

# The New Daily Prime



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## **PETROL SMUGGLERS MAKING N17M PER TRUCK UNDER SUBSIDY REGIME – NNPC BOSS**

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# CURRENT REFORMS CRITICAL TO TRANSFORM NIGERIA'S ECONOMY – WORLD BANK

By Dave Oludare Oso



The leading global financial institution, the World Bank has said that for Nigeria to significantly transform its economy, it must maintain its current reforms for the next 10 to 15 years.

This was the submission of the Senior Vice-President of the World Bank Group, Indermit Gill.

Gill spoke on Monday at the ongoing 30th Nigerian Economic Summit (NES), organized by the NES Group (NESG) in collaboration with the Ministry of Budget and National Planning.

Themed “Collaborative Action for Growth, Competitiveness, and Stability,” the three-day summit is being held in Abuja.

The World Bank chief, in his welcome address, said the reforms are critical for ensuring long-term growth and enabling Nigeria to compete with other emerging

economies in sub-Saharan Africa and globally. Gill added that the reforms implemented by the current administration must continue to reverse the N10 trillion squandered through petrol subsidy and multiple foreign exchange rates, noting that while implementing the reforms will be challenging, it is essential to persevere. He maintained, “Nigeria will need to stay the course of current economic reforms for at least the next 10 to 15 years to transform its economy.

“If these reforms are sustained, Nigeria will transform its economy and become an engine of growth in sub-Saharan Africa.

“It is very difficult to implement such reforms, but the rewards are massive.” On the day he assumed power, May 29, 2023, President Bola Tinubu announced the removal of the petrol subsidy, which has led to a higher cost of living, and

increased transportation and production costs.

Also, on June 19, Nigeria’s apex bank, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced the unification of all segments of foreign exchange (FX) markets, which took the local currency to unprecedented lows, ultimately leading to higher inflation rates and high cost of living.

# PETROL SMUGGLERS MAKING N17M PER TRUCK UNDER SUBSIDY REGIME – NNPC BOSS

By Dave Oludare Oso



The Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Limited, Mele Kyari, has disclosed that petrol smugglers exploited subsidy loopholes, making not less than N17 million per truck in neighboring countries.

Kyari revealed this on Monday while fielding questions from journalists in Abuja on the government’s efforts to deregulate the oil and gas sector.

The NNPC chief explained that cross-border smuggling

was rampant due to the fuel subsidy, with a 6,000-liter truck netting smugglers no less than N17 million per trip.

He, however, noted that the same truckload would generate no more than N500,000 if sold within Nigeria, for instance, in a state like Borno.

The GCEO added that the country has stopped losing such revenue to smuggling since the subsidy was removed, as fuel prices are now adjusted to reflect their true market value.

His words: “In the last 47 years, PMS has always been subsidized and subsidy is creating arbitrage that means there is a difference between price in one location, lower than what it should be in another location.

“And when Mr. President announced subsidy in June, what he did was recalibrate the price. There is no longer any value in anyone taking the product

across the border. If you do, you’re not going to make those profits than you do.

“In a 6,000-litre truck, you can actually gain up to N17 million from just one truck. How are you going to stop someone who with two trips can just easily make N17 million times two—which is the price of the truck itself.

“However, when you take a truck legally maybe N8 million, say, to Maiduguri, the legitimate value you have is less than N500,000. Why will I see N17 million and then take all the trouble go to Maiduguri, keep it in the fuel station for one month, and then make N3 to N4 million. So you see, as long as you are not in a subsidy regime, you won’t lose money.”

# ABUJA DISCO RESTORES POWER AFTER NATIONAL GRID COLLAPSE

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Following the collapse of Agency of Nigeria the national grid on (NAN), places like Monday, and the attendant Deidei, Suleja, Lugbe, power outages witnessed Kuje, and other areas nationwide, the Abuja had their light restored Electricity Distribution on Tuesday at about Company (AEDC) has 5:15 am.

restored power in some AEDC on Monday, parts of its franchise areas. pleaded with customers According to the News that the disruption in

power supply was caused by the AEDC had stated on its Twitter pm, adding, "Be rest assured that we are working with relevant stakeholders to restore power as soon the grid stabilizes." collapse of the national grid and handle on Monday that the collapse occurred at about 6.58

