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# Don't bait us with loan, ASUU tells FG

By Alade Adisa

The Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, has said the federal government, Fag, cannot bait it with loan offers when many dues and allowances of its members have not been paid.

The union has therefore described the loan offer as a Greek gift.

This was the position of the University of Lagos, UNILAG, chapter of the union on Tuesday during a special Congress.

The union also voted to support all the steps and actions being proposed by the national leadership to ensure the demands of the union are met.

Addressing members who marched through the campus from the Main Gate, the Branch Chairman, Prof. Idou Keinde, said if the FG fulfils its promise of giving lecturers their dues, there would not be



any need for members to run after any loan.

"The loans are to be guaranteed by our union. This is not necessary; the Governing Council of each university can give loans to our members based on our conditions of service. If we are paid a living wage and if all our allowances are paid as expected, who would want to go

borrowing money? Let them do the needful and we are okay," he said.

The ASUU boss called on the federal government to implement the 2009 Signed Agreement with the union, saying doing so would solve a lot of the issues that have become a means of face-off between the parties.

# FG unveils teacher database to streamline licensing, boost standards

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Federal Government on Monday launched a digital portal aimed at creating a credible database of Nigerian teachers, streamlining licensing processes, and promoting professionalism in the education sector.

The platform, unveiled in Abuja by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) in partnership with the UK-funded Partnership for Learning for All in Nigeria (PLANE) programme, is expected to enhance transparency and efficiency in teacher management.

Speaking at the launch, the Minister of State for Education, Prof Suwaiba Ahmad, described the initiative as a transformative step for the sector.

"Today, we are not merely unveiling a portal, we are opening a new chapter – a chapter where technology, innovation and efficiency become the heartbeat of teacher professionalism in our country," Ahmad said.



She explained that the portal would allow seamless registration and licensing of teachers, provide a transparent database of qualified professionals, offer real-time access to professional development opportunities, and strengthen accountability.

"In an increasingly digital world, where knowledge travels at the speed of light and nations are competing through ideas, skills

and creativity, Nigeria cannot afford to remain behind. To build the future we dream of, we must embrace the tools of the 21st century," she added.

Ian Attfield, Senior Education Adviser at the British High Commission, said the UK government was pleased to support the project, noting that Nigeria's teaching workforce remained diverse and often underqualified.

"There are lots of different types of teachers — community teachers, volunteers in faith-based education, and those in low-cost private schools. Many of them are under or unqualified.

"The diversity means that these systems need to be integrated, they need to be smart, but they also need to be motivated," Attfield said.

He assured that the UK government, through its Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, would continue to back Nigeria's education reforms.



# THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

## PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

## PRODUCT COLOUR

## EFFECTIVE FROM DECEMBER 1, 2024

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	372,500.00
HALF PAGE	213,000.00
QUARTER PAGE	106,500.00
14X2	118,000.00
10X6	261,585.50
10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	8,600.00
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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
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3X2	17,260.00
2X2	12,945.00
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## POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

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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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5X4	55,900.00
5X3	43,705.00
5X2	27,938.00
4X4	44,493.00
4X3	33,524.00
4X2	22,350.00
3X2	16,763.00
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DOUBLE SPREAD STRIP COLOUR	144,294.00
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QUARTER PAGE	84,641.50
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10X5	201,600.00
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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
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## PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

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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
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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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FEATURES	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00

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# Tinubu, Lula da Silva seal five MoUs to bolster Nigeria-Brazil ties

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has lauded his visit to Brazil as a significant step toward deepening ties between Nigeria and the South American nation.

During the visit he met with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

In a statement on his X page on Tuesday, Tinubu said their conversations were purposeful and resulted in concrete actions.

The visit culminated in the signing of five Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) covering key sectors: trade, aviation, science, finance and diplomacy.

These agreements, Tinubu said, transform “intentions to implementation” and will open new horizons for collaboration, strengthening what he called a “stronger global south partnership.”

A major outcome of the visit is the potential return of the Brazilian state-owned oil company, Petrobras, to Nigeria.



Tinubu welcomed the move, stating it would “re-energise” Nigeria’s oil and gas sector and create broader economic opportunities.

Furthering the new partnership, the MoUs also lay the groundwork for direct flights

between Nigeria and Brazil, as well as cooperation in technology, food security, and clean energy.

Tinubu expressed his gratitude to Brazil, acknowledging the shared history and cultural ties between the two countries.

## Education is cornerstone of Tinubu administration – SGF

By Friday Omosola

The Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), George Akume, has reaffirmed the President Bola Tinubu administration’s commitment to improving the standard of education in Nigeria, calling it the “cornerstone” of the government.

Akume said this while receiving a delegation from the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim & Seraphim (ESOCS), led by its Prelate, His Most Eminence Baba Aladura David Bob-Manuel.

The SGF highlighted Tinubu’s past actions, including returning missionary schools to their original owners during his time as governor of Lagos State, a move he said was made despite significant opposition.

He also pointed to establishing the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) as proof of the administration’s commitment to ensuring



every Nigerian has access to higher education through interest-free loans.

Akume acknowledged the contributions of religious bodies in providing education, healthcare, and promoting peace.

He stated that the government is ready to partner with them to foster peaceful coexistence and national development.

Speaking, Prelate Baba Aladura David Bob-Manuel expressed the ESOCS’s full support for Tinubu and assured the government of their willingness to collaborate on the “Renewed Hope Agenda.”

He also congratulated the President on his election and Akume on his appointment.

The visit ended with the presentation of centenary souvenirs to the SGF, commemorating the ESOCS’s 100 years of ministry.

The Prelate also offered prayers for Tinubu, Akume, and the nation, seeking peace, unity, and sustainable development.



# Tinubu imposes temporary ban on raw shea nut exports to boost local industry

By Ismaeel Aleem



**P**resident Bola Tinubu has approved a six-month ban on the export of raw shea nuts, effective immediately, to strengthen Nigeria's shea industry and curb informal cross-border trade.

The directive, announced by Vice President Kashim Shettima during a multi-stakeholder meeting at the Presidential Villa, aims to transform Nigeria into a global supplier of refined shea products, with projections to generate \$300 million annually in the short term.

Shettima emphasised that the ban is not an anti-trade measure but a strategic move to enhance value addition, protect local processors, and create jobs, particularly for rural women.

"This is about industrialisation, rural transformation, gender empowerment, and expanding Nigeria's global trade footprint," Shettima stated.

He highlighted Nigeria's potential to dominate the \$6.5 billion global shea market, noting that despite producing nearly 40% of the world's shea nuts, the

country captures less than 1% of the market share.

By 2027, Nigeria aims to achieve a tenfold increase in earnings from the sector.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Abubakar Kyari, provided further context, revealing that Nigeria produces an estimated 350,000 metric tonnes of shea annually across 30 states, with the potential to reach 900,000 tonnes.

However, informal exports, estimated at 90,000 metric tonnes yearly, have left local processors operating at only 35-50% capacity.

"While regional neighbours like Ghana and Burkina Faso have restricted raw shea exports to protect their industries, Nigeria has become a hotspot for unregulated trade," Kyari noted.

The ban aims to secure the domestic supply and enable processors to operate at full capacity.

The policy aligns with Nigeria's Zero Oil Plan, which identifies shea as a strategic non-oil export.

With the global shea market projected to grow to \$9 billion by 2030, Nigeria's vast shea tree endowment of over five million hectares positions it to lead in both production and value-added processing.

The ban is expected to empower rural women, who make up 90% of shea pickers and processors, fostering sustainable livelihoods and aligning with the Tinubu administration's focus on women's empowerment.

Shettima also revealed that Tinubu, currently in Brazil, has secured an agreement to prioritise Nigerian shea butter and oil in the Brazilian market within the next three months.

"We are not closing doors; we are opening better ones," he said, underscoring the transformative potential of the policy for Nigeria's economy and global trade presence.

The ban, subject to review after six months, has been met with calls for swift enforcement by the Federal Ministry of Finance and other agencies to ensure its success.

# ECOWAS sets up 260,000-strong force to tackle terrorism

By Gbenga Olaleye



**T**he Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has unveiled plans to establish a 260,000-strong rapid deployment counter-terrorism brigade, requiring an annual budget of \$2.5 billion.

The President of the ECOWAS Commission, Omar Touray, disclosed this during the 2025 African Chiefs of Defence Staff Summit in Abuja, themed “Combating Contemporary Threats to Regional Peace and Security in Africa: The Role of Strategic Defence Collaboration.”

Represented by the ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador Abdel-Fatau Musah, Touray said the funds would support the activation of the force, logistics provision, and financial assistance to frontline states battling terrorism.

He stressed that the Sahel region has become the epicentre of global terrorism, accounting for 51 per cent of terrorism-related deaths worldwide in 2024, adding that urgent and coordinated action is required to confront the threats.

“On the directive of ECOWAS Heads of Government, the organisation is in the process of activating a 260,000 rapid deployment counter-terrorism brigade. While ECOWAS remains committed to raising its 5,000-man brigade under the African Peace and Security Architecture, the need for this larger rapid deployment force has become unavoidable,” Touray said.

He further revealed that ECOWAS Ministers of Finance and Defence would meet in Abuja this Friday to agree on modalities for raising the \$2.5bn annual funding. He also called on bilateral and multilateral partners, including the United Nations, to support the initiative.

Beyond counter-terrorism, ECOWAS is working to operationalise its integrated maritime security strategy with three regional maritime centres and an international coordinating hub in Abuja to combat transnational organised crime.

Former Nigerian Minister of External Affairs, Professor Ibrahim Gambari, also speaking at the summit, warned that Africa is contending with over 1,000

insurgent groups. He urged African nations to strengthen indigenous defence industries and technologies to reduce reliance on external powers.

Nigeria’s Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa, emphasised the need for stronger regional collaboration, warning that Africa’s opportunities are being undermined by terrorism, violent extremism, piracy, and the effects of climate change on conflict.

Musa stressed that modern threats extend beyond traditional battlefields into cyberspace, urging investment in cyber defence, artificial intelligence, and indigenous military technology.

“These challenges know no borders and demand a unified, strategic response. Let us rise above division and build a continent where our people can live free from fear,” he said.

The summit highlighted the urgency of regional cooperation, technological innovation, and sustainable financing in confronting Africa’s evolving security challenges.



# “It’s insensitive” – Falana condemns proposed salary hikes for politicians

By Friday Omosola



**H**uman rights lawyer Femi Falana has criticised the planned salary increase for Nigerian political office holders, labelling the proposal as “insensitive” given the country’s dire economic state.

He believes the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) has failed to consider the severe hardships faced by ordinary citizens.

During a discussion on Channels Television’s Sunrise Daily, Falana pointed to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, which indicates that over 133 million Nigerians are “multidimensionally poor.”

He argued that it’s inappropriate for any government body, especially the RMAFC, to suggest raising the pay of public officials when so many citizens are struggling to afford basic necessities like food, education, and healthcare.

Falana urged the nation’s leaders to forgo any salary increments and instead share in the economic difficulties experienced by the public.

He expressed confidence that the RMAFC would reconsider its position to avoid further antagonising Nigerians.

According to him, this is not the right time for officials to justify increasing their already substantial salaries and allowances.

He instead called on leaders to support social safety programs that directly help vulnerable citizens.

The RMAFC recently announced its intention to review the salaries of political office holders, claiming their current earnings are insufficient and outdated.

This move has also been met with opposition from the Nigeria Labour

Congress (NLC), which has called for the plan to be halted, describing it as both “insensitive” and “unjust.”

Falana maintained that any review of politicians’ pay must be comprehensive, considering various “unaccounted funds” like self-awarded allowances, estacodes, and security votes.

He highlighted that while estacodes were once restricted to governors, numerous agencies now receive millions in monthly allowances.

The senior lawyer stressed that the RMAFC must align its review with court rulings that have declared certain allowances illegal and must also work with the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission to ensure equity between public officials and civil servants.

He warned against the use of unaccounted-for funds, which he stated have no place in a democratic system.

# Court orders six banks to reveal Sowore's account details

By Gbenga Olaleye



In a significant development in an ongoing investigation, the Federal High Court in Abuja has directed six major financial institutions to provide the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) with comprehensive account details linked to prominent activist and publisher Omoyele Sowore.

The order, issued on Tuesday, mandates the banks to release transaction records, including inflows and outflows, from January 2024 to the present.

Justice Emeka Nwite presided over the case, granting the *ex parte* motion filed by the IGP's legal representative, Wisdom Madaki. The motion, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1757/2025, named Sowore and Sahara Reporters Media Foundation as the first and second defendants, respectively.

The banks involved—United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc, Guarantee Trust Bank (GTB) Plc, Zenith Bank Plc, Opay Digital Services Ltd, Moniepoint, and Kuda Microfinance Bank Ltd—were listed as the third to eighth defendants.

The court's ruling came after Madaki argued that the information was crucial for probing allegations against Sowore, including terrorism financing, money

laundering, and fraudulent activities.

Justice Nwite, in his decision, stated, "I have listened to the submission of the counsel to the applicant and I have also gone through the affidavit evidence. I am of the view and so hold that the application is meritorious. The prayer is hereby granted as prayed."

The IGP's application emphasized the need for account opening packages, mandate cards, and certified statements of accounts to facilitate the investigation.

In supporting documents, the police claimed that Sowore's accounts were allegedly used for illicit purposes, with intelligence reports indicating financial support from foreign partners for terrorism-related activities.

