were on board when the train left the tracks at around 6:10pm local time near the town of Riedlingen, in the state of Baden-Württemberg.

Initially, authorities reported four fatalities, but later corrected the figure to three. Details regarding the number and severity of injuries remain unclear, with officials declining to provide further information at this time.

German rail operator Deutsche Bahn confirmed the fatalities and said “numerous” passengers had been injured. Two carriages of the train derailed “for

reasons yet unknown,” the company stated.

Emergency services were dispatched swiftly to the scene, with footage showing yellow and grey carriages lying on their sides as firefighters and rescue workers attempted to reach trapped passengers.

According to local broadcaster SWR, helicopters were deployed shortly after the incident to airlift the injured to nearby hospitals. Emergency doctors from surrounding towns were also mobilised.

The train had been travelling from Sigmaringen to the city of Ulm when it derailed in a wooded area.

While the cause of the accident has not been confirmed, German media have speculated that a landslide triggered by recent severe storms may have played a role, citing meteorological sources.



Chancellor Friedrich Merz expressed his condolences to the families of the victims in a social media post, stating that he was in close contact with the interior and transport ministers. He added that he had instructed them to “provide the emergency services with all the support they need.”

In response to the derailment, rail traffic was suspended across a 40-kilometre stretch of the affected route.

Four super falcons make WAFCON best XI after historic win

By Gbenga Olaleye

Four Nigerian Super Falcons players have been named in the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) Best XI following the team's dominant run to clinch their 10th continental title.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) Women's Africa announced the tournament's standout performers via its official X account on Sunday, describing the selection as "The stars who shined the brightest."

Among the Nigerian quartet, Rasheedat Ajibade was voted Player of the Tournament. The Atletico Madrid forward impressed throughout the competition, earning Woman of the Match honours in three of Nigeria's six games thanks to her leadership and attacking prowess.



Esther Okoronkwo also made a significant impact, contributing two goals and four assists, which proved vital in Nigeria's title run.

Goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie was named Best Goalkeeper of the tournament, keeping four clean sheets and reinforcing her reputation as one of Africa's safest hands.

Defender Michelle Alozie, who played every minute of Nigeria's campaign, also secured a spot in the Best XI. Her decisive late winner in the semi-final against South Africa was one of the tournament's most memorable moments.

The full Best XI squad includes:

Chiamaka Nnadozie (Nigeria)
Michelle Alozie (Nigeria)
Rasheedat Ajibade (Nigeria)
Esther Okoronkwo (Nigeria)
Ghizlane Chebbak (Morocco)
Grace Asantewaa (Ghana)
Refiloe Jane (South Africa)
Bambanani Mbane (South Africa)
Karabo Dhlamini (South Africa)
Portia Boakye (Ghana)
Ibtissam Jraidi (Morocco)

Nigeria sealed their 10th WAFCON crown with a thrilling 3-2 victory over hosts Morocco in the final, reclaiming their place as Africa's women's football powerhouse.

Bayern Munich seal £65.5m deal for Luis Diaz

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Bayern Munich have reached an agreement with Liverpool to sign Colombia international Luis Diaz in a deal worth £65.5 million (€75m), including add-ons, bringing to an end weeks of speculation surrounding the 28-year-old's future.

The German champions had an initial offer of £58.6m rejected earlier this month but have now succeeded in prising Diaz away from Anfield, where he has played since January 2022 after signing from FC Porto.

The winger was notably absent from Liverpool's squad for their 4-2 pre-season defeat to AC Milan in Hong Kong on Saturday, fueling rumours that a transfer was imminent. That speculation has now been confirmed, with Diaz set to travel from Asia to Europe in the coming days to undergo a medical and finalise personal terms with the Bavarian giants.

Diaz enjoyed his most productive campaign to date last season, scoring 17 goals in all competitions—his highest in a single campaign—while also registering 13 league goals as Liverpool claimed the Premier League title under new manager Arne Slot. In total, Diaz has netted 41 goals in 148 appearances for the Reds.

The timing of the move is significant, as Bayern look to bolster their attacking options following the devastating injury suffered by Jamal Musiala. The German star is expected to miss several months after breaking his leg and dislocating his ankle during the Club World Cup.

Bayern, who scored a league-high 99 goals en route to winning their 34th Bundesliga title last season, are not short of firepower, but the addition of Diaz offers them a player in peak form with both attacking threat and defensive discipline.



What Diaz brings to Bayern Statistically, Diaz had an outstanding 2024-25 season, with his shot conversion rate of 18.3% representing a career-best in the Premier League. He finished just outside the top 10 in several key attacking categories, including combined goals and assists (18), shots on target (30), chances created (56), and dribbles completed (52).

His relentless work rate and defensive contributions have also been notable. He won possession in the final third on 22 occasions last season—more than any other Liverpool player on a per-minute basis—making him a strong fit for the high-pressing style traditionally favoured at Bayern.

The move comes amid a summer of change at Anfield. With Diaz on his way out, Liverpool have already begun reshaping their forward line with the arrivals of Hugo Ekitike and highly-rated German playmaker Florian Wirtz. The club also retains strong interest in Newcastle United striker Alexander Isak, as they look to maintain a dynamic and youthful attack.

Diaz's departure is likely to be met with mixed emotions by Liverpool fans.

Signed for £37 million from Porto, he quickly became a fan favourite thanks to his flair, pace, and commitment on the pitch. His contributions during the Reds' title-winning season helped cement his reputation as one of the most dangerous wide attackers in Europe.

For Bayern, the capture of Diaz represents a statement of intent. After falling short in the Champions League and crashing out in the last 16 of the DFB-Pokal, manager Vincent Kompany will hope the Colombian's arrival sparks renewed success both domestically and on the continent.

The move also marks another high-profile transfer from the Premier League to the Bundesliga, as Bayern continue to scout aggressively beyond Germany's borders to remain at the forefront of European football.

With his medical imminent and personal terms expected to pose no obstacle, Diaz's unveiling in Munich could happen within the week. All eyes will be on how the former Porto and Liverpool star adapts to life in Bavaria—and whether he can be the missing piece in Bayern's quest for Champions League glory.

Super Falcons return to Abuja after triumphant 2024 WAFCON victory

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Super Falcons of Nigeria have arrived back in Abuja following their remarkable success at the 2024 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON), New Daily Prime reports.

Players and officials touched down at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport on Monday afternoon to a warm welcome from fans and supporters. The team's triumphant return comes after securing a record-extending 10th WAFCON title in a thrilling 3-2 win against hosts Morocco, known as the Atlas Lionesses, on Saturday night.

To celebrate the victory, a trophy parade has been organised, with the Falcons expected to move through some of the most popular districts in the Federal Capital Territory. The procession will pass through Airport Road, Berger Junction, Maitama, and Wuse Market, giving fans an opportunity to catch a glimpse of the champions and their coveted trophy.

Later in the day, the Super Falcons will be hosted by President Bola Tinubu at the Presidential Villa, where the team will receive national recognition for their outstanding achievement.

The Super Falcons' continued dominance in African women's football has once again solidified Nigeria's position as a powerhouse on the continent, with the team's tenth WAFCON triumph marking a historic milestone. Fans and officials alike have hailed the players' determination and skill in overcoming a tough Moroccan side in a dramatic final.

As the celebrations continue, the nation looks forward to the next chapter in the Falcons' illustrious journey on the international stage.