# TINUBU REMAINS COMMITTED TO STAYING AHEAD OF CURVE IN BORDER MANAGEMENT – TUNJI-OJO

By Friday Omosola



Interior Minister statement while Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo on presiding over a Monday reaffirmed the presentation on the Tinubu administration's newly developed commitment to Integrated Border proactive border Management System management, for the Nigeria emphasising its Immigration Service importance in (NIS).

addressing emerging In a statement on his X challenges to national page, the minister said the NIS's integrated

Tunji-Ojo made this system brings together

expertise to bolster national passengers' wait time during and efficient Immigration Service, security while ensuring the smooth their entry into the country. confidently manned by well-facilitation of legitimate travel both "By embracing technology and trained and motivated personnel." in and out of Nigeria. collaboration, we aim to create a The former House of

He said: "At the centre of this secure, efficient, and traveller- Representatives member urged system is our e-Gate facility that is friendly environment that Nigerians to be patient as the designed (amongst other supports Nigeria's economic government move forward with responsibilities) to automate our and social growth. Our vision is the implementation of the new vetting processes and reduce to establish a modern, effective, structure.

# GOV AIYEDATIWA TO DUALISE AKUNGBA-AKOKO ROAD *By Friday Omosola*

Ondo State Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa has pledged to dualize the major road in Akungba Akoko, located in the Akoko South West local government area, and construct an overhead bridge for pedestrians.

In a statement released on Monday by his Chief Press Secretary, Ebenezer Adeniyen, the governor emphasised that this initiative aims to reduce the frequent accidents occurring on the road.

Governor Aiyedatiwa made this commitment during an interaction with market women and youth from the community while returning from his senatorial campaign rally in Ikare Akoko, in the Akoko North East local government area.

In response to the concerns raised by the community members regarding the hazardous road conditions, the governor reassured them that his administration has no plans to remove the existing barricades along the road.

Governor Aiyedatiwa highlighted that the state government had carefully evaluated several options in recent months before deciding on the dualisation of the road and construction of the overhead bridge. He further noted that the road dualisation project will begin in Ikare Akoko and extend through the main gate of Adekunle Ajasin University in Akungba-Akoko.

Accompanied by Deputy Governor Olayide Adelami and key figures of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Governor Aiyedatiwa led the flag-off of the party's gubernatorial campaign for the Northern Senatorial District in Ikare Akoko.

While addressing the large crowd, he urged the people to support the APC in the upcoming November 16 gubernatorial election, emphasising



that Ondo State's future is tied to the continuation of the party's development agenda.

The governor expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the people for their overwhelming support, crediting it to the administration's visible progress within less than a year in office.

He said: "The love and support you have shown me and our great party stem from the progress you have witnessed. You see the difference, and you want that progress to continue.

"In every sector of our society, the government has intervened. We owe no salaries to our workers; in fact, salaries are paid before or on the 25th of every month. We are recruiting more teachers for both primary and secondary schools because we understand that our children are the leaders of tomorrow, and they deserve a solid education."

The governor highlighted his administration's considerable efforts in improving education through the construction and renovation of schools.

He also emphasised progress in strengthening security, enhancing healthcare, boosting agriculture, and upgrading infrastructure.

"We are building roads, securing our communities, and making sure our farmers can thrive. This is the work we must continue. On November 16, I urge everyone gathered here and those who are not present to convert your support into votes for the APC to ensure the continuation of our significant progress in the state," he added.

Additionally, Adelami stressed the significance of continuity in governance during his address at the rally.

"Our state has witnessed remarkable development under Governor Aiyedatiwa's leadership. But we must not stop here, we need to push forward for even greater accomplishments. The coming election is not just about electing a governor, it's about safeguarding our future and the progress we have made", Adelami said.

He urged the people to come out in large numbers to vote for the APC, stating, "I encourage every one of you to vote, not just for the APC, but for the continued progress of our state. Your vote is essential to building on today's achievements and creating a brighter future for our children." Meanwhile, the APC State Chairman, Ade Adetimehin, commended the people of Akoko for their unwavering support, saying, "By standing with Governor Aiyedatiwa, you have made the right choice. Under his leadership, developmental infrastructure has been a top priority, showing that this is a government that truly cares about its people"

Before the governor flag-off his campaign, he inaugurated two projects under the Ondo State CARES initiative: a science laboratory at Community Comprehensive High School, Akungba, and a basic health centre constructed by the Okusa Community in Akungba with support from the Ondo State Community and Social Development Agency.