A police officer, Bassey Ibrahim, from the Legal Section of the Force CID, deposed in an affidavit that the order was essential to uncover details of these suspected fraudulent operations. He assured that granting the request would not prejudice the respondents and was in line with the Oaths Act of 2024.

Omoyele Sowore, a vocal critic of the Nigerian government and founder of the online news platform Sahara Reporters,

has a history of activism.

He ran for president in 2019 under the African Action Congress (AAC) and has faced multiple arrests for his advocacy, including charges related to the #RevolutionNow protests.

The current probe extends to no fewer than 26 bank accounts associated with Sowore, Sahara Reporters Media Foundation, and the AAC, highlighting the breadth of the investigation.

Legal experts suggest this move could raise concerns about privacy and freedom of expression, given Sowore's role as a journalist and political figure.

However, authorities maintain it is a necessary step in combating financial crimes. The banks are expected to comply promptly, providing the requested documents through the IGP's Monitoring Unit.

As the investigation unfolds, Sowore has yet to publicly respond to the court's order. This case underscores ongoing tensions between Nigerian security agencies and civil society actors, with potential implications for press freedom and political dissent in the country.



# Alaafin cites British treaty in supremacy dispute with Ooni

By Gbenga Olaleye



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

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

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

"The British... recognised lineage as

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

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

**Olugbon, Cultural group call for calm**

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

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

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

traditional institutions and avoid media-fuelled division.

**Think Yoruba first warns against historical distortion**

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

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

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

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

# Panic as Abuja-Kaduna train derails, passengers evacuated

By Gbenga Olaleye

A passenger train travelling from Abuja to Kaduna derailed on Tuesday morning, sparking panic among passengers and their relatives.

The incident occurred along the Kaduna corridor shortly after the train departed Abuja at around 11 a.m. Witnesses described scenes of confusion, with passengers scrambling to safety as the coaches came to a halt.

It was not immediately clear what caused the derailment, and no official confirmation of injuries or fatalities had been issued at the time of reporting.

Security sources said military personnel were swiftly deployed to the site to assist in evacuating stranded passengers and securing the area.

The management of the Nigerian Railway



Corporation (NRC) has yet to issue a formal statement on the incident.

The Abuja-Kaduna rail line has become

one of Nigeria's busiest and most scrutinised transport corridors in recent years, following past security breaches and service disruptions.

# Oil theft in Africa now run by global syndicates, says NNPC

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), Bashir Ojulari, has warned that crude oil theft in Africa has escalated beyond local crime, with international syndicates now orchestrating the illicit trade.

Speaking in Abuja on Monday at the opening of the Africa Chiefs of Defence Staff Conference, Ojulari said the crime was being driven by organised cartels exploiting weaknesses in national and continental security systems.

"Oil theft is no longer a backyard operation. It is run by organised international syndicates who exploit gaps in state and continental security," he said.

He stressed that security had become central to the sustainability of the oil sector, noting that recent improvements in Nigeria's oil output were linked to stronger collaboration with security agencies.



"Security is not an adjunct to the oil business; it is the foundation of energy security. Our sector has improved because of the deliberate efforts of security agencies. We owe this recovery to sustained action by the military and intelligence services.

"The losses are continental, the actors

international, and the response must be collective," he added.

The conference brought together defence chiefs and security leaders from across Africa to discuss strategies for addressing cross-border threats, including oil theft, insurgency and organised crime.



# Bode George criticises calls for northern PDP presidential ticket as selfish

By Friday Omosola



A prominent figure in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Bode George, has condemned demands from certain members to zone the party's 2027 presidential ticket to the northern part of the country, calling the move "selfish and manipulative."

During an interview on Channels Television, George commended the recent decision by the PDP's governors and the National Executive Council (NEC) to allocate the presidential ticket to the southern region while keeping the national chairmanship in the North.

He praised the governors for their unanimous agreement, stating that this decision would allow the South to complete its eight-year term in the presidency, which aligns with principles of fairness and equity.

George characterised the push for a northern candidate as a power grab

motivated by personal ambition.

According to George, the party's resolution has ended a period of what he called "existential imbecility", and he noted that former members who had left the party are now returning.

He expressed satisfaction at the newfound unity, stating that a divided party cannot succeed.

When asked about how the PDP plans to handle members like FCT Minister Nyesom Wike and Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde, who worked against the party in the 2023 elections, George stated that the party would not rush to take disciplinary action.

He said the party's leadership wants to show it can be accommodating, adding that it is a positive trait for a political party to be able to manage diverse personalities.

However, he warned that if these members do not eventually align with the party's position, they could face "the sledgehammer."

The New Daily Prime earlier reported that PDP zoned its presidential slot to the southern part of the country, ahead of the 2027 presidential election and said the position of chairman would be retained by a northerner.

The party also ratified Umar Damagum as its substantive national chairman on Monday during the party's 102nd National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting held at its Abuja headquarters.

Damagum has been steering the party in an acting capacity since March 2023, following the suspension of former chairman, Iyorchia Ayu — a move later validated by the courts.

# ASUU strike threat: NANS vows nationwide shutdown of critical assets

By Gbenga Olaleye

The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has vowed to shut down major infrastructure across the country if the Federal Government fails to resolve its lingering dispute with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), which has again threatened to embark on a nationwide strike.

NANS Assistant General Secretary, Emmanuel Adejuwon, speaking in Abuja on Monday, said the union would mobilise students for “massive protests” that would paralyse activities nationwide should ASUU proceed with its threat.

“Let it be on record: if this strike is not averted, we will bring the country to a standstill until the future of Nigerian students is secured,” Adejuwon declared. “The Federal Government must act now. ASUU must act responsibly. And Nigerian students will not sit idle while our future is wasted.”

He argued that strike actions only punish children of ordinary Nigerians whose parents struggle to pay tuition in public universities, while politicians’ children school abroad or in expensive private institutions.

“This strike must not be allowed to happen,” Adejuwon said. “If the children of politicians were in our public universities, this issue would have been resolved long ago.”

The student body also accused the Federal Government of insincerity in meeting ASUU’s demands, warning that it would no longer tolerate “endless promises and excuses.”

At the same time, Adejuwon urged ASUU to reconsider its tactics, noting that prolonged strikes damage academic calendars, elongate students’ years in school, and weaken the value of university degrees.

ASUU insists on demands

Meanwhile, ASUU branches across the country have renewed their demands,



warning that another nationwide strike is imminent unless the Federal Government implements key agreements.

In Ibadan, Zonal Coordinator Prof. Biodun Olaniran urged the government to implement the Yayale Ahmed report submitted in February, describing it as a comprehensive resolution of all contentious issues.

“The true test of government’s sincerity lies in how it handles the Yayale Ahmed report,” Olaniran said. “Our members are frustrated with delay tactics and are no longer willing to be dragged along endlessly.”

He listed the union’s concerns to include the 2009 FGN-ASUU Agreement on university funding, outstanding salary awards of 25–35 per cent, unpaid promotion arrears, withheld third-party deductions, rejection of the IPPIS payment platform, and unpaid earned academic allowances.

Similarly, in Abuja, Zonal Coordinator Prof. Al-Amin Abdullahi reiterated the union’s call for the release of withheld salaries and adoption of the University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS).

“It is impossible for a nation to advance beyond the standard of its university

system,” Abdullahi warned. “Yet successive governments have systematically underfunded universities, leaving overcrowded classrooms, poorly equipped laboratories, and inhabitable hostels.”

In Uyo, Calabar Zonal Coordinator Dr. Ikechukwu Igwenyi described the recently launched Tertiary Institution Staff Loan Scheme as a “poison chalice,” accusing government of using it as a distraction from its failure to review salaries and implement agreements.

“How can government owe its workforce and then turn around to offer an impossible loan scheme?” he asked. “We reject the loan and everything it represents.”

Tensions ahead of August 28 meeting

ASUU and NANS have now pointed to the August 28, 2025, meeting with the Federal Government as a decisive moment that will determine whether universities remain open or slide into another round of industrial action.

For students, Adejuwon insisted the message is clear: “The time for games is over. The Federal Government must act now. ASUU must act responsibly. And Nigerian students will not sit idle while our future is wasted.”



# 2027: APC vows to retire Amaechi, Omehia from politics

By Ismaeel Aleem

In a bold declaration amid escalating political tensions in Rivers State, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ikwerre Local Government Area has vowed to retire former governors Rotimi Amaechi and Celestine Omehia from active politics following the 2027 general elections.

This statement underscored the deepening rifts within the state's political landscape, where old alliances are fracturing and new battle lines are being drawn ahead of crucial polls.

Obinna Ekem, the Director-General of the Ikwerre APC Campaign Organisation, made the announcement during the grand finale of a rally in Omagwa community yesterday.

Speaking to a crowd of supporters gearing up for the August 30 local government elections, Ekem expressed unwavering confidence in the party's prospects.

"We are set to sweep all 13 wards in Ikwerre," he proclaimed, citing strong grassroots support and assurances from residents for a decisive victory.

He emphasised that this momentum would carry into the 2027 elections, predicting a landslide win for President Bola Tinubu despite opposition from local heavyweights like Amaechi and Omehia.

Ekem's remarks highlighted past grievances, attributing the APC's repeated electoral defeats in Rivers State to Amaechi's leadership during his tenure as the party's state leader.

"Under Amaechi, we suffered losses time and again," Ekem stated, noting that Amaechi's recent defection to the African Democratic Congress (ADC) has opened the door for the APC's resurgence.



He urged Tinubu to direct his focus toward national opponents such as former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and former Senate President David Mark, assuring that the Ikwerre APC would "handle" Amaechi and Omehia at the grassroots level.

Backing Ekem's stance, Rivers State APC Chairman Tony Okocha, who enjoys support from the party's national secretariat, called on Ikwerre residents to prevent any single party from dominating the upcoming local elections.

Okocha contrasted the forthcoming polls with the controversial October 2024 exercise under suspended Governor Siminalayi Fubara, which was nullified by the Supreme Court due to irregularities.

"This election will be credible and fair," he asserted, urging voters to embrace the APC's vision for transparent governance.

The vow comes against a backdrop of intense political manoeuvring in Rivers State, a key battleground in Nigeria's south-south region. Both Amaechi and

Omehia, natives of Ikwerre, have long been influential figures.

Amaechi, who served as governor from 2007 to 2015 and later as Minister of Transportation, has been a vocal critic of the current administration's policies.

Omehia, whose brief 2007 governorship was overturned by the courts but later recognised, has aligned with opposition forces.

Their involvement in a coalition challenging the APC's dominance has evidently irked party loyalists.

However, neither Amaechi nor Omehia has publicly responded to the claims, leaving room for speculation on their next moves.

As the August 30 polls approach, all eyes are on Ikwerre, where the outcome could foreshadow broader shifts in the state's volatile politics.

With Tinubu's re-election bid on the horizon, such local skirmishes highlight the APC's efforts to neutralise internal and external threats.

# ADC criticises PDP's 2027 zoning as tactic to lure Obi, Jonathan, Amaechi

By Ismaeel Aleem

**T**he African Democratic Congress (ADC) has criticised the Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP) recent decision to zone its 2027 presidential ticket to the Southern region of Nigeria.

The party described the move as a calculated political strategy aimed at attracting high-profile figures such as Peter Obi, former President Goodluck Jonathan, and Rotimi Amaechi.

ADC National Publicity Secretary Bolaji Abdullahi made the remarks during an appearance on Channels Television's "The Morning Brief" on Tuesday.

He accused both the PDP and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) of focusing on political manoeuvring rather than addressing Nigeria's pressing challenges.

The PDP's zoning announcement, which keeps the party's national chairmanship position in the North, aligns with Nigeria's informal tradition of rotating power between the North and South to promote national unity.

Meanwhile, APC governors and leaders have already endorsed President Bola Tinubu as their sole candidate for 2027, reinforcing the party's commitment to maintaining the power rotation convention.

Abdullahi, however, dismissed these moves as premature and insensitive, given that the election is still two years away.

"Why are we so preoccupied and behaving in ways that make Nigerians feel the political elite do not care about them?" he asked, highlighting the growing disconnect between the country's leaders and the everyday struggles of citizens.

He argued that the early zoning arrangements by both the PDP and APC reflect a prioritisation of political strategy over urgent national issues such as economic hardship, insecurity, and unemployment.



Abdullahi suggested that the PDP's decision is a deliberate attempt to lure prominent politicians into its ranks.

"They [PDP and APC members] are very experienced and know the implications of showing their hand too early. So, it's either a predetermined game or a tactic to attract certain individuals," he said.

Speculation has linked the PDP's zoning move to efforts to draw figures like Obi, former Labour Party presidential candidate; Jonathan, the former president; and Amaechi, former Rivers State governor and APC chieftain, all of whom hail from the South.

Positioning itself as an alternative to the two dominant parties, the ADC stressed that it remains open to all aspirants.

Abdullahi noted that prominent figures such as former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, who recently declared his intention to contest in 2027, as well as Obi and Amaechi, would have an equal opportunity to secure the party's ticket.

"In the papers yesterday, Atiku announced he is running for president. Let us not forget that Obi, Amaechi, and others are also interested, and they have an equal chance with us," he said.



Unlike the PDP and APC, the ADC has yet to decide on zoning its presidential ticket.

Abdullahi emphasised that the party is currently focused on grassroots mobilisation and strengthening its internal structures to build a credible platform for the 2027 elections.

"We are not built around a single aspirant. Our priority is connecting with Nigerians at the grassroots and ensuring that our party can offer a credible alternative," he said.

The ADC's critique comes at a time when Nigeria faces severe economic and security challenges.

