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**Ekiti Manchester fest brought African fashion to Life -** **Pg 9 & 10**



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## Medical doctor, PhD holder, Honorary doctorate awardee: Who deserves Dr title?

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# VDM's Arrest: Obi warns against rising abuse of rule of law

By Friday Omosola

**F**ormer Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate, Peter Obi, has described the arrest of social media influencer Martin Otse, known as Verydarkman (VDM) as a disturbing erosion of democratic values in Nigeria.

The former Anambra State governor in a statement on his X page on Sunday expressed concern about the growing tension in the country, worsened by economic hardship and actions that undermine the rule of law and human rights.

He stated that while security agencies may have acted within their legal rights, the forceful and opaque manner in which VDM was arrested resembled an abduction, sparking fear among citizens.

“The display of force, lacking in transparency and civility, closely resembled an abduction,” he said.

“If Nigerians begin to struggle to distinguish between legitimate arrests and unlawful abductions, we will lose a vital layer of national security and accountability.”

The 63-year-old noted that the pattern is not new, recalling that even members of the judiciary, the last line of defence for justice — have previously suffered similar indignities.

According to Obi, when those who interpret the law are disrespected, it is unlikely that ordinary citizens will feel safe or protected.

He also warned that such actions have



economic consequences.

He cited the public backlash against GTBank, which has been linked to VDM's arrest, as a damaging blow to investor confidence and institutional credibility.

“At a time when investor confidence is already fragile, we must do all we can to avoid actions that tarnish institutions or undermine the trust of both citizens and the international community,” he said.

Obi questioned why the activist could not have been invited in a ‘civil, transparent, and legal manner’.

He added that such an approach would have spared the nation unnecessary embarrassment.

More so, Obi condemned reports surrounding the alleged ‘adoption’ of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) President, describing it as another troubling sign

of the suppression of youth voices.

“Nigeria’s youth should not feel coerced, silenced, or absorbed into political agendas that do not reflect their will. The oppression of young voices, whether through force, patronage, or intimidation, is a dangerous path that we must not normalise,” he said.

Obi called for a return to democratic norms where justice is delivered without theatrics or abuse, youth are free to express themselves, judges serve with dignity, and institutions act with integrity.

“That is the Nigeria we must rebuild,” he said.

The New Daily Prime reported that VDM's lawyer, Deji Adeyanju alleged he was arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

# THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

## PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

## PRODUCT COLOUR

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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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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
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FULL PAGE	329,868.50
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10X5	237,500.00
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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
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## PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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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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2X1	6,500.00
1X1	3,292.00

## PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

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QUARTER PAGE	70,950.00
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10X5	162,222.445
10X4	103,963.00
10X3	N/A
9X6	162,222.445
9X5	168,191.50
9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
7X4	72,676.00
6X4	65,000.00
6X3	41,124.50
6X2	29,858.00
5X6	71,378.00
5X4	42,825.00
5X3	29,858.00
5X2	22,841.00
4x4	N/A
4X3	N/A
4X2	17,737.50
3x3	23,458.00
3X2	14,923.00
2X2	10,200.00
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## CONTACT US

**Correspondent Address:**  
Real Group Plaza, No.1 Junaid Dosumu  
Street, CBD, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos  
**Call the Editor on: 07025014298, 09014323792**

**E-mail Address:**  
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# NNPC Probe: Kyari denies being in EFCC custody

By Friday Omosola

In recent hours, reports have circulated that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is investigating former executives of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd).

The anti-graft agency is the executive alongside the recently dismissed managing directors of the Port Harcourt, Warri, and Kaduna refineries, over the alleged misappropriation of approximately \$2.96 billion allocated for the rehabilitation of the facilities.

The EFCC is said to have launched a probe into allegations of abuse of office and misappropriation of funds involving several former top officials of NNPC Ltd, including two former Group Chief Executive Officers (GCEOs), Mele Kyari and Abubakar Yar'Adua.

The news has sparked significant discussion across social media, with many Nigerians calling for a thorough and transparent investigation into the alleged diversion of public funds.

Reacting to reports that he is currently in the custody of the anti-graft agency, Kyari denied the claims via a statement on his X (formerly Twitter) account.

He refuted the allegations, stating that he served not only his country but also with a deep sense of accountability to God.

"I served with the fear of God," Kyari wrote. "I am happy to account for my stewardship."



He also noted that he is presently enjoying a well-deserved rest following the recent dissolution of NNPC Ltd's management and board.

He wrote: "Over the past few days and in particular in the past 2 hours, I have been inundated with calls from concerned family and friends over claims by an online newspaper that I was in the custody of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC. This is clear mischief and a calculated attempt by the newspaper and its sponsors to achieve a desired outcome, which only they know."

"It should be stated that having served the NNPC and the NNPC Ltd for 34 years, and 17 of those in management roles and especially the last 5 years and 9 months, I had little time for leave of even two weeks. So, I am thankful for the opportunity to serve under their Excellencies Presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Bola Ahmed Tinubu."

"I must emphasize that I served with

the fear of God knowing fully well as a Muslim that if I do not account before man, I will account before Allah, and that I am better off accounting to the institutions of man. Therefore, having served in public capacity, I am willing and happy to account for my stewardship in this world."

"However, it is important to state that the resort to disinformation does not serve anyone's purpose, the NNPC Ltd or the country in General, as it has the potential to send the wrong signals to investors and the international community."

"It is in this regard that I urge the media to be circumspect and avoid being stampeded into misleading the public on unverified stories or matters that are subject of further validation by relevant organizations. I sincerely thank my family and friends who have reached out to me or tried to do so and assure them that I am available to respond to all lawful queries."

# NDLEA uncovers N3.4bn opioid seizure in Lagos, Port Harcourt

By Friday Omosola

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has announced it intercepted a staggering haul of opioids valued at over N3.4 billion in major operations conducted in Lagos and Port Harcourt.

Femi Babafemi, NDLEA Director of Media and Advocacy in a statement said the drugs were concealed in chocolate tins, commercial vehicles and even household cargo.

Babafemi said in a coordinated operation at the Port Harcourt Ports Complex, Onne, on 29th April, the operatives, working alongside Nigeria Customs and other security agencies, uncovered two million pills of tafrodol 225mg and 163,000 bottles of codeine syrup hidden in a watch-listed container.

That same day in Lagos, officers recovered 1.5 million pills of a controlled opioid from a suspect, Olarenwaju Wahab, in the Alaba-Rago area of Ojo.

Investigations traced the shipment to a residence in Victoria Garden City, Lekki, linked to one Obinna Kenneth, who is currently at large.

Further interceptions were made at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Ikeja, where 42 parcels of "Canadian Loud" — a potent cannabis strain weighing 20kg — were discovered disguised in tins of chocolate, Milo, and kidney beans in cargo arriving from Canada aboard a British Airways flight.

Three suspects, including Monsurat Ewawunmi Lawson, who received the consignment, were arrested between 30th April and 3rd May.