The senatorial district campaign will conclude on Wednesday at Government Field in Ore, Odigbo Local Government Area, in Ondo South.

# TEENAGE STUDENT SUES JAMB, MINISTRY, NUC OVER ADMISSION AGE POLICY

By Dave Oludare Oso

The controversy over Nigeria's tertiary institution admission age policy just took a new turn as a 15-year-old student has taken the education ministry, the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), and the National Universities Commission (NUC) to court.

Chinaemere Opara, the senior secondary student (SSS), filed the suit at the federal high court in Abuja on Monday through his father, Maxwell Opara, who is a lawyer.

The education ministry had in July introduced a policy adopting 18 as the minimum age for tertiary institution admissions.

It said the policy, which is to take effect in 2025, will ensure candidates are mature enough to deal with the rigours of tertiary education.

The ministry also maintained that candidates who do not spend the required years in primary and secondary school would not be allowed to write the SSCE.

The contentious age policy has received wide criticism from people who feel that exceptionally brilliant and prodigious students could be unduly shut out of tertiary education.

In the originating motion marked "FHC/ABJ/CS/1512/2024", dated September 30, and filed October 14 by Wayne Elijah, the SS2 student listed the ministry, JAMB, and NUC as first to third respondents respectively.



Opara, in the six reliefs, sought a declaration that the admission age policy was "discriminatory and unconstitutional."

The lawyer said it amounted to a gross violation of his right to freedom of expression as guaranteed under Sections 42 of the 1999 Constitution, 2011 (as amended) and Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 13(2), 17 and 28 of the African Charter on Human and People Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act Cap A9 Vol. 1 LFN.

Urging the court to declare that his right to peaceful assembly and association cannot be limited by the respondents' admission policy, Opara also sought a declaration that the policy, which restricts his age as to when to enrol to write the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and JAMB exams infringed on his right to equal access to public service.

He said this is guaranteed under Article 13(2) and (3) of the African Charter on Human and People Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act Cap A9 Vol. 1 LFN.

Opara sought an order of perpetual injunction restraining the respondents from attempting to disturb, breach, or interfere with his rights.

He equally sought an order setting aside the policy.

In the affidavit deposed to by Maxwell, he said he is the biological father of Chinaemere.

He said Chinaemere is an SS2 student of Sure Start Secondary School, who is directly affected by the respondents' minimum age for admission policy.

He said the policy had impeded Chinaemere's right to freedom from age discrimination and education as enshrined in the law. He said, "The applicant believes that his right to education has been or is likely to be violated.

"The applicant would enter SS 3 in this 2024/2025 academic session with his plan/arrangements of writing his WAEC, NECO AND JAMB in 2025 with his expectations of gaining admission in 2025/2026 university academic sessions.

"The applicant wants to study medicine & surgery whose duration is six years along with a mandatory one-year youth service and one-year compulsory medical externship totalling all eight years."

New Daily Prime understands the suit is yet to be assigned to a judge at the time of filing the report.

By Friday Omosola

# ALLEGED £1 MILLION FRAUD: COURT DISMISSES DEFENCE OBJECTION IN TRIAL OF 7 SUSPECTS

On Friday, Justice R.A. Oshodi of the Special Offences Court in Ikeja, Lagos, dismissed the objection raised by defence counsel Olalekan Ojo in the trial of seven individuals accused of participating in a £1 million fraud.

The court also accepted a flash drive containing video evidence of the sixth defendant, which was presented by the prosecution.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) earlier arraigned Morufu Adewale, also known as Gbegunleri Adelana, Abayomi Alaka, aka Dauda Usman Alashe, Omitogun Ajayi, and Ajisegiri Abiodun on 3 February 2022 before Justice Oluwatoyin Taiwo of the same court.

Three other defendants—Taiwo Ahmed, Raufu Raheem, and Sanlabiu Teslim—were listed as being at large at the time.

However, due to the retirement of Justice Taiwo, the trial was left incomplete, leading to the reassignment of the case to Justice Oshodi. Meanwhile, the EFCC intensified efforts to apprehend the remaining suspects.