Rising inflation, fuel scarcity, and widespread insecurity have heightened public discontent, with many Nigerians frustrated by the government's inability to provide tangible solutions.

Abdullahi's comments reflect a growing sentiment that the political elite must prioritise governance over early electioneering if they are to regain public trust.

As the 2027 elections approach, the political landscape is expected to become increasingly competitive, with parties striving to position themselves as viable options for voters.



# Benue Assembly suspends ex-speaker over botched plot to impeach governor

By **Eniola Amadu**

The Benue State House of Assembly has suspended former Speaker, Aondona Dajoh, for three months over an alleged attempt to impeach Governor Hyacinth Alia.

Dajoh's suspension came after a motion was moved by Teena Shimawua, the lawmaker representing Kyan state constituency and backed up by James Umoru of the Apa state constituency.

Surprisingly, Dajoh had suspended some lawmakers last week before his resignation, and Shimawua, who tabled the motion, was one of them.

Alfred Berger, the speaker who presided over the motion reduced the former speaker's suspension from six to three months without initiating the usual votes on the issue.

Timothy Ornguga, a law lecturer at



Benue State University, who was rejected by the former speaker, Dajoh, has been approved by the assembly as commissioner.

Also, five more nominees were screened including the law professor by Berger, while reading the letter received from the

state governor, Alia.

However, the new Speaker stated that the governor maintained the two nominees — Ornguga and James Dwem — previously rejected by the former Speaker had not been found guilty of any crime, despite the petitions submitted against them.

Interestingly, lawmakers who had earlier opposed their approval remained silent as the Speaker endorsed the two nominees without the regular voice vote.

The House reinstated three political officeholders who had previously been suspended by the governor.

They include Grace Adagba, Chairman of the Benue State Universal Basic Education Board; Maxwell Ogiri, Chairman of Otukpo Local Government; and Michael Uper, Secretary of the State Lottery Board.

# Awujale: Ogun sets up 11-man administrative body to oversee affairs of Ijebu-Ode

By **Alade Adisa**

The Ogun State government on Tuesday set up an 11-man administrative council to superintend over the management of various administrative and traditional responsibilities of Ijebu-Ode following the passing on of the former Awujale and Paramount ruler of Ijebuland, late Oba Sikiru Kayode Adetona, on Sunday, July 13, 2025 at the age of 91 years.

A statement by the State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Ganiyu Hamzat, stated that the constitution of the administrative body was in line with the existing historical and traditional governance structure of Ijebu-Ode.

"In line with the existing historical and traditional governance structure of Ijebu Ode, the Ogun State government hereby formally announces the constitution of an administrative body to superintend over the management of various administrative and traditional responsibilities during the period of transition, until a new Awujale is



installed.

The 11-man administrative body is headed by the Ogbeni Oja of Ijebuland, Chief Folorunso Sunny Kuku, while Chief Oluwaranti Lekan Osifeso, will serve as Secretary.

Other members of the body included Chief Stephen Bakare Oluwalogbon, Chief Bisola Oluneye Okuboyejo, Chief Funmilola Okunowo, Prof. Jide Ajayi,

Chief Tunde Odulaja, Chief Abimbola Okenla, Chief Agboola Alausa, Chief (Mrs.) Adebisi Oshibogun, and Chief Adebisi Adaran.

The State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, reiterated the commitment of his government to ensure stability, continuity, and respect for the cherished traditions of Ijebu Ode during this transition period.

"The state government therefore calls on all sons and daughters of Ijebuland, both at home and in the diaspora, to extend their unflinching support to the constituted administrative body, as this is a collective responsibility, and cooperation of all stakeholders is crucial in safeguarding the peace, harmony, and unity that Ijebuland is known for.

"The people are further urged to remain law-abiding, peaceful and support the ongoing process, as government remains resolute in its commitment to transparency, inclusiveness and the preservation of our cultural heritage."

# Kaduna Govt assures public as train derailment response begins

By Gbenga Olaleye

Governor Uba Sani of Kaduna State has activated emergency services following the derailment of a passenger train travelling from Abuja to Kaduna on Tuesday morning.

In a statement issued by the Commissioner-Designate for Information, Malam Ahmed Maiyaki, the governor expressed deep concern over the incident and directed immediate intervention measures.

According to the statement, the Kaduna State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and the Ministry of Local Government Affairs have been instructed to:

- evacuate all stranded passengers from the scene,
- provide emergency medical care to the injured, and
- offer psycho-social support to affected victims.

“Governor Sani has mandated that every necessary support be extended to the passengers to alleviate the distress caused



by this unfortunate event,” Maiyaki said. “Our priority is the safety and well-being of all involved.”

The state government appealed to residents to remain calm and continue their normal activities, assuring that the situation was under control. Governor Sani also conveyed his sympathy to the

victims and their families.

An investigation into the cause of the derailment is underway, with the state government working in collaboration with federal agencies and security services.

# NUJ: Sanwo-Olu must check CSO's harassment of reporters

By Gbenga Olaleye

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Lagos State Council, has called on Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to take firm action against his Chief Security Officer (CSO), Kunle Fagbemi, following a series of alleged incidents of harassment directed at journalists covering the governor's activities.

The latest episode occurred on Saturday at the Lagos House in Ikeja, where Mr Fagbemi was accused of verbally assaulting and obstructing members of the governor's official press crew as they attempted to discharge their duties.

In a statement issued on Monday, signed by its Chairman, Adeleye Ajayi, and Secretary, Tunde Olalere, the union expressed grave concern over what it described as a “growing pattern of intimidation” by the governor's aide. The NUJ noted that Saturday's altercation was the third such accusation levelled against Mr Fagbemi.



“This growing pattern of intimidation is not only unprofessional but also an affront to press freedom and democratic values,” the union said.

The NUJ condemned what it termed an abuse of power and warned that it would not accept further attempts to stifle or undermine the constitutional role of journalists in a democracy.

“It is unfortunate that the concerned

personnel, who ought to know better, has chosen to act in such a manner under the guise of performing his duties,” the statement added.

The council demanded a public apology from the CSO and urged him to familiarise himself with the role of the media in upholding accountability. It further called on Governor Sanwo-Olu to intervene decisively to prevent a recurrence.

Responding to the controversy, the governor's Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Gboyega Akosile, confirmed to The Punch that the matter had been brought to his attention. He said discussions had been held with the press corps, who had since received an apology.

“I've also spoken with the affected Chief Security Officer to the governor. He told me his own side — that he was trying to restrict movement beyond a certain point — but I believe it was a misunderstanding. It's something that will be resolved amicably,” Mr Akosile said.



# Osun IGR doubles to N54.7bn in 2024, sparks political row

By Gbenga Olaleye



Osun State's Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) more than doubled in 2024, rising to N54.7bn from N25.3bn in 2023, according to the state's Financial Statements and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024.

The report, presented by the State Auditor-General, Kolapo Idris, showed that total revenue inflows for the year stood at N306.8bn. Of this, statutory allocation accounted for N159.7bn, Value Added Tax contributed N66.8bn, while capital receipts and funds from development partners totalled N25.4bn.

On the expenditure side, the state recorded a total spend of N273.5bn. Capital expenditure was the largest item at N118.6bn, followed by personnel costs at N61.4bn. Overheads amounted to N65.7bn, while other recurrent expenditure stood at N27.6bn.

The sharp increase in IGR under Governor Ademola Adeleke's administration has, however, triggered political debate across the state.

Kola Olabisi, spokesperson for the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Osun, dismissed the figures, alleging a lack of transparency in government operations.

"What's there to be commended? Everything is done in secrecy. So, it cannot be the truth. How can such Internally Generated Revenue be obtained with the lackadaisical approach of the present government to governance?"

"It is not an overstatement to suspect and conclude that the figures are made up. They are only doing that to arrogate to themselves the quality they do not possess. It is made up. They are only fooling the people," Olabisi said.

But responding, the Director of Media of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Osun, Oladele Bamiji, insisted the report was credible and transparent.

"We have nothing to hide from the good people of Osun State. The Adeleke administration has been operating on the pedestal of transparency, which is partly responsible for the public presentation of the financial statements we are talking about.

"Regarding the claim that the figures could be made up, maybe APC is still operating at the realm of their own past reckless way of managing public funds. I would have expected them to point out where the reports compiled by experts are made up. Maybe they are financial illiterates," Bamiji said.

# Osun monarch jailed in United States for multi-million dollar COVID-19 loan fraud

By Gbenga Olaleye



The Apetu of Ipetumodu in Osun State, Oba Joseph Oloyede, has been sentenced to more than four years in prison in the United States for his role in a multi-million dollar COVID-19 relief fraud.

Oloyede, 62, who holds dual United States and Nigerian citizenship and resides in Medina, Ohio, was on 26 August handed a 56-month prison term by U.S. District Judge Christopher A. Boyko.

According to a statement issued on Tuesday by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio, the monarch will also serve three years of supervised release following his imprisonment and must pay \$4,408,543.38 in restitution.

In addition, Oloyede forfeited his Medina home on Foote Road, which had been purchased with proceeds of the scheme, along with \$96,006.89 in fraud proceeds seized during the investigation.

Prosecutors said Oloyede orchestrated a conspiracy to exploit emergency loan programmes created for struggling businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"From about April 2020 to February 2022, Oloyede and his co-conspirator, Edward Oluwasanmi, conspired to submit fraudulent applications for loans that were made available through the U.S. Small Business Association (SBA) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act," the statement read.

In April this year, both men pleaded guilty to wire fraud and tax fraud charges linked to the scheme, which siphoned more than \$4.2 million in federal stimulus funds.

The court heard that Oloyede, who also worked as a tax preparer, operated five businesses and one non-profit organisation, while Oluwasanmi owned three additional entities. Together, they used their companies to submit fraudulent loan applications, securing approximately \$1.7 million for Oloyede's entities and \$1.2 million for Oluwasanmi's.

Investigators revealed that Oloyede went further by submitting fraudulent Paycheck Protection Programme (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) applications in the names of some of his clients. In return, he collected kickbacks of between 15 and 20 per cent of the loans obtained, without declaring

this income on his tax returns.

The funds, prosecutors said, were spent on personal luxuries, including land, a luxury vehicle, and the construction of a home. In total, Oloyede caused the SBA to approve 38 fraudulent applications worth \$4,213,378.

His co-conspirator, Oluwasanmi, 62, of Willoughby, Ohio, was sentenced in July to 27 months in prison. He was also ordered to pay more than \$1.2 million in restitution, forfeit a commercial property purchased with fraud proceeds, and surrender over \$600,000 held in financial accounts.

The U.S. Attorney's Office emphasised the significance of the convictions, noting that the case was investigated jointly by the Department of Transportation Office of the Inspector General, the FBI's Cleveland Division, and IRS-Criminal Investigations as part of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee Fraud Task Force.

"This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Edward D. Brydle and James L. Morford for the Northern District of Ohio," the statement concluded.



# Military veterans demand pay rise, National honours

By Gbenga Olaleye



**R**etired military personnel across Nigeria have renewed their calls for an upward review of salaries and pensions for both serving and retired officers, warning that prolonged delays are worsening frustrations within the veterans' community.

The demand was raised last week during a meeting between the Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa, and members of the Ministry of Defence's five-man Ministerial Standing Committee on Military Veterans' Welfare, led by retired Air Commodore Femi Oguntuyi.

Although the Director of Defence Information, Brigadier General Tukur Gusau, confirmed the meeting, he did not disclose further details.

Sources at the meeting revealed that the veterans insisted pensions cannot be reviewed unless the salaries of serving personnel are first increased, citing recommendations submitted as far back as 2023.

"Neglecting welfare obligations is fuelling agitation among ex-

servicemen. These are men who gave their youth and blood for the nation. A fair pension tied to current realities is not too much to ask," one of the retirees said.

They also demanded the reversal of a 2017 policy that reduced pensions for medically retired servicemen, describing it as unjust. In addition, they called for one-off financial compensation for those permanently disabled while in service.

The veterans further urged the government to honour fallen and living servicemen with national awards, stressing that if sportsmen and entertainers receive medals and houses, military veterans who defended the nation deserve the same recognition.

Responding, General Musa reportedly acknowledged their concerns and directed the Chief of Administration at Defence Headquarters to engage with the committee to produce "workable solutions within a short time frame."

Meanwhile, President Bola Tinubu, represented by Vice President Kashim Shettima at the maiden African Chiefs

of Defence Staff Summit in Abuja, called for stronger regional cooperation against terrorism, cybercrime, piracy, and transnational organised crime.

He proposed the establishment of a permanent African Chiefs of Defence Staff Forum to sustain defence coordination across the continent, while also emphasising investment in cyber security, artificial intelligence, and indigenous military innovation.

"Security is the foundation upon which the edifice of progress must stand. This summit must not merely end with applause but mark a covenant to deepen cooperation," Tinubu said.

The summit also featured tributes to fallen soldiers, with speakers including Defence Minister Mohammed Badaru, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, ECOWAS Commissioner Abdel-Fatau Musah, and Nigeria's CDS General Musa, all stressing the need for African-led solutions to insecurity.

# Ekiti Assembly reaffirms development agenda amid rising political tensions

By Ismaeel Aleem



**T**he Ekiti State House of Assembly has restated its commitment to good governance and sustainable development, rejecting claims that it merely serves as a “rubber stamp” for the executive.

In a statement released yesterday, the Assembly stressed that its members were elected to advance progress rather than engage in political squabbles or distractions.