On 2nd May, businessman Bobby Morris Osas was arrested at the Lagos airport while attempting to board a Turkish Airlines flight to Italy. A search of his luggage revealed 8,130 pills of tramadol of varying strengths.

The agency also thwarted an attempt to ship tramadol and skunk to Iraq, concealed in bottles of body cream,



through a courier service in Lagos on 28th April.

In Kaduna, NDLEA officers intercepted a commercial vehicle travelling from Nasarawa to Zamfara on 3rd May. A search uncovered 942 explosives concealed in a sack. A 30-year-old suspect, Nura Sani Muhammad (a.k.a. Nura Hariji), was arrested and handed over to relevant security agencies.

Elsewhere, five members of a drug syndicate led by Aminu Musa (a.k.a. Kadagi) were arrested in Kano on 30th April with 50 blocks of skunk weighing 21.6kg.

In Edo State, on 1st May, NDLEA operatives acting on intelligence intercepted a white Toyota bus in Uromi transporting assorted opioids from Onitsha to Auchi.

The seizure included over 314,000 pills of various controlled drugs, 638 bottles of codeine syrup and 200 ampoules of pentazocine injection. A suspect, Dare Adeyemo, was taken into custody.

In Awka, Anambra State, a commercial bus was intercepted on 30th April, with 50,400 capsules of tramadol, 500 co-codamol tablets and 300 ampoules of pentazocine recovered. A suspect,

Chinedu Eneh, was arrested.

Also, on 3rd May, officers patrolling the Kontagora–Mokwa road in Niger State stopped a Mitsubishi truck loaded with 5,500 tramadol capsules and 2,300 ampoules of pentazocine.

The suspect, 30-year-old Yusuf Abubakar, was apprehended.

In a significant breakthrough following a 10-month investigation, NDLEA officers on 26th April arrested a major drug kingpin, Dominic Chiegozie Obijiaku, Managing Director of Ovidaq International Ltd.

He was allegedly behind a shipment of 2,616,060 tramadol pills seized at Apapa Port on 28th July 2024. A follow-up search of his Lekki residence yielded 51 wraps of Canadian Loud weighing 34 grams.

Meanwhile, NDLEA's War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) advocacy campaign continued nationwide, with sensitisation lectures delivered at Al-Istigama University, Kano, and Government Girls Junior Secondary School, Kankia, Katsina State.



# Customs boss to speak on trade, security at UNIFEMGA's 2025

By Friday Omosola

The Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Customs Service, Adewale Adeniyi will deliver a keynote address on the intersections of cross-border trade and national security during the 2025 national reunion of the Obafemi Awolowo University Muslim Graduates' Association (UNIFEMGA).

This year's event will be held at Oduduwa Hall, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, on 10 May, as part of a three-day programme spanning 9 to 11 May.

In a joint statement issued by the Planning Committee Chairman, Sirajudeen Obayopo, and the association's Public Relations Officer, Ibrahim Fagbenro.

The statement confirmed that Adeniyi, an alumnus of the university, will speak on the theme, 'Cross Border Trade and Security Implications on the Nigerian Economy: Taking Advantage of Global Trade Dynamics.'

The conference is expected to feature high-level discussions, professional networking, and community-building activities.

Governor Ademola Adeleke of Osun State will serve as the Special Guest of Honour, while the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II, is billed to attend as the Royal Father of the Day.

Muritadha Adeyemi Adeniji, Managing Director/CEO of Starling Global and Ideal Limited, will chair the occasion, and the university's Vice-Chancellor, Adebayo Simeon



Bamire, will play host to the gathering.

Distinguished alumni expected to attend include legal luminary Yusuf Olaolu Ali, along with three Vice-Chancellors: Wahab Egbewole of the University of Ilorin, Musa Aibinu of Summit University, Offa, and Akeem Lasisi of the Federal University of Health Sciences, Ila-Orangun.

The reunion will open with a Jumat prayer led by Chief Imam, Abubakar Sanusi, followed by a courtesy visit to the Vice-Chancellor and an exclusive networking dinner featuring the second edition of the UNIFEMGA Investors' Forum, hosted by Rafiu Ebiti, Chairman of UNIFEMGA's Board of Trustees and Pro-Chancellor of Summit University.

A key highlight of the event is the UNIFEMGA Investors' Forum modelled after the popular 'Dragons' Den' concept, where entrepreneurs will present their ideas to prospective investors.

Other scheduled activities include a welcome reception, student picnic, scholarship award presentations, an Annual General Meeting, empowerment sessions for undergraduates, fitness exercises, and novelty football matches between branches.

Commenting on the upcoming reunion, UNIFEMGA National President, Mohammed Buari, described the event as a milestone that coincides with the beginning of his leadership tenure.

He expressed confidence that the conference would be both impactful and enjoyable.

Over 300 delegates, including members from the diaspora, have already confirmed participation, indicating a strong turnout for what promises to be a meaningful and memorable gathering.

# Lagos CP urges GBV survivors to speak out, shuns stigma

By Helen Okechukwu

**L**agos State Commissioner of Police (CP) Mr. Olohundare Jimoh, has urged survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) to report incidents promptly and reject the fear of societal stigma, emphasizing that early reporting is critical to ensuring justice.

Jimoh assured the survivors that the police are fully equipped to handle such cases with sensitivity and speed.

Jimoh while speaking on Sunday in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), reaffirmed the command's commitment to deploying technology in combating crimes, especially cybercrime and GBV.

He stressed that scientific evidence makes cases of rape and defilement easier to prosecute—if they are reported without delay.

“It is very easy to prove either a case of defilement or rape,” Jimoh stated. “But there must be prompt reporting, preservation of the crime scene, and immediate medical and forensic examination.”

He warned that delayed reporting often leads to the destruction of vital evidence and the contamination of crime scenes, making it difficult for investigators to secure convictions.



“When victims delay, it becomes more difficult to secure justice. But with technology, we can crack the veracity or otherwise of rape claims quickly,” he said.

Highlighting the role of technology, the CP disclosed that surveillance cameras with Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities have been installed across Lagos, with three dedicated control centres operated by trained personnel.

He added that these technological tools have significantly boosted the state's ability to respond to and solve crimes, particularly in the digital space.

“Our cybercrime unit is fully functional, and virtually every cybercrime arrest we have made is tied to our technology-enhanced

strategies,” Jimoh noted.

On the growing threat of cultism beyond school environments, the commissioner expressed concern over the involvement of gainfully employed individuals, stating that the police are taking decisive action against the trend.

“Cultism is no longer confined to campuses, and that is deeply concerning,” he said.

Jimoh concluded by reaffirming the command's readiness to collaborate with the media and other stakeholders in enhancing public safety. He called for a united front against all forms of crime and violence.

He added, “Let us work together to stop all forms of crime and violence.”