In December 2022, all seven defendants were re-arraigned on an amended three-count charge, which includes obtaining money under false pretence, in violation of Section 1(1)(a) and 1(3) of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act 2006, and conspiracy to obtain money by false pretence, contrary to Section 410 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State 2011.

Count one reads: “Morufu Yahaya Adewale, Omitogun Ajayi, Ajisegiri Abiodun, Abayomi Kamaldeen



Alaka, Taiwo Olamilekan Ahmed, Raufu Wale Raheem and Sanlabiu Owolabi Teslim between May and July 2018 at Lagos within the Ikeja Judicial Division obtained the total sum of £1,000,000.00 (One Million GBP) from Dr. and Dr. (Mrs) Lateef Oladimeji Bello for the purpose of conducting prayers for spiritual cleansing of the family and that the money will be refunded after the prayers within one week, which pretence you knew to be false.”

Count three reads: “Morufu Yahaya Adewale, Omitogun Ajayi, Ajisegiri Abiodun, Abayomi Kamaldeen Alaka, Taiwo Olamilekan Ahmed, Raufu Wale Raheem and Sanlabiu Owolabi Teslim between August and September 2018 at Lagos within the Ikeja Judicial Division obtained the total sum of N175,000,000.00 (One Hundred and Seventy-five Million Naira Only) from Dr. and Dr. (Mrs) Lateef Oladimeji Bello for the purpose of conducting spiritual prayers for spiritual cleansing of their son and the family and that the money will be refunded one week after the prayers which pretence you knew to be false.”

The suspects entered a plea of ‘not guilty’ to the charges.

During the previous court session on 23 September, the prosecution counsel, N.K. Ukoha, attempted to submit a flash drive as evidence through the sixth witness, Giwa Wasiu,

an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP). Wasiu testified before Justice Oshodi, explaining how the sixth defendant was apprehended in the Ikorodu area of Lagos.

He further revealed that the sixth defendant, in the video contained on the flash drive, confessed to conspiring with others to defraud one Dr. (Mrs.) Bello of N675 million.

The witness also stated that the flash drive, containing the said video, had been handed over to the EFCC, which was investigating the crime.

However, when Ukoha moved to tender the flash drive as evidence, the defence, led by Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) Olalekan Ojo, objected, causing the court to adjourn the matter to today, Friday, October 11, 2024, for a ruling.

At today’s session, Justice Oshodi overruled the defence’s objection and admitted the flash drive, containing the video recording of the sixth defendant, into evidence as Exhibit E.

Following this, the prosecution requested that the video of the confessional statement be played in open court, which the court approved.

The trial was then adjourned to December 18 and 19 for continuation.

# COURT SENTENCES BUREAU DE CHANGE OPERATOR, OTHERS FOR FRAUD

By Friday Omosola



Justice Abimbola their involvement in Awogboro of the Federal internet fraud.

The Ilorin Zonal Office of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) sentenced Yakubu Aminu to 200 hours of community service for operating a bureau de change business without a valid license. The charge against all three individuals on separate charges on October 9.

In a related case, Justice Hammed Gegele of the Kwara State High Court sentenced Abdullahi Yakubu reads: "That you, Yakubu Aminu, Abdulrasaq Omotosho at Chikanda Market, and Akeem Ibrahim Yashikira District, Salaudeen to prison for B a r u t e n L o c a l

Government Area, Kwara State, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court did carry on, other financial business, to wit: Bureau De Change Business without a valid licence issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria contrary to Section 15 (5) of the Banks and other Financial Institutions Act, 2020 and punishable under Section 57 (5) (B) of the same Act."

The charge against Akeem Ibrahim Salaudeen between 3rd December 2018 and 8th November 2024, in Ilorin, Kwara State within the jurisdiction of Honourable Court, did knowingly had under your control the sum of N4,069,000.00 (Four

Million, Sixty Nine Thousand Naira Only) in your bank account number 2104916025 with the name Akeem Ibrahim Salaudeen with the United Bank of Africa Plc which you knew to be proceeds of criminal conduct and thereby committed an offence contrary to and punishable under Section 319 (a) of the Penal Code Laws of Northern Nigeria."

The defendants pleaded guilty when the charges were presented to them.

Following their pleas, the court convicted and sentenced them to various prison terms, based on the strength of the prosecution's unchallenged evidence and

the credibility of the cases brought before it.