The declaration comes against the backdrop of heightened political friction in the state, following accusations from a 2026 All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship hopeful, who alleged that Governor Biodun Oyebanji was stifling opposition within the party and intimidating party leaders to consolidate power ahead of the polls.

Responding, the Assembly’s leadership emphasised that its primary duty is to pass laws and policies that improve the welfare of

Ekiti residents, not to inflame partisan disputes.

Speaker of the House, Rt. Hon. Adeoye Aribasoye, underscored recent legislative milestones, including bills targeting improvements in infrastructure, healthcare, and education.

“We are here to deliver the dividends of democracy,” Aribasoye said. “Our focus remains on supporting Governor Oyebanji’s developmental agenda, which reflects the aspirations of our people.”

The Assembly further highlighted Ekiti’s record of low levels of violence, as cited in a recent Enough is Enough (EiE) Nigeria report, attributing this to collaborative governance and effective community engagement.

The statement followed reports of a violent attack on the Ekiti State Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

Publicity Secretary, Jackson Adebayo, who was assaulted by suspected assassins in Ado-Ekiti and is currently receiving treatment.

The Assembly strongly condemned the incident, urging security agencies to investigate thoroughly and bring the perpetrators to justice, while reiterating that such violence has no place in the state’s pursuit of peace and progress.

Looking ahead, the Assembly noted ongoing initiatives such as the proposed Soil Assessment Laboratory in Ido/Osi and youth-focused agricultural programmes, which it said underscored Ekiti’s commitment to economic growth and innovation.

It urged all stakeholders to work together for the state’s advancement, warning that divisive politics could undermine the collective goal of development and stability.



# Gombe gov signs bill creating new LCDAs

By Ismaeel Aleem



**G**ombe State Governor, Muhammadu Yahaya, has signed into law the Local Council Development Areas (Creation and Administration) Bill, establishing 13 new Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) in the state.

The reform expands Gombe's administrative structure from the existing 11 Local Government Areas (LGAs) to 24 units, marking what the governor described as a "historic moment" in the state's democratic journey.

Speaking at the signing ceremony in the government house yesterday, Yahaya said the initiative was designed to correct long-standing structural imbalances.

He noted that despite the state's vast landmass, larger than 15 other states, and its growing population, the state had one of the fewest LGAs in the country.

"This reform corrects historical anomalies, broadens governance frontiers, and ensures equitable service delivery to underserved communities,"

the governor stated, citing Sections 4(7) and 5(2b) of the 1999 Constitution as its legal basis.

The newly created LCDAs, modelled after successful examples such as Lagos State's, include: Akko North (Amada), Akko West (Pindiga), Balanga South (Bambam), Billiri West (Taal), Dukku North (Malala), Funakaye South (Tongo), Gombe South (Bolari), Kaltungo East (Wange), Kwami West (Bojude), Nafada South (Birin-Fulani), Pero-Chonge (Filiya), Yamaltu East (Dadinkowa), and Yamaltu West (Zambuk).

According to officials, the new councils are expected to reduce ungoverned spaces, strengthen security, create jobs, and improve access to essential services in response to rapid population growth.

Yahaya directed both the new LCDAs and existing LGAs to prioritise four key sectors, security, basic education, primary healthcare, and agriculture, and gave administrators a six-month timeline to deliver measurable results.

Acknowledging concerns over financing, he argued that the long-term

benefits far outweighed the costs, drawing parallels with the gains from the state's own creation in 1996.

He assured residents of "a new era of inclusive development and stronger local governance."

To ensure a smooth rollout, Yahaya announced the establishment of a high-powered Transition Technical Committee, chaired by the deputy governor, which will include state officials, local government representatives, and civil society actors.

Interim management committees will oversee the initial phase, supported by an Executive Order for phased implementation.

The bill, which was unanimously passed by the state House of Assembly, has already secured broad support from traditional rulers, community leaders, and political stakeholders.

As the state embarks on this new phase of local governance, residents are hopeful that the reforms will bring more responsive leadership and accelerated development at the grassroots.

# Dementia diagnoses hit a record 500,000 in UK

By Helen Okechukwu



**M**ore than half a million people in England are now living with a confirmed dementia diagnosis, the highest number on record, as the NHS rolls out new home monitoring technology to help patients stay safe and supported.

Figures released by NHS England show that 506,549 people are now living with a confirmed diagnosis, up from 490,163 recorded at the same point last year. Health leaders say the milestone reflects growing awareness, earlier detection, and more families seeking medical support.

In response to the rising demand, NHS hospitals are increasingly turning to new technologies designed to help patients remain at home safely. At Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, a programme known as MinderCare is being piloted.

The system uses discreet sensors on beds, kitchen appliances and doors, enabling clinicians to track daily routines, medication use, and early signs of illness.

By flagging subtle changes in health and behaviour, the technology aims to prevent avoidable hospital visits.

Families involved in the trial have reported feeling reassured that loved ones are being monitored, with care teams able to adjust support more quickly if problems arise.

Over the past year, more than 330,000 people with dementia have had personalised care plans arranged through the NHS, while just over 114,000 have received medication reviews, says Independent report.

Professor Jeremy Isaacs, national clinical director for dementia at NHS England, described the latest figures as a sign of progress.

“We have a record more than half a million people diagnosed with dementia, many of whom are living in their own homes with support from family and friends

“Getting a diagnosis of dementia is the first step in supporting people, with a wide range of NHS services able to help.

“If you have noticed that someone has symptoms, please encourage them to visit their GP for an assessment – the sooner someone is seen the quicker the NHS can help.”

Charities have welcomed the increase in diagnoses but stressed that many remain undiagnosed. Kieran Winterburn, head of national influencing at Alzheimer’s Society, said:

We understand that getting a dementia diagnosis can feel overwhelming, but we believe it’s better to know.

“An early and accurate diagnosis can unlock access to crucial care, support and treatment – helping people manage their symptoms and avoid reaching crisis points.”

“It’s promising to see more people receiving a dementia diagnosis, and we must keep up this momentum.”

The MinderCare service, backed by the medical research charity LifeArc, is expected to include 100 patients in a study by September 2025 to assess whether it can be offered more widely across north-west London.

Would you like me to make this read more like a formal health policy report or a public-facing newspaper article with more human-interest emphasis?



# NAFDAC warns public of counterfeit batches of Postinor-2 in circulation

By Helen Okechukwu



The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has raised an alarm over the circulation of falsified batches of Postinor-2, a popular emergency contraceptive pill.

In a public notice released on Friday, 22 August, the agency confirmed receiving a report from the Society for Family Health (SFH), the authorised marketing company, disowning the affected batches.

According to NAFDAC, the counterfeit products were identified after a careful review of packaging details which revealed spelling errors and discrepancies in the verification stickers.

While the original pack carries the correct spelling and a visibly larger font on its verification sticker, the falsified versions feature the misspelt words “Veify” instead of “Verify” and “Distnibuted in Nigeria” instead

of “Distributed in Nigeria.”

Details provided by NAFDAC show that the genuine product comes under batch number T32458H, with a manufacturing date of February 2023 and expiry date of February 2027.

However, the fake versions were labelled with batch numbers T36184B and 332, carrying inconsistent dates and packaging features.

The agency warned that the use of counterfeit Postinor-2 poses serious health hazards, including failure of contraception, exposure to toxic substances, severe side effects, and long-term reproductive complications.

Since counterfeit medicines are not subjected to regulatory safety checks, NAFDAC stressed that their effectiveness and safety cannot be guaranteed.

All zonal directors and state coordinators have been instructed to intensify surveillance and remove the falsified products from circulation.

Distributors, pharmacists, and health workers were also urged to remain vigilant and ensure medical products are sourced only from licensed suppliers.

Consumers and healthcare professionals have been encouraged to report suspicious products or side effects to the nearest NAFDAC office, through the agency’s hotlines, dedicated emails, or its Med-Safety application.

NAFDAC further disclosed that the information has been shared with the World Health Organization’s Global Surveillance and Monitoring System to aid global tracking of falsified medicines.

# WHO, UNICEF warn: 1 in 4 people still without safe drinking water as inequalities persist

By Helen Okechukwu



A new global assessment by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has found that one in four people worldwide remain without access to safe drinking water, despite progress in recent years.

This was contained in documents shared to press men on Tuesday while nothing that the report, Progress on Household Drinking Water and Sanitation 2000–2024: special focus on inequalities, was launched to coincide with World Water Week 2025.

It highlights that 2.1 billion people continue to rely on unsafe sources, with 106 million drawing directly from rivers, lakes, and other untreated surface water.

Sanitation challenges also remain severe. According to the findings, 3.4 billion people lack access to safely managed sanitation facilities, while 354 million still practise open defecation. A further 1.7 billion people have no basic hygiene services at home.

The analysis underscores that vulnerable groups, particularly those

living in low-income countries, fragile settings, rural areas, minority ethnic and indigenous communities, as well as women and children, are disproportionately affected.

Water, sanitation and hygiene are not privileges, they are basic human rights," said Dr Ruediger Krech, WHO's Director ad interim for Environment, Climate Change and Health.

"We must accelerate action, especially for the most marginalized communities, if we are to keep our promise to reach the Sustainable Development Goals."

Cecilia Scharp, UNICEF's Director of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), warned that inequalities are undermining children's futures.

"When children lack access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene, their health, education, and futures are put at risk. These inequalities are especially stark for girls, who often bear the burden of water collection and face additional barriers during menstruation."

The report reveals that while rural communities have seen some progress, such as increases in access to safe water and hygiene between 2015 and 2024, urban coverage has largely stagnated.

It also shows that women and adolescent girls remain primarily responsible for collecting water in many countries, with long daily journeys still common in parts of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

With just five years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), WHO and UNICEF caution that ending open defecation and ensuring universal access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene will require faster progress.

They add that universal coverage of safely managed services appears increasingly out of reach by 2030 unless urgent action is taken.

World Water Week, held from 24 to 28 August in Stockholm and online, brings together governments, researchers, civil society, and development partners to accelerate solutions for global water challenges.



# Priscilla Ojo's newborn son Rakeem, gains 166,000 Instagram followers in hours

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The newest celebrity baby in town is already an internet sensation. Rakeem Ayomide Mkambala, the newborn son of Nigerian influencer Priscilla Ojo and Tanzanian singer Juma Jux, has taken Instagram by storm, attracting thousands of followers within hours of his birth.

Rakeem was born on Sunday, and his arrival immediately became one of the most talked-about stories on social media. Priscilla Ojo, who is the daughter of Nollywood star Iyabo Ojo, announced the birth in an emotional post that quickly went viral.

According to checks by New Daily Prime, Rakeem's Instagram page gained over 50,000 followers just one hour after his birth was made public.

By Tuesday afternoon, the number had skyrocketed to more than 166,000 followers, a feat that even established entertainers often take years to achieve.

The baby's growing popularity highlights the influence of his parents, both of whom command huge followings in Nigeria and across East Africa.

Priscilla has built a strong brand as a fashion entrepreneur and social media influencer, while Juma Jux enjoys a successful music career in Tanzania and beyond.

Together, they have created a media buzz that has now extended to their newborn son.

Rakeem's parents tied the knot in a traditional wedding ceremony in Lagos on April 17, 2025. The event drew celebrities, influencers, and musicians from across Africa, cementing the couple's status as one of the continent's most high-profile unions.

Their love story has also captured public attention. According to reports, Priscilla met Jux in Rwanda during a business trip, and the two quickly developed a connection that grew into marriage.

The arrival of their first child has only added to the fascination. Fans from Nigeria, Tanzania, and across the continent have flooded social media with congratulatory messages.



Many praised the couple for sharing their joy with the public, while others expressed amazement at how quickly the newborn amassed followers.

"Rakeem is already a star," one Instagram user wrote. "Imagine being born on Sunday and by Tuesday you already have more followers than some celebrities."

Another fan commented, "This is what happens when you are born into influence. He's blessed already."

For Priscilla, who has often spoken about building her own legacy outside her mother's shadow, the moment marks another milestone in her journey.

Over the years, she has successfully transitioned from being known simply as Iyabo Ojo's daughter to becoming one of Nigeria's most recognisable young influencers. Her business ventures in fashion and lifestyle have further cemented her brand identity.

Juma Jux, on his part, has long been a household name in East Africa. With several hit songs to his name and collaborations with top African stars, he has built a reputation as one of Tanzania's most talented musicians.

His marriage to Priscilla bridged two entertainment worlds, Nollywood and Bongo Flava, giving the couple a unique cross-continental appeal.

The rapid rise of Rakeem's Instagram following also reflects a wider trend in Africa's entertainment industry. Celebrity children are increasingly attracting attention online, with parents opening social media accounts for them from birth.

These accounts often serve as a way to document their childhood, build a digital legacy, and in some cases, even attract brand endorsements.

However, the practice has also sparked debates. While some see it as harmless fun, others raise concerns about privacy and the pressures of growing up in the spotlight. For now, though, Rakeem's page is being celebrated as a joyful symbol of love and family.

As his follower count continues to rise, many wonder what the future holds for him. Will he follow in his father's footsteps in music, or his mother's path in business and influencing? Or will he choose an entirely different journey of his own?

One thing is certain: even as a newborn, Rakeem has already carved out a place in the digital world. With parents as influential as Priscilla Ojo and Juma Jux, his story is only beginning, and the world is watching closely.

# Tunde Ednut sparks backlash after throwing shade at Wizkid

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian media personality Tunde Ednut has once again found himself at the centre of social media controversy.

This time, he appeared to throw a subtle jab at Grammy-winning Afrobeats star Wizkid, and fans did not take it lightly.