# Medical doctor, PhD holder, Honorary doctorate awardee: Who deserves Dr title?

By Agency Reporter

**W**ho should rightly use the title Dr? This question has sparked intense debates in certain quarters. How do we distinguish holders of honorary doctoral degrees from those with academic qualification using titles?

A fundamental distinction exists between honorary doctoral degrees and academic qualifications, particularly the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Unlike the PhD, which demands rigorous scholarly inquiry, original research, and academic rigour, honorary doctoral degrees symbolise exceptional individual achievements, contributions, and service to society, distinct from academic accomplishments.

Honorary doctoral degrees acknowledge non-academic achievements, including exemplary leadership, innovative entrepreneurship, exceptional artistic expression, and humanitarian endeavors.

In the United States, these degrees are denoted by “Hon” or “HC” (Honoris Causa) in parentheses, preceding the degree

In an interview with Nigerian Tribune, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, (Administration) University of Ibadan, Professor Peter Olapegba stated that medical doctors should not attach the title “Dr” to their names.

He noted that there is a craze for titles in Nigeria compared to abroad where medical doctors do not use the “Dr” title. According to him, it is only those that earn a PhD that are called “Dr.”

He added that those who are awarded an honorary doctorate degree are not entitled to be called “Dr.”

He said: “This is an ongoing controversy. Basically, abroad, for example, in United States of America precisely, medical doctors are not called Dr.

“It is only those that earned an academic PhD that are addressed with ‘Dr’ title unlike here in Africa where everyone wants to be referred to using their title.



For example, a veterinary doctor will also call himself a doctor, while a person who produces and prescribes herb will call himself doctor, that is ‘agbomola’ which is the Yoruba name for traditional medicine seller.

“Funny enough some professions use titles which do not exist. This includes surveyors who address themselves as ‘Surv.’ ‘Pharm’ is use to refer to pharmacists. Townplanners uses the title, ‘Tpl’. So there is a craze for titles.

“So for someone who was awarded with a honorary doctorate degree, the person should not use the Dr title. The person should use ‘PhD Honoris causa’ at the back of their name to indicate that they were honoured with PhD by a university.

“So they are not supposed to be addressed as Dr. Sadly because there is no regulation about it, everyone uses the title. If it was strictly regulated, such will be put to an end.”

Also speaking in an interview with Nigerian Tribune, the Director General, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Professor Ayo Omotayo, was also of the opinion that a medical doctor should be addressed as a physician and not addressed with the Dr title.

According to him, when medical doctors

take further courses in the field they are addressed as ‘registrar’ and later ‘consultant’.

He, however, argued that a person who has bagged an honorary doctorate degree award can also be addressed with the title “Dr” just as a person who worked to earn PhD from a university.

“Ordinarily medical doctors are not to be called doctors. They are basically physicians; that is the more reason you see they are addressed as registrars and later they graduate to be called consultant.

“Those who have PhD are the ones to be called a ‘Dr’ and those who bagged honorary titles are also free to be called Dr because they were given in honour of some achievements they might have had that otherwise qualified them to be called Dr, but not truly at the same level with those who worked hard to get the award. But then, society accepts them. Even though they did not go through the academic process, they can be addressed with the title if they have truly contributed in other areas which makes them worthy to be given the title.”

Source: Nigerian Tribune



# Ekiti Manchester fest brought African fashion to Life – see stunning looks

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

**M**anchester Ekiti Fest was more than just a musical celebration—it was a vibrant showcase of African fashion and pride. Guests fully embraced the theme, ‘Unapologetically African,’ arriving in stunning ensembles that highlighted the richness and uniqueness of their culture and diverse styles.

The recently held Ekiti Manchester Fest was far more than a conventional gathering of speeches and performances—it evolved into a stunning celebration of African identity, culture, and fashion. With the empowering theme “Unapologetically African”, the atmosphere was set from the very first step onto the red carpet. The event was held at Jubilee Hall in Dukinfield, Manchester.

Scroll down to see the standout fashion moments that turned heads and



warmed hearts.

Attendees did not disappoint. From intricately woven Aso-Oke and ornate beadwork to sculptural mini dresses, sweeping gowns, and bold Ankara prints, the fashion on display was nothing short of spectacular. Every ensemble told a story—each one a

heartfelt tribute to African artistry, craftsmanship, and creativity.

The evening blurred the lines between tradition and modern elegance. Guests proudly wore their cultural roots, proving once again that African fashion is not just a style, but a statement—bold, beautiful, and deeply meaningful.

From the sheer glamour to the community spirit, Ekiti Manchester Fest reinforced an undeniable truth: when Africa celebrates, it does so with unmistakable flair. This year’s edition didn’t just highlight the richness of Ekiti heritage—it affirmed that in every corner of the diaspora, African culture continues to thrive, inspire, and captivate.



**Continue reading  
On next page**



## Cont from page 9





# ‘Free my guy’ – Davido calls for VeryDarkMan’s release

By Agency Reporter



**A**frobeats star, David Adeleke, popularly known as Davido, has joined calls for the release of social media commentator, VeryDarkMan, who was said to have been arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

On Friday, May 2, 2025, VDM was arrested shortly after leaving a Guaranty Trust Bank (GTBank) branch in Abuja, where he had gone to address alleged unauthorised deductions from his mother’s account.

According to his legal counsel, Deji Adeyanju, VDM was apprehended by masked individuals believed to be EFCC operatives and has since

been held without clear disclosure of charges.

In response to the arrest, Davido took to his official X (formerly Twitter) account on Sunday to express his support for VDM.

“Outside all the noise it’s good to see that the good one does actually impacts lives and people actually appreciate! The support I’m seeing for VDM everywhere is encouraging, makes one want to do more for the masses. FREE MY GUY,” he wrote.

VDM, known for his outspoken critiques on social issues, has faced multiple arrests in the past, often related to his online activities.

His recent detention has sparked widespread reactions from the public and fellow celebrities, with many demanding transparency and his immediate release.

As of now, the EFCC has not provided specific details regarding the reasons for VDM’s detention, leading to increased public scrutiny and calls for accountability from the agency.

The situation continues to develop, with supporters awaiting further information on VDM’s legal status and the circumstances surrounding his arrest.



# Brazilian police foil bomb attack at Lady Gaga's rio concert

By Fatimah Idera



**T**he Brazilian police said on Sunday that they had thwarted a bomb attack planned for Lady Gaga's historic concert that drew over 2 million people to Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro.

The Civil Police of Rio de Janeiro state, working in coordination with the Justice Ministry, said the plot was orchestrated by a group promoting hate speech and the radicalization of teenagers, including self-harm and violent content as a form of social belonging.

According to the Rio City Hall, 2.1

million people attended the concert of the American pop icon.

The police said in a statement that, "The suspects were recruiting participants, including minors, to carry out coordinated attacks using improvised explosives and Molotov cocktails,"

The Justice Ministry said the recruiters identified themselves as members of Gaga's global fan base, known as the "Little Monsters."