The drama began after Davido, Wizkid's longtime rival in the music industry, took to social media to share news of a new private jet recently acquired by his family.

The singer celebrated the purchase, highlighting his father's wealth and business success.

In response, Ednut congratulated Davido on Instagram, praising the achievement. But things took a turn in the comment section when a fan, identified as @jeremyahi, asked Ednut when he would be able to afford his own private jet.

"When you go buy your own, Tunde?" the user wrote.

Ednut, known for his humour and sometimes controversial remarks, replied with a comment that quickly set the internet buzzing. "After Wizkid by God's grace," he wrote.

The comment, short as it was, instantly triggered reactions from Wizkid's fans. Many accused Ednut of dragging Wizkid into a conversation that had nothing to do with him.

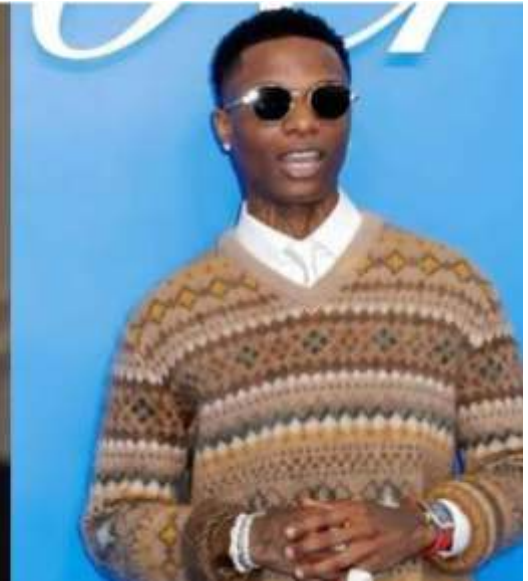
To them, it was an unnecessary dig at a global superstar who has built his career on music rather than flaunting luxury possessions.

Within hours, screenshots of Ednut's response began circulating online, sparking heated debates across X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram.

Some fans saw the comment as lighthearted banter. Others, however, believed it was a deliberate attempt to spark comparisons between Wizkid and Davido, two artists whose fan bases have clashed repeatedly over the years.

Here are some of the reactions:

- @PaulTochuk81983: "The Ojuelegba boy collects stray bullets."



- @CrewzWinski: "Tunde wey no get sense. Sheyb na their cars dem suppose dey compare? Which one be Davido papa jet to Wiz? Like they he make sense?"
- @LARR6Y: "Make him use that money wey he go use buy pj go fix en leg after when Wizkid buy am."
- @AkanniiEkun: "All I know be say David no get any jet bro. Una go just dey make noise online."
- @amandalise81211: "But he knows so well say Wizkid has his own. Why you dey mumu say Davido get when we all know say na him papa own he dey always rock. Everyone knows it. Or nah you buy give am?"

While some comments were humorous, others were direct and harsh, reflecting the passion of Wizkid's loyal fan base, popularly called Wizkid FC.

This latest episode is not the first time Ednut has been accused of stirring rivalry between Nigeria's two biggest Afrobeats stars. Over the years, his posts have often generated heated exchanges among fans of Wizkid and Davido.

Industry watchers say Ednut thrives on social media engagement, and controversial remarks often drive traffic to his platforms. However, critics argue that comments like this risk deepening unnecessary fan wars that overshadow the achievements of the artists themselves.

For Wizkid, the conversation about private jets has never been a focal point of his brand.

The "Essence" crooner has instead built his global appeal through music, tours, and collaborations with international stars.

Unlike Davido, who often embraces the flashy side of wealth, Wizkid has cultivated a more reserved image, rarely showcasing material possessions online.

Davido, on the other hand, has never shied away from flaunting his father's success and his own lifestyle. His recent post about the family's third private jet fits into his longstanding persona of living big and celebrating it publicly.

By bringing Wizkid into the conversation, even indirectly, Ednut reopened the never-ending debate about how the two stars measure up against each other.

Some neutral voices on social media called for restraint. They argued that both artists have achieved remarkable success in their own ways and that constant comparisons only fuel unnecessary division among fans.

"Tunde should know better by now," one user wrote. "He has a huge platform. He doesn't need to keep pushing this Wizkid vs Davido thing. Let both men enjoy their wins."

As of Tuesday, Ednut had not issued a clarification or apology for his comment. Meanwhile, the discussions continue to trend, with Wizkid FC making their displeasure known and Davido's fans celebrating their favourite's latest family milestone.



# Tacha says she would have won BBNaija season 4 without disqualification

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**F**ormer Big Brother Naija Season 4 housemate, Natasha Anita Akide, better known as Tacha, has once again stirred conversations about her time on the reality show.

The outspoken star has declared that she would have emerged the winner of the 2019 edition if not for her disqualification.

Speaking during a recent episode of the Hot Takes podcast, Tacha reflected on her journey in the house and the circumstances that cut it short.

According to her, her confidence stemmed from her resilience in the face of multiple eviction threats.

“I knew I was going to win,” she said firmly. “The fact that the other housemates were always putting me up for eviction... In the history of Big Brother Naija, no housemate has stood for eviction as much as I have. I was up for eleven possible evictions. But the fact that I kept bouncing back, I knew I had massive supporters outside.”

Her words rekindled memories of her eventful run in Season 4, titled Pepper Dem. Tacha was one of the most talked-about housemates that year, often dominating discussions both inside the house and on social media.

Her bold personality, no-nonsense attitude, and confrontations with fellow housemates made her a polarising figure, loved by many, disliked by others.

Yet, her resilience was undeniable. Each time she was nominated for eviction, her fan base, popularly known as the Titans, rallied behind her. Week after week, she survived, strengthening her claim of having one of the most loyal and organised fan groups in BBNaija history.

Her journey, however, came to an abrupt end in September 2019 after a heated clash with fellow finalist Mercy Eke. The altercation, which escalated into physical contact, led to Tacha's disqualification for violent conduct.

Mercy, on the other hand, received two strikes but remained in the competition. She went on to become the eventual winner, making history as the first female champion of the show.



Looking back, Tacha insists that her disqualification robbed her of the crown. She argued that her eviction record proved she was the strongest contender that season.

“I wasn't just surviving,” she explained on the podcast. “Every eviction week showed me the love and support outside. For me, that was proof. I had the numbers. I had the people. That's why I say with confidence that I would have won.”

Tacha's comments have sparked fresh debate among fans. Many of her supporters agree with her claim, pointing to the fact that she had become the central figure of Season 4 before her disqualification.

Her fans also argue that her popularity since the show, spanning endorsements, media appearances, and her business ventures, proves she was the true winner in spirit.

Critics, however, hold a different view. They argue that Big Brother's rules are clear and that her disqualification was the result of her own actions.

According to them, no matter her popularity, violent conduct could not be overlooked in a competition built on discipline and fairness.

Regardless of differing opinions, what

remains clear is that Tacha's time on BBNaija left an indelible mark. Six years after her season, her name still sparks discussions, proving the extent of her impact.

Few housemates in the show's history have managed to remain as relevant in public discourse as she has.

Since leaving the show, Tacha has built a strong career outside the house. She has worked with major brands, hosted shows, and grown her influence across social media. Her Titans fan base continues to stand by her, often defending her in online debates and celebrating her milestones.

As she revisits her BBNaija journey, one thing remains certain: Tacha's story is one of resilience, controversy, and lasting influence.

While Mercy Eke holds the title of Season 4 winner, Tacha remains convinced that she was destined to wear the crown.

For viewers, the debate over “what could have been” is part of what keeps the legacy of the Pepper Dem season alive.

Whether one agrees with Tacha or not, her presence on the show cemented her place as one of the most unforgettable housemates in Big Brother Naija history.

# Williams Uchemba urges entrepreneurs to separate cash flow from profit

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**ollywood actor and entrepreneur Williams Uchemba has shared important business advice for small and medium-scale entrepreneurs, warning them to stop confusing cash flow with profit.

In a video he posted on Instagram on Tuesday, Uchemba broke down the difference in simple terms. He stressed that putting money into a business does not immediately equal profit until the original capital has been fully recovered.

Using an example, he said: "If you invest one million naira into a business, you've not started making money until that one million naira has returned from customers."

According to him, many entrepreneurs make the mistake of thinking every inflow of cash is profit. In reality, most of it is simply the return of invested capital. This misunderstanding, he warned, often causes business owners to spend money that does not belong to them.

He explained further with another example. "If you buy something for ₦2,000 and sell it for ₦2,300, you bring out that ₦2,000 because it's not your own. Your money there is ₦300. Don't go and start eating the ₦2,000 thinking you're making money."

Uchemba described this principle as the foundation of financial discipline in business. In the Igbo language, he said, the practice of separating capital from profit is called 'Isiego,' meaning "this is different from that."

The actor stressed that proper bookkeeping is the only way to keep track of such details. Without records, he said, business owners easily mix up funds, leading to poor money management.

"That is why bookkeeping is important," he emphasized. "A lot of people fail because they don't separate the money they invested from the money they made."

Uchemba, who also runs Prosthesis Entertainment and the Williams Uchemba Foundation, said many small businesses collapse not because they lack customers, but because owners do not handle their finances correctly. He highlighted poor money management and disregard for proper records as key



reasons most ventures fail within the first few years.

His advice resonated strongly with followers, many of whom admitted in the comments that they had struggled with the same problem. Some small business owners confessed that they often dipped into their capital, mistaking it for profit, only to realize later that they had no funds to restock their businesses.

Business experts often echo this sentiment. Studies have shown that one of the leading causes of failure among small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria is mismanagement of finances. While passion and hard work are necessary, financial discipline is what sustains a business long-term.

Uchemba's decision to share this lesson comes at a time when many young Nigerians are venturing into entrepreneurship, especially in retail, fashion, tech, and food businesses. With rising unemployment and inflation, more people are choosing self-employment as a survival strategy. However, financial illiteracy continues to hinder growth.

By using relatable examples, the actor hoped to simplify what might seem like complex business principles. His message was clear: until your capital is safe, you are not yet in profit. Anything else is a dangerous illusion that could wipe out your business.

He urged entrepreneurs to adopt financial discipline, no matter how small their

businesses are. "It's not about how much you make. It's about how well you manage what you make," he advised.

Beyond acting, Uchemba has established himself as an entrepreneur, philanthropist, and motivational voice for young people. Through his foundation, he has funded charitable causes, supported education, and provided relief for vulnerable communities. His foray into business education adds another layer to his growing influence outside Nollywood.

Entrepreneurs who watched his video praised him for breaking down the subject in a way they could understand. Some called for him to share more financial tips, while others suggested he host an online class for young business owners.

Whether or not Uchemba plans to expand on the advice remains to be seen. But his words already serve as a reminder for entrepreneurs to rethink how they handle their cash.

At a time when many small businesses are struggling with rising costs and thin profit margins, his call to separate capital from profit could make the difference between survival and collapse.

For Williams Uchemba, the message is simple but powerful: money in your hand is not always your money. Until your capital is safe, profit is only an illusion.



# Nkechi Blessing escapes ceiling collapse at Lekki Home

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular Nollywood actress, Nkechi Blessing Sunday, has shared her shock after a section of the POP ceiling in her Lekki residence suddenly gave way, narrowly missing her newly purchased car.

The incident, which the actress revealed in a now-deleted video posted on her Instagram page on Tuesday, has since sparked conversations about housing standards in the high-brow Lekki area of Lagos.

In the clip, Nkechi Blessing appeared visibly shaken as she narrated how the collapse happened without warning. According to her, the ceiling fell just outside her home, landing dangerously close to where her new car is usually parked.

“Come to Lekki, they said,” she began, her voice laced with frustration. “Thank God it didn’t fall inside the house, and my new car wasn’t parked there. What would I have said? It’s well with una Lekki developers.”

Her remarks reflected both relief and anger. While she was thankful no lives were lost, she expressed disappointment at the construction quality of homes in the area.

The actress, who is known for her outspoken personality, said she had never experienced such a frightening incident before. For her, the thought of what could have happened if the ceiling had crashed inside the house was almost unbearable.

The video, which quickly circulated online, drew reactions from fans and fellow celebrities. Many sympathised with her, thanking God for her safety.

Others took the opportunity to raise concerns about the rising cases of structural defects in buildings across Lagos, especially in fast-developing estates.

This is not the first time Lekki developers have come under fire. Residents in the area often complain about poorly executed projects that fail to match the expensive prices attached to properties. Issues such as flooding, weak foundations, and poorly installed fittings



have been reported by several homeowners. Nkechi’s experience has now added fresh fuel to those complaints.

For celebrities like her, moving into high-end areas like Lekki is often seen as a symbol of success. Many entertainers choose the location for its security, modern facilities, and status appeal. However, incidents like this highlight the growing gap between expectations and reality.

Nkechi’s narration also exposed the risks celebrities face as public figures. While fans see the glamorous lifestyle, the behind-the-scenes challenges, ranging from faulty homes to safety scares, are often hidden. By choosing to share her story openly, she has shed light on an issue many may be silently enduring.

Some fans who commented under her post warned her to take the matter seriously, advising her to call in independent inspectors to check the structural integrity of her home. Others suggested that developers in Lagos should face stricter regulations to prevent such near-tragedies from recurring.

Experts in housing have long argued that poor enforcement of building standards is the root cause of frequent complaints in Lagos estates. Developers are often accused of cutting corners, using substandard materials, or rushing projects to meet the high demand for

luxury apartments. While some buyers rely on trust, many fail to conduct thorough inspections before purchasing properties.

For Nkechi, the incident has now become a wake-up call. Though she did not reveal whether she plans to take legal action or report the matter to authorities, her words made it clear that she felt let down by the developers.

“Imagine if my car was there, or worse, if someone was standing at that spot,” she added in the video. “This is not a small thing. People need to be more careful when they’re building houses for others.”

The actress ended her post with a note of gratitude, thanking God for sparing her from what could have been a major disaster.

As of Tuesday evening, she had not released further updates, but fans continue to flood her page with prayers and encouragement.

The incident is another reminder of the importance of strict building checks, especially in areas like Lekki, where luxury homes often come with hidden risks. For Nkechi Blessing, it is an experience she says she hopes never to repeat.

# Big Brother Naija cancels week 5 eviction

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**B**ig Brother Naija Season 10 has once again thrown fans and housemates into confusion.

In a dramatic twist on Monday night, all nominations for Week 5 were declared null and void. The announcement instantly turned what should have been a tense eviction build-up into a free and safe week for every contestant.

The evening started like any other nomination session. By tradition, housemates are asked to gather in the living room where each person nominates two fellow contestants for possible eviction.

The mood was tense, as everyone knew the stakes. One wrong move or one unlucky mention could place a housemate's dream of winning the show in jeopardy.

One after the other, housemates walked into the diary room and mentioned two names each. The whispers, the pauses, and the nervous laughter that followed gave the night its usual edge.

By the end of the process, six housemates had received enough votes to be placed on the chopping block. Their names, Ivatar, Faith, Thelma, Zita, Tracy, and Sultana, were called out by Big Brother. For them, the fear of facing eviction once again became very real.

But as it turned out, this week's story was far from ordinary. The twist came immediately after the nominations. Big Brother turned to the Head of House, Rooboy, and instructed him to approach the Tree of Trinkets.

This feature of the game, introduced to keep housemates on their toes, allows the Head of House to unlock secret powers that can change the course of the week.

Rooboy stepped forward, visibly nervous yet excited. He reached into the Tree of Trinkets and picked out a power. When the content was revealed, the entire house erupted in shock. The power granted Rooboy the authority to cancel all nominations.



Big Brother's voice echoed across the house, confirming the surprise outcome. "Head of House Rooboy, you have drawn the power to nullify nominations.

This means all nominations are null and void. Is this clear? It means the whole house is safe and free from eviction for the week."

For a few seconds, silence filled the air as the weight of the announcement sank in. Then came the claps, cheers, and wide smiles.

Housemates who had been bracing for a stressful week suddenly felt the heavy load lift off their shoulders. Relief replaced anxiety, and conversations quickly shifted from strategy to celebration.

For Ivatar, Faith, Thelma, Zita, Tracy, and Sultana, the news was nothing short of a lifeline. Each of them had been mentally preparing for the possibility of facing the public vote.

Now, they get another week to rebuild alliances, strengthen their game, and perhaps change how they are perceived inside and outside the house.

The decision also changes the dynamics of the game for everyone. With no eviction hanging over their heads, housemates are likely to let loose, form new bonds, or even stir new rivalries.

Free weeks often bring drama, as

contestants use the time to settle scores or test the waters with bold moves. Fans of the show know this twist too well, when housemates feel safe, the real personalities tend to shine through.

Viewers have already begun reacting on social media. Some fans welcomed the twist, saying it gives housemates the chance to entertain without fear.

Others argued that the cancellation was unfair to those who had strategized carefully for nominations. A few even suggested that Big Brother might be protecting certain housemates by resetting the game.

Regardless of opinions, the twist has once again proved that Big Brother Naija is never predictable. Just when the audience thinks they understand the rules, the show changes them.

That unpredictability is exactly why the reality series has remained one of the most-watched shows in Africa.

As Week 5 unfolds, the big question now is how the housemates will use this gift of safety. Will they relax, or will they push harder to secure their place in the coming weeks? One thing is certain, Big Brother still holds the power to shake the house at any moment.

For now, every housemate remains safe. And in a game where eviction can end dreams in a heartbeat, that safety is priceless.



# Omoni Oboli announces new film: Love in Every Word

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nollywood star Omoni Oboli has officially confirmed that the sequel to her romantic hit film, *Love in Every Word*, is now in production.

The announcement, made via her social media pages, has thrilled fans eager to see the next chapter of the beloved story.

Sharing her excitement on Instagram, Oboli described the sequel as a continuation of a journey she and her fans have shared since the release of the first movie.

“Besties, the story that stole your hearts is NOT over,” she wrote. “We are already on set, shooting the sequel to *Love in Every Word* and I honestly can’t hold back the joy in my heart.”

Oboli credited her fans for the success of the original film, which became a viral sensation across social media platforms and solidified her status as one of Nollywood’s leading romantic storytellers.

“The love and support you showed for the first film inspired us to take this story further,” she said. “The sequel promises an even bigger, sweeter, and more powerful love story that we hope will capture your hearts once again.”

The actress also teased a special celebration in the coming weeks, hinting that fans can expect a cinematic experience worthy of the anticipation surrounding the project. While specific details about the premiere or release date remain under wraps, Oboli assured fans that the production team is working to create something memorable.

Tentatively titled *Love in Every Word: The Wedding*, the sequel is expected to continue Oboli’s signature blend of romance, drama, and engaging storytelling. Industry watchers predict that the movie will explore new challenges and milestones in the lives of the characters viewers fell in love with in the first installment.

Fans have already taken to social media to



express their excitement. Many are speculating about plot developments, potential guest stars, and the romantic twists the sequel might bring. The overwhelming response indicates that the franchise has a loyal and enthusiastic following eager to see the story continue.

“Can’t wait! The first movie broke my heart and made me believe in love again. I’m ready for more!” wrote one fan on Instagram. Another commented, “Omoni Oboli never disappoints. The first film was everything. The sequel is going to be epic!”

The original *Love in Every Word* was praised for its relatable characters, emotional depth, and compelling narrative. Oboli, who has successfully written, produced, and acted in several Nollywood hits, is expected to bring the same level of dedication and creativity to the sequel.

Analysts say the project underscores the growing trend of multi-part films in Nollywood, where successful stories are expanded into sequels to maintain audience engagement and maximize box office returns. With Oboli at the helm, the sequel is poised to become a major highlight in Nigeria’s romantic film lineup this year.

The actress has also hinted at behind-the-scenes content and exclusive interviews, suggesting that fans will have an opportunity to follow the production journey closely. This approach not only

builds anticipation but also strengthens the connection between the creator and her audience.

As one of Nollywood’s most respected female filmmakers, Oboli has consistently focused on producing content that balances entertainment with meaningful storytelling. Her films often explore themes of love, family, and personal growth, resonating deeply with audiences across Nigeria and the diaspora.

With *Love in Every Word: The Wedding*, Oboli seems determined to continue this trend while also raising the stakes for romantic storytelling in Nollywood. From the set photos and updates shared so far, the production promises high-quality visuals, memorable performances, and a narrative that remains true to the essence of the original film.

For now, fans will have to wait patiently for more updates about the release date, cast details, and premiere events. But one thing is clear: Omoni Oboli’s sequel is already shaping up to be one of the most anticipated romantic films of the year, and expectations are high that it will deliver the same emotional impact as its predecessor.

With a talented cast, a passionate filmmaker, and a devoted fan base, *Love in Every Word: The Wedding* is set to become another milestone in Nollywood’s ever-expanding romantic film genre.

# Trump threatens tariffs on countries taxing US tech giants

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Donald Trump has threatened to impose tariffs and export restrictions on countries that levy digital taxes or introduce regulations targeting major American technology firms, including Google, Meta, Amazon and Apple.

Writing on his social media platform, Truth Social, the US president claimed that “digital taxes, legislation, rules or regulations are all designed to harm, or discriminate against, American technology”.

He singled out the UK’s digital services tax (DST), introduced in 2020, which raises around £800m annually through a 2% levy on revenues of global tech firms.

Trump said such measures “outrageously give a complete pass to China’s largest tech companies”.

“As president of the United States, I

will stand up to countries that attack our incredible American tech companies,” he said.

“Unless these discriminatory actions are removed, I will impose substantial additional tariffs on that country’s exports to the USA, and institute export restrictions on our highly protected technology and chips.”

The warning places pressure on both the UK and the European Union, which have sought to rein in the dominance of US tech companies through measures such as the EU’s Digital Services Act.

Several member states, including France, Italy and Spain, also maintain digital services taxes.

In February, Trump issued an executive order titled Defending American Companies and Innovators from Overseas Extortion

and Unfair Fines and Penalties, threatening retaliatory tariffs over such measures.

Reports in April suggested Keir Starmer had offered to reduce the headline rate of the DST for American companies in an effort to placate Washington, while keeping it in place for firms from other countries.

“America, and American technology companies, are neither the ‘piggy bank’ nor the ‘doormat’ of the world any longer,” Trump said.

“Show respect to America and our amazing tech companies or consider the consequences.”

The warning came a week after the US and EU issued a joint statement pledging to “address unjustified trade barriers”.



# Labour accuses of sidelining UK tech firms in AI policy push

By **Fatimah Idera**

**T**he Labour government is facing criticism for allegedly neglecting British tech companies while seeking to position the UK as a global leader in artificial intelligence (AI).

Newly formed government working groups had set up to address growing concerns over AI's impact on copyright laws which come under fire after it emerged that just one UK tech company, AI video startup Synthesia, was invited to participate.

In contrast, the attendee list includes several major US tech giants, such as Amazon, Apple, Meta, Nvidia, and OpenAI.

The imbalance has sparked accusations that UK ministers are prioritising American corporate interests over homegrown innovation, undermining the government's stated goal of achieving AI sovereignty.

A source from the creative industries said, "Not content with hollowing out the creative sector in favour of Big Tech, it seems the Government is now favouring US AI giants over UK startups. This makes a mockery of their supposed commitment to UK tech."

The working groups were established following the passage of the Government's controversial Data Bill, which drew backlash from prominent artists including Sir Elton John, Sir Paul McCartney and Dua Lipa.

Critics say the legislation gives tech firms the freedom to use copyrighted material to train AI models without compensation.

An attempt in the House of Lords led



by filmmaker Baroness Kidron to introduce an amendment requiring transparency around the use of copyrighted content was rejected.

Ministers said a separate consultation on copyright is underway.

Two meetings of the AI working groups have already taken place, with a third set for early next month. The final session will include representatives from industry group TechUK, which has pledged to advocate for its UK-based members.

Baroness Kidron described the lack of UK representation as beyond disappointing, warning: "We cannot grow our AI sector if the Government continually offers preferential treatment to US companies. It's as if they've failed to learn the lessons of two decades of economic power being exported to Silicon Valley."

Ausrine Skarnulyte, CEO of UK AI startup Voice Swap, echoed those

concerns, saying: "There is a real risk that well-funded US companies will end up setting the terms of AI regulation, leaving UK firms with no say in shaping the rules they'll be forced to follow."

Critics say the exclusion of ethical UK tech firms, many of which support paying for creative content used in training AI—undermines both domestic innovation and fair treatment of creators.

A government spokesperson rejected claims of favouritism added that: "A range of British voices have been contributing to this work. We are bringing together both British and global companies, alongside broader industry and sector experts, to ensure we capture the widest possible range of views."

However, critics remain unconvinced, warning that unless UK firms are meaningfully included in policy development, the economic and regulatory benefits of AI will continue to flow overseas.

# Cambodia passes law to strip citizens of nationality for foreign 'collusion'

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Cambodia's parliament has passed legislation enabling authorities to revoke the citizenship of citizens deemed to be "colluding" with foreign countries, a move rights groups say will be used to silence dissent.

All 120 members of the National Assembly, including Prime Minister Hun Manet, voted in favour of the bill on Monday.

The law allows nationality to be stripped for acts of collusion with foreign powers or actions considered to undermine "sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security".

A committee established at the request of the interior minister, Sar Sokha, will oversee cases.

Before the vote, Sokha urged lawmakers to support the measure, claiming the country faced threats from "a small handful" of Cambodians working on behalf of neighbouring Thailand.



The two countries clashed at the border last month in fighting that left at least 43 people dead.

Rights groups say the law is dangerously vague and open to abuse. A coalition of 50 organisations warned it would have a "disastrously chilling effect" on free speech.

"The potential for abuse in the implementation of this vaguely worded law to target people based on their ethnicity, political opinions, speech and activism is simply too high to accept," the groups said.

The law still requires approval by the upper house and enactment by the head of state, but both processes are expected to be formalities.

The measure follows a constitutional amendment last month removing the unconditional guarantee of citizenship and allowing nationality to be "determined by law".

Cambodia has faced mounting criticism over its suppression of opposition figures, activists and journalists, with dozens imprisoned or facing politically motivated cases.

Rights monitors argue the new law will further entrench repression.

# Trump signs order to prosecute flag burners

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Donald Trump has signed an executive order directing federal prosecutors to seek criminal charges against people who burn the American flag during protests, in a move that challenges a long-standing supreme court ruling protecting the act as free speech.

The order instructs the US attorney general, Pam Bondi, to examine incidents of flag burning and determine whether individuals can be prosecuted under existing laws, such as disturbing the peace or environmental violations.

It marks an attempt to sidestep the 1989 supreme court decision in *Texas v Johnson*, which struck down flag-burning bans in 48 states.

The court ruled by a 5-4 majority that destroying the flag is a form of political expression protected under the first



amendment.