The operation was based on a report by the ministry's Cyber Operations Lab following a tip-off from Rio state police intelligence,

which uncovered digital cells encouraging violent behaviour among teenagers using coded language and extremist symbolism.

A man described as the group's leader was arrested in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul for illegal possession of a firearm, while a teenager in Rio de Janeiro was detained for storing child pornography.

Authorities carried out over a dozen search and seizure warrants across the states of Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso, and Rio Grande do Sul and Sao Paulo.

# Trump sparks global debate after posting AI photo in Papal attire

By **Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi**

In an unexpected turn of political theatre meets religious spectacle, President Donald Trump has once again stirred global headlines—this time by publishing an AI-generated image of himself dressed as the pope. The image, which quickly went viral after appearing on his Truth Social platform, shows the U.S. president in full papal regalia: white robes, a gold crucifix, and a towering mitre, with his right index finger pointed solemnly to the sky.

Coming just days before the Vatican's conclave to elect the successor to the late Pope Francis, the post has reignited questions about Trump's obsession with power and influence—both secular and spiritual. It also follows comments he made earlier this week that blurred the line between jest and ambition.

When asked during a press briefing who he hoped would succeed Pope Francis, Trump replied, "I'd like to be pope. That would be my number one choice." Although he later added that he had no particular preference, he did single out "a cardinal out of New York" believed to be Timothy Dolan, the Archbishop of New York, calling him "very good."

Trump's AI papal image was uploaded without a caption but needed none. The symbolism and timing were clear—and polarizing.

## Public and Political Reaction

While the post generated amusement among some of Trump's supporters, critics were quick to denounce it as another instance of the president trivializing sacred traditions for personal spectacle.

Melanie D'Arrigo, a former Democratic congressional candidate, reacted sharply: "The guy who broke all Ten Commandments is posting pictures of himself cosplaying as the next pope."

The Republicans Against Trump account went even further, declaring: "Trump just posted a photo of himself as the pope. It's full-on lunacy at this point."

Even within Republican circles,



reactions ranged from cautious amusement to enthusiastic endorsement. Senator Lindsey Graham remarked last week, apparently in jest, that the conclave should "keep an open mind" about Trump as pope, adding that he was "excited" by the prospect.

## Religious Context and Political Undercurrents

The mock papal post comes at a delicate time for the Vatican, as 133 eligible cardinals prepare to gather for the first conclave in two decades following a pope's death. Pope Francis, who died on April 21, had often stood as a vocal critic of Trump's policies, particularly on immigration and nationalism. In a 2016 comment that has since resurfaced, Francis told reporters, "Anyone, whoever he is, who only wants to build walls and not bridges is not a Christian."

Trump's visit to Pope Francis's funeral last week marked his first official foreign trip since returning to power. His presence at the service, combined with the viral image, has been widely interpreted as part of a broader public relations strategy aimed at reshaping his image among Catholic voters—a group that made up 20 percent of the American electorate in the last election. Exit polls showed that nearly 60 percent of Catholic voters supported the Republican ticket.

## Blurring Boundaries Between Faith and Power

While most observers view Trump's papal ambitions as satirical, the broader implications raise serious questions about the fusion of politics, digital manipulation, and religious symbolism in modern leadership. In an age of AI-generated imagery and polarizing public figures, the boundaries between parody and propaganda have grown increasingly thin.

What remains clear is that President Trump's unique brand of populism continues to dominate public discourse, even in places few expected it to reach—like the gates of the Vatican.

As the conclave prepares to convene on May 7, one thing is certain: while Trump will not be among the cardinals casting ballots under Michelangelo's frescoes, his image—papal or otherwise—will remain etched in the spectacle surrounding one of the world's most sacred traditions.



# Trump sparks global debate after posting AI photo in Papal attire

By **Fatimah Idera**

**P**resident Vladimir Putin said in remarks published on Sunday that Russia had sufficient strength and resources to take the war in Ukraine to its logical conclusion, although he hoped that there would be no need to use nuclear weapons.

Recall, Putin had ordered thousands of Russian troops into Ukraine in February 2022, triggering Europe's biggest ground conflict since World War Two and the largest confrontation between Moscow and the West since the depths of the Cold War.

Also, hundreds of thousands of soldiers have been killed and injured as U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he wants to end the bloodbath that his administration casts as a proxy war between the United States and Russia.

In a film by state television about Putin's quarter of a century as Russia's paramount leader entitled "Russia, Kremlin, Putin, 25 years", Putin was asked about the risk of nuclear escalation from the Ukraine war.

He said "They wanted to provoke us so that we made mistakes." while speaking beside a portrait of Tsar Alexander III, a 19th century conservative who suppressed dissent. "There has been no need to use those weapons and I hope they will not be required."

"We have enough strength and means to bring what was started in 2022 to a logical conclusion with the outcome Russia requires."

Trump has been signalling for weeks that he is frustrated by the failure of Moscow and Kyiv to reach terms to end the war, though the Kremlin has said that the conflict is so complicated that the rapid progress Washington wants is difficult.

Former U.S. President Joe Biden,



Western European leaders and Ukraine cast the invasion as an imperial-style land grab and repeatedly vowed to defeat Russian forces, which control about a fifth of Ukraine.

Putin portrays the war as a watershed moment in Moscow's relations with the West, which he says humiliated Russia after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 by enlarging NATO and encroaching on what he considers Moscow's sphere of influence.

Trump has warned that the conflict could develop into World War Three. Former CIA Director William Burns has said there was a real risk in late 2022 that Russia could use nuclear weapons against Ukraine, an assertion dismissed by Moscow.

Putin who was a former KGB lieutenant colonel who was handed the presidency on the last day of 1999 by an ailing Boris Yeltsin, is the longest serving Kremlin leader since Josef Stalin, who ruled for 29 years until his death in 1953.

Russian dissidents – most now either in jail or abroad – see Putin as a dictator who has built a brittle system of personal rule reliant on sycophancy and corruption that is leading Russia towards decline and

turmoil.

Supporters cast Putin, who Russian pollsters say has approval ratings of above 85%, as a saviour who pushed back against an arrogant West and put an end to the chaos which accompanied the 1991 disintegration of the Soviet Union.

In the carefully choreographed state television film, which gave viewers a rare look behind the notoriously closed life of the Russian president, Putin was shown offering chocolates and a fermented Russian milk drink to Pavel Zarubin, a top Kremlin correspondent, in his private Kremlin kitchen.

Putin said that he first knelt in prayer during the 2002 Nord-Ost Moscow theater crisis, when Chechen militants took over 900 people hostage. More than 130 hostages were killed.

"I don't feel like some kind of politician," Putin said of his 25 years in power as president and prime minister.

"I continue to breathe the very same air as millions of Russian citizens. It is very important. God willing that it continues as long as possible. And that it doesn't disappear.