"All over the country they're burning flags," Trump said in the Oval Office as he signed the order on Monday.

"All over the world they burn the American flag, and as you know, through a very sad court, I guess it was a 5-4 decision, they called it freedom of

speech."

Trump also declared: "You burn a flag, you get one year in jail."

However, the order does not contain provisions for a custodial sentence.

Public opinion appears to lean in Trump's favour.

A YouGov poll in 2020 found nearly half of Americans supported making flag burning illegal, compared with around one-third who considered it permissible.

An updated survey in September 2023 showed 59% of respondents believed burning the flag during protests was "always unacceptable".



# India's Supreme Court orders inquiry into Ambani family zoo

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



India's supreme court has ordered an investigation into Vantara, a vast private zoo and animal rescue facility run by Anant Ambani, the son of Asia's richest man, following allegations of illegal wildlife imports and financial misconduct.

Located in Gujarat state and spread across 3,000 acres next to a Reliance Industries oil refinery, Vantara claims to be the world's largest wild animal rescue centre. It is home to an estimated 200 lions, 250 leopards, 900 crocodiles and tens of thousands of other animals.

The court announced on Monday that a panel led by retired judges will examine the alleged unlawful acquisition of animals, particularly elephants, possible breaches of wildlife regulations, and suspected money laundering. The panel has been asked to submit its findings by

12 September.

"We consider it appropriate ... to call for an independent factual appraisal," the court said, adding that investigators would also look into concerns about Gujarat's climate, animal welfare, and whether the zoo amounted to a "vanity or private collection".

Vantara, which was one of the venues for Anant Ambani's lavish wedding celebrations last year, has drawn criticism from wildlife groups over the treatment of its reported 150,000 animals. The facility is not open to the public.

A joint investigation earlier this year by Süddeutsche Zeitung and Venezuelan outlet Armando Info revealed that at least 39,000 wild animals had been sent to Vantara. Records showed that 14 orangutans and a mountain gorilla arrived from

the United Arab Emirates, while more than 100 giant otters and 142 giant anteaters came from Venezuela. Other imports included 481 green tree pythons and 520 hawk doves from Malaysia and Indonesia.

In a statement on Tuesday, Vantara said it would fully cooperate with the inquiry and remained committed to "transparency, compassion and full compliance with the law".

Prime minister Narendra Modi previously visited the facility, praising it as "truly commendable". It has also featured prominently on the YouTube channel of American wildlife influencer Forrest Galante, showcasing amenities such as an elephant jacuzzi and what it calls the world's largest leopard rescue centre.

# UK approves evacuation of more Gaza students for study

By **Eniola Amadu**



**U**K ministers have approved plans to help a further 30 students from Gaza travel to Britain to begin university courses next month.

The move, however, still depends on clearance from Israeli authorities before any evacuation can proceed.

This latest approval brings the total number of students the government intends to assist to 39, following last week's pledge to secure the safe passage of nine Chevening scholars.

The Chevening programme, funded primarily by the UK government, enables outstanding candidates to undertake one-year master's degrees at British universities.

All 40 identified students already hold fully funded scholarships.

A Home Office source described the process as “complex and challenging”, explaining that student names must first be cleared by Israeli authorities. Once approved, they would travel to a third country—most likely Jordan—for biometric checks, as such services are unavailable in Gaza.

Campaigners welcomed the government's decision but warned that affected students still face uncertainty due to limited direct communication.

Dr Norah Parr of the University of Birmingham, who has been coordinating support, said:

“We are relieved that the government has agreed to assist a larger group of students and enable their arrival in time for the autumn term. But we remain worried about the lack of

transparency and clear guidelines. At our last count, at least 53 students had full funding and university support.”

Labour MP Abtissam Mohamed, representing Sheffield Central, who spearheaded calls for intervention and secured the backing of over 100 MPs in a letter to ministers, praised the announcement.

“Stranded, many students feared that they would die under Israel's bombs before being able to take up their university places. Our message to the students was that they are not alone.

“And I'm relieved to share the news that the government will offer almost all funded scholarship students the same assistance with safe routes out of Gaza. This is the right decision.” she wrote on X.



# France to sue Kick after livestreamer's death

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

France will take legal action against the Australian streaming service Kick for alleged negligence following the death of a man during a livestream, the country's digital affairs minister has confirmed.

The platform has come under scrutiny after 46-year-old Raphael Graven, known online as Jean Pormanove or JP, died earlier this month while attempting a 12-day livestreaming marathon. His broadcasts were centred on enduring abuse and humiliation from participants.

Kick, launched in 2022, is registered in Australia and operates a revenue-sharing model with its content creators.

"Kick did not do everything possible to stop the broadcast of dangerous content," said Clara Chappaz, the digital affairs minister, accusing the company of breaching a 2004 law governing online content.



A postmortem examination concluded that Graven had not been killed by trauma or at the hands of another person.

Separately, the Paris prosecutor, Laure Beccuau, announced on Tuesday that an investigation had been opened into whether Kick knowingly broadcast "videos of deliberate attacks on personal

integrity". Investigators will also assess whether the platform is in compliance with the European Union's Digital Services Act, which sets strict rules on content moderation.

Under French law, offences relating to the dissemination of harmful content online carry penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment and fines of €1m (£864,000).

Kick did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the prosecutor's announcement. Following Graven's death, Kick Français said it would cooperate fully with the authorities and was reviewing content hosted in France.

"Our priority is to protect creators and ensure a safer environment on Kick," the platform wrote on X, adding that all co-streamers involved in the broadcast had been banned pending the outcome of the investigation.

# SpaceX scrubs Starship launch due to bad weather

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

SpaceX was forced to call off the planned launch of its Starship rocket in Texas on Monday because of poor weather, marking the latest setback for the company.

The 71-metre Super Heavy booster and its 52-metre Starship upper stage, together taller than New York's Statue of Liberty, had been scheduled to lift off from SpaceX's Starbase site at 7.30pm local time. The attempt was abandoned at the last moment.

"Standing down from today's flight test attempt due to weather," the company said on X, the social media platform also owned by Elon Musk.

The cancelled launch came a day after a separate attempt was halted because



of a liquid oxygen leak at the launchpad, Musk said on X.

Starship is central to SpaceX's ambition to create a fully reusable rocket system and to Musk's longer-term goal of sending humans to Mars.

The programme has faced repeated delays this year, complicating plans

by Nasa, which hopes to use Starship as soon as 2027 for its first crewed lunar landing since the Apollo missions.

The rocket is also critical to the future of SpaceX's Starlink satellite internet service, the company's largest source of revenue. Starship is designed to carry much larger batches of satellites than the Falcon 9 rocket, which has been used so far.

Despite the setbacks, Musk struck an optimistic note.

"In about six or seven years, there will be days where Starship launches more than 24 times in 24 hours," he said on Sunday in response to a user on X.

# Over 100 channel migrants detained under Uk's "one in, one out" scheme

By Eniola Amadu



**T**he UK government has detained more than 100 people who crossed the Channel in small boats under its new "one in, one out" immigration scheme, designed to return irregular migrants to France.

So far, no one has been admitted to Britain through the official safe route system, fuelling growing frustration among migrants in Calais who say their applications remain unanswered.

According to officials, the reciprocal arrangement means new arrivals will only be processed once returns begin "in the coming weeks".

Until then, those detained will be held in immigration centres.

On French beaches, several migrants complained they had received no acknowledgement from the government's formal application system for safe routes, introduced as an alternative to dangerous Channel crossings.

Despite this, more than 200 people managed to reach the UK on Sunday by

boat, taking advantage of calmer weather.

Ministers said they plan to launch an extensive information campaign along France's northern coast, warning migrants that those attempting the crossing risk immediate return to France—losing both their money and their chance of asylum.

A government spokesperson confirmed: "Detentions of those arriving from France have been happening in the last 24 hours. Some small boat migrants could find themselves on a bus to a detention centre before the day ends."

The Home Office maintained that asylum seekers do not need a fixed address to apply for safe routes and that all applications receive a response.

Meanwhile, Reform UK leader Nigel Farage is set to unveil a more hardline proposal, calling for mass deportations, expanded detention in military facilities, and agreements with third countries—including the controversial suggestion of negotiating with the Taliban to facilitate returns to Afghanistan.

His plan would require withdrawing from the European Convention on Human Rights and replacing the Human Rights Act with a British bill of rights.

Farage declared: "The time has come to put this country first. Is Keir Starmer on the side of the British people, national security and protecting women and girls—or on the side of outdated treaties and human rights lawyers?"

The Labour government, which entered office promising to restore order to the asylum system, dismissed Reform's plans as "back-of-the-fag-packet" ideas.

Home Office minister Angela Eagle said her government had already saved £1 billion in accommodation costs, increased deportations of those with no legal right to remain, and introduced new legislation to accelerate removals—steps she claimed previous administrations had failed to deliver.

"Illegal migration is a complex, global problem that demands realistic and sustainable solutions," Eagle said.



# UK food inflation climbs as egg, butter prices soar

By **Fatimah Idera**



**R**ising grocery costs are piling further pressure on UK households, with eggs, butter and chocolate leading a fresh surge in food inflation.

According to the British Retail Consortium (BRC), food prices rose by 4.2% in August, up from 4% in July and the sharpest increase in 18 months.

Overall shop price inflation also edged up to 0.9%, despite non-food prices falling by 0.8%.

BRC chief executive Helen Dickinson said the cost of everyday staples had jumped because of strong demand, tighter supply chains and higher labour costs. Cocoa shortages have also kept chocolate prices elevated.

The BRC warned that retailers face an additional £7bn in costs following last year's budget changes to national insurance and the minimum wage, while more than 60 major retailers,

including Tesco and Sainsbury's, have urged the chancellor not to raise taxes further this autumn.

Industry leaders fear food inflation could hit 6% later this year.

Mike Watkins of NIQ said seasonal weather patterns, higher global supply costs and the end of promotions linked to summer events also played a role in the latest rise.

"As households return from summer holidays, many may have to reassess their budgets," he added.

The impact is already showing in official figures: consumer price inflation rose to 3.8% in July, above forecasts, and well above the Bank of England's 2% target for the tenth month running.

Food and drink prices alone were up 4.9% year on year, with beef, coffee, orange juice and chocolate among the

steepest climbers.

Droughts in southern Europe have pushed up the cost of fruit and vegetables at a time when prices usually fall.

The squeeze on household budgets is set to worsen with energy bills also expected to rise.

Ofgem is forecast to increase its October price cap by 1% to £1,737 a year for a typical dual-fuel household.

Campaigners warn the change could leave millions struggling. The End Fuel Poverty Coalition said average bills remain 67% higher than before the energy crisis, with an estimated 12.1 million households already unable to afford their energy costs.

"We are now entering the fifth winter of the energy crisis, and the time for tinkering with the price cap is over," said Simon Francis of the coalition.

# UK elections chief urges democracy lessons for children from age 11

By **Fatimah Idera**

**T**he head of the UK's elections watchdog has said schools must begin teaching democracy from the age of 11 to prepare children for voting at 16, while stressing the importance of keeping classrooms free from political bias.

Vijay Rangarajan, chief executive of the Electoral Commission, said teaching will initially target pupils aged 14 and above but should eventually start earlier so that young people are ready to use the vote by their mid-teens.

The change comes ahead of the next general election, when 16- and 17-year-olds are expected to gain the right to vote.

The commission is developing teaching materials for schools, focusing on impartial lessons about how the political system works and how to engage with debate.

Rangarajan said teachers must be careful not to impose their own views: "We're going to need teachers to be really good at leaving their own personal views at the door. When they do express them, they need to make clear they are personal opinions."

His comments follow criticism from Reform UK leader Nigel Farage, who has accused schools of harbouring leftwing prejudice and anti-Reform bias.

Rangarajan said guidance and resources would help ensure impartiality, acknowledging that political parties are concerned about fairness.

Surveys suggest there is widespread support for more citizenship education.

A Teacher Tapp poll of 6,000 teachers found that over 80% believe the



curriculum does not prepare children adequately to vote at 16.

Half of teenagers aged 16 and 17 also said they do not feel well informed enough to participate in elections.

Lessons from Scotland, where 16- and 17-year-olds voted in the independence referendum and now take part in Holyrood and local elections, show that schools must play a central role.

Rangarajan said the Scottish experience was patchy because many teachers avoided engagement during the referendum, underlining the need for support and national resources.

Beyond voting mechanics, Rangarajan stressed the importance of teaching young people to critically assess online information and spot misinformation. Evidence suggests that early voting experiences help form lasting democratic habits.

His comments come as the government pushes forward with election reforms, including tougher rules on campaign finance, higher fines for breaches, and plans for more automatic voter registration.

The Electoral Commission has long called for tighter controls to block foreign money in politics, and Rangarajan welcomed the government's latest proposals.

However, he urged ministers to restore the commission's independence after Boris Johnson's government gave ministers the power to set its objectives.

"A government depends on an election to be re-elected. It shouldn't be able to instruct the people who are refereeing that election."

He also highlighted emerging threats to democracy, including abuse of candidates particularly women and ethnic minorities through online harassment and deepfake pornography.

A speaker's conference is examining the issue, and Scottish pilots are trialling police, electoral officials and IT experts working together to track abusers.

On political donations, Rangarajan said cryptocurrency contributions do not need to be banned outright, arguing parties already have a duty to check the source of gifts.

"Parties get given far more weird things than crypto," he said, citing donations of artworks, foreign trips and yacht use as harder to track.

Rangarajan, who became head of the commission last year, said his biggest concern remains the abuse and intimidation that deters people from entering politics. "It's very gendered," he warned.