# India bans imports from Pakistan over tension of tourist killings

By Fatimah Idera



**A**s tensions rise between the nuclear-armed neighbours in the wake of a deadly attack on tourists in the disputed Kashmir region, India said on Saturday that it had banned the import of goods coming from or transiting via Pakistan and barred Pakistani ships.

India's Directorate General of Foreign Trade said in a notification that the ban would take effect immediately.

"This restriction is imposed in the interest of national security and public policy," it said.

Suspected militants killed at least 26 people in last week's attack on a

mountain tourist destination in the Pahalgam area of the Kashmir valley.

The Muslim-majority Himalayan region is claimed by both India and Pakistan, and has been the focus of several wars, an insurgency and diplomatic standoffs.

India has accused Pakistan of involvement in the attack, which Islamabad denies. Pakistan has said it has "credible intelligence" that India intends to launch military action.

Pakistan's retaliatory measures have included halting all border trade, closing its airspace to Indian carriers and expelling Indian diplomats.

It has also warned that any attempt to

prevent the flow of river water promised under a decades-old treaty would be considered an act of war.

On Saturday, India said Pakistani-flagged ships would not be allowed to visit any Indian port, and Indian flagged-ships would not visit any ports in Pakistan.

"This order is issued to ensure safety of Indian assets, cargo and connected infrastructure, in public interest and for interest of Indian shipping," the Directorate General of Shipping said in a statement.

Trade between the two nations has dwindled over the last few years.

# Eight arrested in UK counter-Terrorism raids

By **Fatimah Idera**



**B**ritain's counter-terrorism police have arrested eight men, including seven Iranian nationals, in a number of raids across the country, the Metropolitan Police said on Sunday.

On Saturday, five men, four of whom are Iranian nationals, were detained on suspicion of terrorism offences over a plot to target specific premises, while the nationality of the fifth man remains unknown.

The arrests were made in Swindon, west London, Stockport, Rochdale, and Manchester.

"The investigation is still in its early stages and we are exploring various lines of enquiry to establish any potential motivation as well as to identify whether there may be any further risk to the public linked to this matter," said Commander Dominic Murphy, head of the Met's Counter Terrorism Command.

In a separate operation on the same day, three Iranian nationals were arrested in London as part of another counter-terrorism investigation, the Met said in a separate statement.

They are now in custody, with

searches ongoing at the three addresses. The Met said this investigation was unrelated to the earlier arrests of the five men.

The police did not disclose details of the suspected plot, citing operational reasons.

The arrests come amid heightened scrutiny of Iran-backed activities in the UK, with Britain saying it has responded to more than 20 such plots since 2022 and imposing sanctions on a Swedish-based criminal network linked to Iran for targeting Israeli and Jewish interests in Europe.



# Yemen's Prime Minister resigns amid power struggles with Presidential Council

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**A**hmad bin Mubarak, the Prime Minister of Yemen's internationally recognised government, has resigned, citing his inability to exercise constitutional authority amid escalating tensions with the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC).

Bin Mubarak made the announcement on Saturday via social media, posting on X that he had formally met with PLC chief Rashad al-Alimi to tender his resignation. The post included his resignation letter, in which he expressed frustration over his limited powers and the internal gridlock that hindered his ability to implement reforms.

"I could not exercise my constitutional powers and take the necessary decisions to reform government institutions or implement rightful governmental changes," the letter stated.

Bin Mubarak's departure comes less than three months after his appointment on February 5, and marks the latest chapter in Yemen's fractured political landscape. Two ministers and a member of the PLC, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, confirmed that Bin Mubarak had been locked in months of fierce disputes with Alimi and other senior figures.

Despite operating under a Saudi-backed leadership coalition, the internationally recognised government has struggled to exert control since Houthi rebels, aligned with Iran, seized the capital Sana'a in 2014. The government was forced to relocate to the southern city of Aden, while the Houthis now control most of the country's key population centres.



Bin Mubarak, a longtime critic of the Houthis and former Yemeni ambassador to the United States, was kidnapped by the rebel group in 2015. He later held roles as Yemen's chief of staff, UN envoy, and foreign minister before becoming prime minister.

During his short tenure, he launched a campaign against government corruption, reportedly suspending the budgets of several ministries, including defence. He also introduced fiscal and administrative reforms. However, these moves are said to have deepened rifts within the government.

"Bin Mubarak wanted to be more than prime minister, he wanted the powers of the presidency. That aspiration isolated him politically," said Mohammed al-Basha, a Yemeni analyst at the US-based Basha Report Risk Advisory. "Over time, this power struggle eroded trust."

The political infighting came as Yemen remains entangled in regional turmoil.

The Houthis, currently waging a missile and drone campaign targeting Israel and international shipping routes, claim their attacks are in support of Palestinians amid the war in Gaza.

The United States resumed airstrikes on Houthi positions in March after the rebel group threatened renewed assaults over Israel's Gaza aid blockade. This comes after a UN-negotiated truce in 2022 had significantly slowed hostilities in Yemen.

Though Bin Mubarak maintained that he achieved "many successes in a short space of time," observers believe his resignation may help restore some degree of unity within the deeply fractured government.

"His departure should ease internal tensions and reduce the deep divisions that have plagued Yemen's internationally recognised government, a necessary and positive step toward restoring cohesion," Basha added.



# Illegal immigrants are making up to £500 a week in UK

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

A recent investigation has revealed that thousands of illegal migrants and asylum seekers are working as couriers for food delivery companies across the UK, earning up to £500 a week despite having no legal right to work. Many are using the income to repay debts owed to criminal smuggling networks that facilitated their entry into Britain via dangerous Channel crossings.

Despite the Labour government's push to reduce immigration, the gig economy—particularly takeaway and grocery delivery services such as Deliveroo, Uber Eats, Just Eat, and Stuart—has become a lucrative underground market for migrants housed in Home Office-funded hotels.

## A System Open to Abuse

The investigation, conducted by undercover Telegraph reporters, found that migrants—many of whom arrived illegally and await decisions on asylum claims—are renting or borrowing courier accounts to work in violation of immigration laws. These accounts are sold or leased for £75 to £100 per week on a growing black market that thrives in major UK cities.

The Home Office revealed that in 2023, two in five couriers stopped during random checks were found to be working illegally. Many operate under substitute identities, using rented phones and accounts, and evade detection through sophisticated workarounds including shared facial recognition logins.

Couriers told The Telegraph they were compelled to work illegally due to mounting debt owed to smugglers, as well as pressure from families who had invested heavily in their journey.



One Afghan asylum seeker living in a Home Office hotel in London said he earns around £500 weekly delivering food. "My family lent me money to pay smugglers. I have to send it back," he said. Like many others, he admitted to renting an app account from abroad—paying a middleman in Turkey £70 a week for access.

## Sales Pitches from the Shadows

The Telegraph's journalists also went undercover to speak with people smugglers based in Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and northern France, who actively market the UK as the best destination for illegal migration.

One smuggler in Istanbul declared, "Life in England is good... All you need is a mobile phone and a bike." He added that once migrants arrive, they are given government-funded hotel rooms and can easily find "delivery work" while their asylum is processed.

Another trafficker in Dunkirk told a reporter posing as a potential migrant:

"The government will feed you, give you shelter, and you'll still make good money delivering food. England is the best," reported by the Telegraph.

These operations were highly secretive, relying on encrypted messaging apps such as Telegram and WhatsApp. Smugglers boasted about their networks across Europe and promised fast, safe routes to Britain—often downplaying the risks of crossing the Channel.

## The Hotel Courier Hubs

According to the report, many hotels housing asylum seekers have been transformed into unofficial courier depots. Dozens of bicycles, including illegally modified e-bikes capable of reaching 40mph, are parked outside entrances. Inside, residents have created makeshift workshops to repair and maintain delivery bikes. Some even act as informal mechanics for other riders.

**Continue reading  
on next page**

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Couriers say they often lack basic knowledge of UK road laws. One migrant confused a “Give Way” sign for “No Entry,” while another believed a slippery road warning meant a parking zone. Despite these misunderstandings, many continue to ride long hours, often under pressure to deliver multiple orders quickly and pay back mounting debts.

One Kurdish migrant told reporters he regretted coming to the UK, saying he felt “suicidal” after months of inactivity and stress caused by legal uncertainty and financial obligation.

### Company and Government Response

Following the Telegraph’s revelations, major food delivery platforms issued statements defending their practices and reiterating their cooperation with the Home Office.

A Stuart spokesperson stated the platform performs “compliance checks” on right-to-work documentation and closes accounts involved in unauthorized

activity.

Deliveroo said it was introducing daily identity verification and device ID checks to strengthen its platform. A Just Eat representative highlighted the company’s “biometric spot checks” and tough criteria for self-employed couriers, including criminal background and right-to-work documentation. Uber Eats confirmed that it was deploying new detection tools and removing fraudulent accounts.

Meanwhile, Dame Angela Eagle, the UK’s border security minister, said the government would soon introduce tougher legislation to combat illegal working in gig economy sectors.

“Companies who try to escape scrutiny will face fines of up to £60,000 per worker, potential prison terms, and the loss of their business licenses,” she warned. “We are working closely with firms like Deliveroo, Just Eat, and Uber Eats to ensure right-to-work checks are being enforced properly.”

### The Cost of ‘Easy Money

The story paints a stark portrait of a system under strain, where economic desperation, legal ambiguity, and loopholes in the gig economy have converged to form a shadow workforce operating just beyond the reach of regulators.

For many migrants, the UK is not the land of effortless prosperity they were promised. Instead, it is a place of risk, moral compromise, and unrelenting pressure to meet obligations forged under duress. For British authorities, the situation exposes deep vulnerabilities in immigration control, labour enforcement, and digital platform accountability.

As the Labour government continues its immigration overhaul, the challenge of cracking down on illegal work while maintaining compassion for vulnerable asylum seekers will be a defining test in the years ahead.

## Court blocks order for Voice of America employees to return to work

By Fatimah Idera

A night of celebration turned into tragedy early Sunday when gunfire erupted at a family party in southeast Houston, leaving at least one person dead and up to 14 others injured, police said.

The shooting occurred around 12:50 a.m. on the 6000 block of Cherry Hill, according to Assistant Chief Patricia Cantu of the Houston Police Department. Officers responded within minutes after receiving multiple reports of shots fired.

When authorities arrived, they encountered a chaotic and sprawling scene with victims scattered around the home. Cantu described the situation as “very complicated” and noted that multiple areas were being treated as active crime scenes.



Preliminary investigations revealed that the violence began when an uninvited guest was asked to leave the gathering. The individual allegedly opened fire, prompting others at the party to return fire.

The Houston Fire Department confirmed that at least one person had died at the

scene. Several others were rushed to local hospitals, some in critical condition and undergoing surgery. Cantu added that some of the wounded victims transported themselves for treatment.

As of Sunday morning, several individuals had been detained for questioning. However, authorities could not immediately confirm whether the suspected shooter was among them.

“The scene is ongoing,” Cantu said during a briefing. “It was chaotic from the get-go getting here.”

Police continue to investigate the motive and circumstances surrounding the incident, urging anyone with information to come forward.



# Los Angeles county to pay \$4 Billion in settlement for decades of child abuse in foster system

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

In what is now the largest settlement of its kind in U.S. history, Los Angeles County has agreed to pay \$4 billion to nearly 7,000 survivors of sexual abuse at county-run juvenile facilities and foster homes. While hailed as a significant milestone in justice for victims, many say no amount of compensation can undo the damage inflicted by a broken system that for decades protected abusers and silenced the most vulnerable.

The settlement, unanimously approved by county officials this week, addresses abuse dating back as far as the 1950s, though the majority of cases occurred between the 1980s and early 2000s. At the heart of many claims is the now defunct MacLaren Children's Center, a foster shelter once meant to provide temporary care but which became a long-term holding ground rife with abuse, neglect, and systemic failure.

Survivors described harrowing experiences at MacLaren and other county facilities, including being drugged, sexually assaulted, physically beaten, and threatened into silence. A grand jury report revealed that the county had, for years, employed staff with criminal backgrounds. The MacLaren center was ultimately shuttered in 2003 following mounting legal and civil rights pressure, including a lawsuit from the ACLU.

"No one has ever been arrested for what happened to us," said Jimmy Vigil, 45, who was incarcerated at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall as a teen. He recalled being abused by a physician and brutalized by staff who orchestrated fights among minors for entertainment. "This settlement doesn't undo what they did," Vigil said. "They created the monsters they claimed we were."



Vigil's words echo a broader sentiment of unresolved pain among survivors. While financial compensation will soon be disbursed, many, including Vigil, say true justice would require criminal prosecution of those responsible.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger described the \$4 billion payout as a "sobering reckoning" and an "indictment of failed oversight." She called the deal historic but said it stemmed from "a dark chapter in our history," where those trusted to protect children instead inflicted lasting trauma.

The settlement became possible after California passed a 2020 law temporarily lifting the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse claims, offering a three-year window for survivors to file historic cases. That law unleashed a wave of lawsuits, not only against the county but also against religious organizations, nonprofits, and schools.

Adam Slater, a lead counsel representing more than 3,500 victims, said the true scale of institutional abuse was only revealed once litigation began. "While no amount of money can erase the horrors they endured, this agreement acknowledges the profound harm inflicted on thousands of children," he said.

Los Angeles County CEO Fesia Davenport offered a formal apology earlier this year, stating the county was committed to "helping survivors recover and rebuild" and to implementing sweeping reforms. Those reforms include a new countywide hotline to report abuse, expedited investigations, and the immediate termination and referral of substantiated offenders to law enforcement.

Despite these promises, critics warn the path to accountability is far from over.