"Deepfake porn is now being used as a direct tool against women candidates quite a lot."



# Water restrictions imposed on Scotland amid ongoing drought

By **Fatimah Idera**



**S**cotland has introduced water restrictions for the first time due to a prolonged dry spell that has pushed river levels to critical lows.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Sepa) announced restrictions in Ythan (Aberdeenshire) and North Fife after both regions reached significant scarcity status which is the highest level of alert. This follows over 30 days of very low water levels in local rivers.

The measures limit water abstraction and the process of taking water from natural sources and primarily affecting agricultural and industrial users. Sepa stated the restrictions are temporary and will be lifted once conditions improve.

The agency emphasized the need to protect the environment, wildlife, and local communities that depend on these water sources.

The head of environmental performance, Chris Dailly, Sepa's said "the water environment in parts of Scotland is clearly under stress. We've been working closely with licence holders throughout the summer to prepare for this."

So far, 2025 has brought unusually dry conditions, especially along Scotland's east coast. Each month this year has seen below-average rainfall, and this spring was the driest since 1964.

Scottish Water has not issued a hosepipe ban but is urging residents to conserve water at home by taking shorter showers and avoiding unnecessary outdoor use.

Average reservoir levels in eastern Scotland were at just 56% last week, 24% below the seasonal average of 81%.

The western areas reported healthier

levels at 76%, though still 5% below average. Across Scotland, reservoir levels were 14% below the norm.

Several other areas, including the Deveron, Don, and Esk in Angus, are at moderate scarcity, with more regions at risk of moving to the highest alert if dry conditions continue.

Dr. Rebecca Wade, an environmental science lecturer at Abertay University, said changing climate patterns are contributing to the crisis, "We're seeing less overall water and different rainfall patterns. Short, intense storms may cause flooding but don't replenish groundwater or reservoirs adequately."

However, authorities are urging water users to plan ahead, reduce usage, and follow existing licence conditions to help manage the ongoing drought.

# Ghanaian fraudsters con British women in 'revenge for colonialism'

By **Fatimah Idera**



**F**raudsters in Ghana are deliberately targeting British women in online romance scams, claiming their crimes are a form of retribution for colonial exploitation, new research has revealed.

Accra, the capital of Ghana, has become a hub for cybercrime networks known as Sakawa Boys. These gangs impersonate white men on Facebook often posing as soldiers, bankers or government officials to lure affluent Western women into relationships.

Over months, victims are persuaded to hand over large sums of money, sometimes amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds, after being manipulated with fabricated tales of medical emergencies or personal crises.

**Read Read:** Ghana's president Mahama assures safety of Nigerians, rejects Xenophobia

Dr Suleman Lazarus, a criminologist at the London School of Economics, interviewed 13 Ghanaian fraudsters and five police officers for his study. He found

many scammers showed no remorse, instead framing their activities as retributive justice for Britain's colonial past.

"A common saying among Sakawa Boys is: 'They exploited our ancestors with mirrors and gunpowder; we will reclaim our resources with computers and brains,'" Dr Lazarus told the media

Ghana which was colonised by Britain in 1874 and exploited for its gold and role in the slave trade, gained independence in 1957. Yet its colonial legacy continues to be cited by some criminals as justification for fraud. According to Oxford University's cybercrime index, Ghana ranked 13th-worst globally last year.

Interpol has identified West Africa as an emerging hub for online scam centres, where recruits are sometimes tricked by fake job offers, forced into debt bondage and trained to defraud victims. In a recent continent-wide crackdown, more than 1,200 suspects were arrested, with £73m recovered.

In Ghana, training hubs for aspiring

scammers dubbed hustle kingdoms teach recruits how to run romance frauds and other online cons. British and American women, particularly those who are vulnerable and seeking companionship, are frequent targets.

Some police officers interviewed even expressed sympathy for the scammers' perspective. One fraudster, Kojo, said: "Our ancestors were stripped of dignity and freedom... The colonialists brought chains and humiliation. Now we are smarter. We carry the codes, the format, the skills. We are reclaiming what was taken."

Another scammer, Justice, echoed the sentiment: "They took our gold, cocoa and our people. Now, we are bringing dollars back from overseas."

The human impact is stark. One British woman was persuaded to send vast sums to a Ghanaian posing as a US soldier. After months of online exchanges, she flew to Ghana to meet him only to discover he was a much younger man with no connection to the military.



# Poland vetoes extension of benefits for Ukrainian refugees

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**P**oland's president has vetoed legislation to prolong welfare payments for Ukrainian refugees, honouring a campaign pledge to tighten support at a time of rising anti-Ukrainian sentiment in the country.

Karol Nawrocki, who took office earlier this month after his spring election victory, said only Ukrainians in work should be entitled to child benefit.

"We remain open to providing assistance to Ukrainian citizens that hasn't changed," Nawrocki said in a statement. "But after three and a half years, our law should be amended."

The bill, which Nawrocki rejected on Monday, would have extended the existing system of payments, due to expire in September, until March 2026. Around 1 million refugees, most of them women and children, are believed to have settled in Poland since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

The decision drew sharp criticism from the government. The prime minister, Donald Tusk, and labour minister, Agnieszka Dziemianowicz-Bąk, both condemned the move. "We cannot punish people for losing their job, particularly not innocent children. This is the ABC of human decency," Dziemianowicz-Bąk wrote on X. The monthly benefit is 800 złoty (£162).

In a statement, the president's office defended the veto, saying: "President Nawrocki does not agree to the privileged treatment of citizens of other countries. That is why he has decided to veto the bill on assistance for Ukrainian citizens in its current form and will present his own legal proposals."

The deputy prime minister, Krzysztof Gawkowski, said the veto also jeopardised Poland's continued financing of Starlink satellite internet for Ukraine. "This is the end of Starlink internet, which Poland provides to Ukraine as it wages war," he warned on

X. Nawrocki's office later told Reuters that funding could continue if parliament backed his alternative bill before the end of September.

Poland was one of the most welcoming European states to Ukrainians in the early months of the war, with many Poles offering homes, donations and support. But resentment has grown, despite evidence that refugees have strengthened the economy. A study by Poland's National Development Bank this year found Ukrainians had paid more in taxes than they had received in benefits, and that their labour was vital for economic stability.

Bartosz Cichocki, Poland's ambassador to Ukraine until 2023, said the change in mood was predictable. "After the euphoric solidarity in 2022, the climax of social and political support, there had to be some sort of swing to the other side. We are now in this other extreme. I believe at some point this will calm down and we will reach a balanced approach," he said.

# Typhoon Kajiki leaves three dead, causes widespread damage in Vietnam

By **Eniola Amadu**



**A**t least three people have been killed and 10 others injured after Typhoon Kajiki swept across Vietnam.

Officials warned of continued heavy rainfall that could trigger flooding and landslides in several regions.

According to a government statement, the storm damaged nearly 7,000 homes, engulfed 28,800 hectares of rice fields, and uprooted 18,000 trees.

It also toppled 331 electricity poles, cutting power across multiple provinces, including Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Thai Nguyen, and Phu Tho.

Meanwhile, in the capital Hanoi, torrential rain flooded major streets, leaving cars submerged and traffic at a standstill.

Floodwaters surrounded residential neighbourhoods as the city prepares for its largest National Day parade in decades, marking Vietnam's 80th anniversary next week.

State media footage showed water overflowing the banks of West Lake, Hanoi's largest lake, as downpours continued.

Several villages in Bac Ninh province have been isolated by rising floodwaters, local media reported.

Also, Kajiki made landfall on Vietnam's north-central coast Monday afternoon before weakening into a tropical depression over Laos early Tuesday, the national weather agency said.

The agency warned that northern regions could see up to 150 millimetres (6 inches) of rain within six hours,

increasing the risk of flash floods and landslides.

However, authorities have evacuated 44,000 residents across five provinces and ordered all fishing boats back to shore.

The military has deployed more than 346,000 personnel, 8,200 vehicles, and five aircraft for disaster relief operations and remains on high alert for emergency response.

Vietnam has recorded more than 100 deaths or missing persons from natural disasters in the first seven months of 2025, with estimated economic losses exceeding \$21 million, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Last September, Typhoon Yagi caused hundreds of deaths and inflicted \$3.3 billion in damage in northern Vietnam.



# Iga Swiatek kicks off US Open with win over Arango

By Boluwatife Kehinde

Polish tennis star Iga Świątek launched her US Open campaign in emphatic style, sweeping aside Emiliana Arango with a dominant straight-sets win, 6-1, 6-2.

The victory keeps alive her bid to achieve a remarkable milestone – becoming the first woman since Serena Williams in 2012 to claim both Wimbledon and the US Open in the same calendar year.

The match, staged at the iconic Arthur Ashe Stadium, highlighted Świątek's trademark blend of power, precision and resilience.

Beyond securing her place in the next round, she also made history by surpassing Monica Seles' long-standing record for the most consecutive opening-round wins in the Open Era – another testament to her unrelenting dominance.

Currently ranked world number one,



Świątek is determined to sustain her momentum as she chases a second Grand Slam crown in 2025.

She lifted the Australian Open title earlier this year and is now aiming to add another major to her growing collection with a deep run in New York.

With her formidable strokes, tactical sharpness and steely determination, Świątek remains one of the most formidable figures on the tour, and all eyes will be fixed on her as she seeks to etch her name further into tennis history.

# Gordon apologises to Newcastle teammates, others for Liverpool's red card

By Boluwatife Kehinde

Anthony Gordon has issued an apology to his Newcastle United teammates, fans, and Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk following his red card during the Monday match against the Reds.

The 24-year-old winger received a booking in the first 47 minutes for a challenging tackle on the Dutch defender and Liverpool's captain, which will render him ineligible to participate in the upcoming fixture against Leeds United.

The repercussions of Gordon's dismissal left Newcastle with ten players on the field, contributing to their 3-2 defeat at home.

In addition to this recent loss, Newcastle is facing challenges as it now lacks the services of Gordon, who made significant contributions last season with 11 goals,



alongside Alexander Isak, whose future with the team remains uncertain.

In a statement posted on his Instagram account, Gordon expressed, "I want to sincerely apologise to my teammates and the fans. My intentions were pure; I was

merely attempting to inject energy into the game, but I mistimed the tackle.

"I would never intentionally tackle someone in such a manner. We spoke afterwards, and he understands that."

# CHAN 2024: Morocco, Senegal battle for final spot

By Boluwatife Kehinde



**M**orocco and Senegal are gearing up for a highly anticipated clash in the semifinals of the African Nations Championship (CHAN) 2024, taking place in the vibrant city of Kampala, Uganda.

This matchup marks the first time these two powerhouse teams will face each other in this prestigious tournament, with a coveted spot in the final up for grabs.

This match is noteworthy as it features the reigning champions and winners of the past three editions of the tournament.

Morocco has established itself as a formidable force, having claimed the CHAN title in 2018 and 2020, while Senegal enters the semifinals as the current titleholders, seeking to defend their championship status.

Throughout the tournament, the Moroccan national team has consistently showcased its offensive

prowess.

They have recorded an impressive five victories in this edition alone.

So far, Morocco has netted nine goals while only conceding three, demonstrating their ability to maintain a strong defence alongside their attacking capabilities.

With two clean sheets to their name, they have proven to be the most effective attacking team among the semifinalists, racking up a total of 29 shots on target, reflecting their relentless pursuit of goals.

On the other hand, the Senegalese team has proven its resilience by remaining unbeaten in its last eight CHAN matches.

Their defensive solidity has been impressive, as they have managed to keep four consecutive clean sheets during the knockout stages of the tournament.

This remarkable record highlights their disciplined backline and ability to thwart their opponents' attempts to score.

As both teams prepare for this crucial encounter, there is much at stake.

Morocco is on the hunt for their third final appearance in the history of the tournament, aiming to add another illustrious chapter to their legacy.

Meanwhile, Senegal is motivated by the opportunity to join an elite group of teams that have successfully defended their title, becoming only the second team ever to achieve such a feat in the competition's history.

The vibrant atmosphere of Kampala will serve as the backdrop for this momentous clash, as fans from both nations eagerly await a thrilling display of football that promises to be filled with intensity, skill, and the desire to secure a place in the final.



# Wimbledon champion Angela Mortimer-Barrett is dead

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**A**ngela Mortimer-Barrett, the former Wimbledon champion and three-time grand slam winner, has died at the age of 93.

Mortimer-Barrett captured the Wimbledon ladies' singles title in 1961, defeating fellow Briton Christine Truman, three years after losing her first final to Althea Gibson.

She also won the French Championships in 1955 and the Australian Championships in 1958.

In doubles, she triumphed at Wimbledon in 1955 alongside Anne Shilcock, beating Shirley Bloomer and Pat Ward in an all-British final.

Her career was marked by resilience, overcoming hearing loss and frequent illness to establish herself among the game's elite.

She was appointed MBE in 1967, the same year she married former British player and commentator John

Barrett.

Deborah Jevans, chair of the All England Club, paid tribute: "We are deeply saddened to learn of the death of Angela Mortimer-Barrett MBE, Wimbledon's oldest surviving ladies' singles champion, at the age of 93.

"Angela will be remembered for her determination and extraordinary dedication which saw her overcome

significant challenges to rise to the top of tennis, winning three grand slam singles titles and one grand slam doubles title.

"On behalf of everyone at the All England Club, I offer my sincere condolences to Angela's husband, John; their children, Michael and Sarah Jane; grandchildren, family and friends."