The financial toll of the settlement will ripple across county departments. Annual payments, funded by cash reserves, bonds, and departmental budget cuts, are expected to cost hundreds of millions annually through 2030, with the final payment due in 2050. The county's \$48 billion annual budget will absorb the cost, but officials admit key public services may suffer.

"We are going to be paying hundreds of millions of dollars that could be invested into communities, into parks, libraries, beaches, public social services until 2050," Davenport told The Los Angeles Times.

Payouts to victims are expected to begin in January 2026.



# 1 dead, multiple injured in Houston house party shooting

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

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hem.

"The scene is ongoing," Cantu said during a briefing. "It was chaotic from the get-go getting here."

Police continue to investigate the motive and circumstances surrounding the incident, urging anyone with information to come forward.

# Woman missing for 63 years found alive, says she has no regrets

By Damilola Olufemi

A woman who vanished more than six decades ago has been discovered alive, according to authorities in Wisconsin, USA. Audrey Backeberg was just 20 when she disappeared from her home in Reedsburg on July 7, 1962, sparking a case that baffled investigators for years.

Sauk County Sheriff Chip Meister confirmed that her disappearance had not involved any crime or foul play. He stated that Ms. Backeberg had chosen to leave independently and has since been living outside Wisconsin. Details about her current location have not been made public to respect her privacy.

When she went missing, Ms. Backeberg was married with two children. According to the nonprofit Wisconsin Missing Persons Advocacy, she had recently accused her husband, whom she



married at age 15, of domestic abuse and threats to her life. Just before she vanished, she had filed a formal complaint against him.

On the day she disappeared, she left to collect her paycheck from a local woollen mill. A 14-year-old babysitter later told police that she and Ms. Backeberg had hitchhiked to Madison before boarding a bus to Indianapolis, Indiana. While the

teenager eventually returned home, Backeberg continued on her own and was last seen walking away from the bus stop.

Despite numerous leads over the years, the case went cold until a recent reexamination of the original files brought it back into focus. Detective Isaac Hanson, who led the renewed investigation, credited a breakthrough to an online ancestry profile belonging to Backeberg's sister.

Through cooperation with authorities in the area where Backeberg now resides, Hanson was able to contact her and confirm her identity. He spoke to her for 45 minutes and described her as content and at peace with her decision to leave the life she once knew behind. According to Hanson, she expressed no regrets about the path she chose.

# Kane the Conqueror: Trophy at last for Bayern hero

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

After 14 years of prolific scoring, personal accolades, and painful near-misses, Harry Kane has finally ended football's most infamous drought — and he didn't even need to lace up his boots for the decisive moment.

Bayern Munich clinched the Bundesliga title this weekend after Bayer Leverkusen dropped points in a 2-2 draw with Freiburg, mathematically crowning Bayern champions despite Kane watching from the sidelines, suspended after collecting his fifth yellow card of the season.

It was a fittingly ironic twist in the long-running narrative of Kane's career: a world-class striker without silverware. But not anymore.

## The End of the Wait

"People always talk about how I hadn't won anything," Kane said recently. "It would be nice to silence a few of them."

That silence arrived with a roar. Though he missed Bayern's title-clinching match against RB Leipzig, Kane celebrated with his teammates, singing "We Are the Champions" in a video shared from the club's camp.

The title is Bayern's 34th in the German top flight but perhaps one of the most cathartic — not just for the club after a turbulent season, but especially for their record-breaking number nine.

## From Frustration to Fulfilment

Kane arrived in Munich in August 2023 for €100 million, carrying the burden of expectation and replacing Robert Lewandowski. He was touted as the man to continue Bayern's domestic dominance — but things didn't go to plan.

His debut saw Bayern fall 3-0 to RB Leipzig in the German Super Cup. Then came a shock German Cup exit to third-tier Saarbrücken, and a title race dominated by Leverkusen — at least until



late-season drama flipped the script.

For Kane, it was another false dawn in a career full of them. At Tottenham, he became the club's all-time leading scorer (280 goals), earned three Premier League Golden Boots, and reached multiple finals — but never lifted a trophy.

Even at international level, England fell just short time and again.

## Kane's Bundesliga Blitz

Despite the team setbacks, Kane has been sensational in Germany. He leads the Bundesliga with 24 goals and has scored 36 in all competitions, including 11 in the Champions League.

In April, he became the fastest player to reach 60 Bundesliga goals — doing so in 60 games, eclipsing Erling Haaland's previous record. He has also provided 15 assists, averaging a goal contribution every 72 minutes.

Vincent Kompany, who guided Bayern through a rocky campaign, praised Kane's relentless work ethic: "He runs and fights like a youth player. And he just keeps getting better."

Jürgen Klinsmann, a Bayern and Spurs legend, added: "No one deserves it more. He's in top shape, still hungry, and loved

by everyone at the club."

## Bond, Bayern Bond

Dubbed Bayern's "James Bond" by German commentator Taufiq Khalil, Kane has become a beloved figure in Munich. Known for his humility, professionalism, and leadership, he's embraced Bavarian life — from Oktoberfest to German lessons — and forged strong friendships with teammates like Thomas Müller, Konrad Laimer, and Eric Dier.

"He has a licence to score," joked Khalil. "He's not just a top striker — he's the heart of this team."

## More to Come?

With Bayern eyeing the FIFA Club World Cup in the U.S. this summer, Kane has more silverware in sight. And while speculation continues over whether the club will pursue Bayer Leverkusen's Florian Wirtz, insiders believe Kane is staying put.

"He'll be here next season," said Khalil. "He fits, he belongs, and this story is far from over."

After years of carrying teams and enduring the pain of almosts, Kane is finally a champion. And the best may still be to come.



# Palmer shines as Chelsea boost UCL hopes vs Liverpool

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



**C**ole Palmer returned to dazzling form at the perfect moment to revive Chelsea's Champions League hopes with a 3-1 win over Premier League champions Liverpool.

The 22-year-old ended a 1,162-minute goal drought with a confident injury-time penalty, capping a dominant display in front of a roaring Stamford Bridge crowd. His performance brought back memories of his early-season brilliance and reignited Chelsea's push for a top-five finish.

Having gone 18 games without a goal, Palmer played a starring role in all three of Chelsea's strikes. He sparked the opening goal in the third minute, driving through midfield before releasing Pedro Neto, whose cross

was finished by Enzo Fernandez. His clever footwork led to an own goal after his cross caused chaos in the Liverpool box, and he calmly slotted home from the spot after Moises Caicedo was brought down late on.

"I just felt normal," Palmer said post-match. "Going three months without a goal gives me more motivation to fight. I just want to help the team."

Despite his barren run, Palmer now boasts 37 goals in 67 Premier League appearances for the Blues—already enough to rank him 10th on the club's all-time league scoring chart.

His effort was praised across the board. Chelsea head coach Enzo Maresca, who never wavered in his belief in the England international, said, "He always works hard and

wants to help the team. He's special."

The win takes Chelsea level on points and goal difference with fourth-placed Newcastle, setting up a blockbuster clash at St. James' Park on 11 May. With two decisive games remaining—against Newcastle and sixth-placed Nottingham Forest—Palmer's resurgence could not be more timely.

As goalkeeper Robert Sanchez sprinted the length of the pitch to celebrate with Palmer, it was clear this was more than just a win. It was a statement—and perhaps, the moment Chelsea's European destiny shifted course.

Next up: Chelsea at Newcastle, 11 May.

# Mbappe brace guides Real Madrid to 3-2 win over Celta Vigo

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

**R**eal Madrid weathered a late scare to claim a vital 3-2 victory over Celta Vigo on Sunday evening, tightening their grip on second place in La Liga and closing the gap on leaders Barcelona to just four points with El Clasico looming next weekend.

A brace from Kylian Mbappe and a stunning opener from Arda Güler secured Madrid's fourth consecutive league win, but the defending champions were made to sweat in the closing stages as Celta Vigo mounted a spirited comeback through goals from Javi Rodríguez and Williot Swedberg.

With 67,661 fans packed into the Santiago Bernabéu, Madrid looked to be cruising after going 3-0 up just minutes into the second half. However, a sudden lapse in concentration gave Celta the opportunity to claw their way back into the game, and it was only thanks to a couple of crucial interventions from Thibaut Courtois that Los Blancos escaped with all three points.

The breakthrough came in the 33rd minute following a short corner routine. Lucas Vázquez laid the ball off to Arda Güler, who curled a left-footed effort toward the far post. A slight deflection wrong-footed goalkeeper Vicente Guaita as the ball nestled into the top corner, giving Madrid a deserved lead.

Six minutes later, Jude Bellingham led a rapid Madrid counterattack before sliding the ball into Mbappe's path. The Frenchman, with minimal backlift, unleashed a rocket into the top right corner, doubling the hosts' advantage and showcasing the ruthless edge that has defined his debut season in Spain.

Just three minutes into the second half, Güler turned provider, threading a beautiful through ball for Mbappe to



chase. The striker made no mistake, coolly slotting into the bottom corner to make it 3-0. It appeared to be game over for Celta.

However, the Galicians refused to fold. They began to grow into the game and were rewarded in the 69th minute when Real Madrid failed to clear a corner. The ball fell kindly to Javi Rodríguez, who prodded home from close range to reduce the deficit.

Suddenly, Madrid's dominance began to unravel, and Celta capitalized. Seven minutes later, club legend Iago Aspas—who had been introduced as a second-half substitute—played an inch-perfect ball behind the Madrid defense to Williot Swedberg. The Swedish forward took one touch before calmly slotting past Courtois to make it 3-2 and set up a nervy final 15 minutes for the home fans.

Celta came agonizingly close to leveling in the 78th minute when Pablo Durán raced through on goal following another moment of brilliance from Aspas. His initial shot slipped under Courtois, but the Belgian keeper recovered just in time to

smother the ball before it crossed the line.

The closing minutes saw end-to-end action, with both teams pushing—Madrid to kill the game, and Celta to complete a sensational comeback. In the end, Real Madrid held firm and secured a win that could prove pivotal in the title race.

Madrid now head into El Clasico at Camp Nou next Sunday knowing a win would take them within a point of Barcelona with just three matches remaining in the season. For Celta, the defeat means they remain seventh, still clinging to hopes of European qualification.

Despite the result, Iago Aspas earned plaudits and the official "Player of the Match" award, proving once again why he remains a talismanic figure for Celta even in his twilight years.

Carlo Ancelotti's side may have made it harder than necessary, but with Mbappe firing and Güler continuing to impress, Madrid are hitting form at just the right time.

Final Score: Real Madrid 3–2 Celta Vigo



# Brentford 4-3 Man Utd: Schade double boosts Euro hopes

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

**B**rentford reignited their push for European football with a thrilling 4-3 comeback win over Manchester United in a pulsating Premier League encounter at the Gtech Community Stadium.

In a match full of drama, goals, and controversy, Kevin Schade stole the show with a decisive brace, taking his league tally to 11, as the Bees capitalised on a much-changed United side still nursing their Europa League ambitions.

Ruben Amorim's men had taken an early lead through Mason Mount, but Brentford stormed back to score four times, leaving United's late resurgence short of a dramatic rescue.

**United Strike First, But Brentford Respond in Style**

United, who made eight changes with one eye on Thursday's crucial Europa League semi-final second leg against Athletic Bilbao, looked to be in control early on. Alejandro Garnacho, one of the few retained starters from the midweek European victory, provided a pinpoint cross for Mount, who fired in a neat finish in the 14th minute — just his second goal in a United shirt.

But Brentford's response was swift and spirited. A Mikkel Damsgaard cross took a wicked deflection off United captain Luke Shaw and looped past Andre Onana to level the scores after 27 minutes.

The Gtech faithful erupted again just six minutes later when Schade rose above Tyler Fredricson to nod home a powerful header, sparking protests from the United bench. Defender Matthijs de Ligt had gone down with a hamstring issue during the buildup, but play continued, and the Bees pounced.



**Injury Blow for United as Bees Turn the Screw**

De Ligt, making his first start in weeks after an ankle layoff, was visibly distraught as he limped off, possibly adding to United's growing list of defensive casualties. Amorim later revealed his concern, not just for Thursday, but for the long term.

"If it's serious, that changes our whole preparation for next season," the Portuguese coach said post-match. "We didn't want risks, and now we may have taken one we couldn't afford."

Despite the setback, United managed to keep Brentford at bay until midway through the second half. However, Schade wasn't done. The German winger completed his brace in the 70th minute, heading in from close range after a brilliant delivery by Bryan Mbeumo.

Four minutes later, Brentford cut through a fragile United backline with ease. Michael Kayode, enjoying a breakout season, slipped a pass through to Yoane Wissa, who slotted coolly past Onana for the hosts' fourth.

**Late United Surge Falls Short**

With Brentford cruising, United suddenly sparked to life. Garnacho halved the

deficit with a thunderbolt from 25 yards in the 82nd minute, a moment of individual brilliance that gave the visitors hope.

And in the fifth of seven added minutes, Amad Diallo pounced on a loose ball to make it 4-3, setting up a nervy finish. But Brentford held on, securing a win that moves them up to ninth, just a point behind eighth-placed Bournemouth, keeping their European hopes firmly alive.

**Bees Buzzing Towards Europe**

With three games left — against Ipswich, Fulham, and Wolves — Brentford's European dream is within reach. Schade's double marked a historic milestone: Brentford became the only club outside the top four to have three players hit double figures in goals this season.

"We're pushing, and the players believe," manager Thomas Frank beamed. "That spirit, that fight — it's what we need in these final games."

United, meanwhile, remain mired in 15th, their worst top-flight finish in over three decades still a possibility. Their focus now shifts to Bilbao, where failure to reach the Europa League final may spell a disastrous end to an already tumultuous season.