Justice Awogboro also ordered that the sum of 50,000 CFA and N368,500, which were recovered from Aminu at the time of his arrest, be forfeited to the Federal Government.

Similarly, Justice Gegele sentenced Akeem and Abdullahi to six months imprisonment each, with the option of a N150,000 fine.

Additionally, the court ordered the forfeiture of N4,069,000 recovered from Akeem, along with his iPhone 11, as well as \$600 and an iPhone 11 Pro Max recovered from Abdullahi.

The convicts received their sentences following their arrest for internet-related fraud. They were investigated, charged, and subsequently convicted.

# CANADA EXPELS SIX INDIAN DIPLOMATS OVER CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



The Canadian government has expelled six Indian diplomats, including the high commissioner, following evidence of violent criminal activities linked to the Indian government.

According to Associated Press reports, this development was confirmed by a senior Canadian government official.

The official, who did not want to be identified,

disclosed this on Monday, stating that he was not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

However, India had announced the withdrawal of its diplomats after rejecting Canada's claim that the Indian ambassador was a "person of interest" in an assassination case.

Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau had previously mentioned

credible allegations linking the Indian government to the killing of Sikh activist, Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Responding to the development, India dismissed the accusations, calling them 'absurd.'



# CURRENT REFORMS CRITICAL TO TRANSFORM NIGERIA'S ECONOMY – WORLD BANK

By Dave Oludare Oso



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This was the submission of the Senior Vice-President of the World Bank Group, Indermit Gill.

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and globally. Gill added that the reforms implemented by the current administration must continue to reverse the N10 trillion squandered through petrol subsidy and multiple foreign exchange rates, noting that while implementing the reforms will be challenging, it is essential to persevere.

He maintained, “Nigeria will need to stay the course of current economic reforms for at least the next 10 to 15 years to transform its economy.

“If these reforms are sustained, Nigeria will transform its economy and become an engine of growth in sub-Saharan Africa.

“It is very difficult to implement such

reforms, but the rewards are massive.”

On the day he assumed power, May 29, 2023, President Bola Tinubu announced the removal of the petrol subsidy, which has led to a higher cost of living, and increased transportation and production costs.

Also, on June 19, Nigeria’s apex bank, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced the unification of all segments of foreign exchange (FX) markets, which took the local currency to unprecedented lows, ultimately leading to higher inflation rates and high cost of living.

# CRISTIANO RONALDO LAUNCHES EXCLUSIVE LUXURY WATCH COLLECTION: “INSPIRED BY MY ICONIC MOMENTS”

By *Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi*

Global football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo has expanded his brand beyond the pitch with the launch of his exclusive luxury watch collection in collaboration with renowned jeweler Jacob & Co. Announcing the new venture on Instagram, Ronaldo revealed that the collection, which features two models – Flight of CR7 and Heart of CR7 – draws inspiration from his illustrious football career.

“I’ve always dreamed of having my own watch collection,” Ronaldo shared with his fans. “The Flight of CR7 & the Heart of CR7 take inspiration from some of my most iconic moments on the field. I hope you like them as much as I do.”

The collection features two intricately designed models, each with a 44mm case. These watches are not just a testament to Ronaldo’s luxurious lifestyle but also symbolize his football journey and achievements. Both models are equipped with a skeletonized movement, a feature that reveals the intricate inner workings of the watch, enhancing its aesthetic appeal.

One of the standout design elements of the collection is the inclusion of two vertical pillars. These pillars pay homage to both Ronaldo’s personal brand, CR7, and the man himself. One pillar features depictions of Ronaldo in various iconic poses from his playing days, while the other bears the CR7 logo along



with Ronaldo’s signature. The attention to detail extends to the barrel cover, which is shaped like a football, and the sapphire crystal case back, where a gold image of Ronaldo in his famous No. 7 jersey is prominently displayed.

Known for producing high-end luxury watches, Jacob & Co. is no stranger to collaborations with elite athletes and celebrities. The partnership with Ronaldo, however, represents one of the brand’s most high-profile ventures, leveraging Ronaldo’s global appeal and iconic status in the sports world. By aligning with Ronaldo, Jacob & Co. have created a watch collection that merges world-class craftsmanship with the legacy of one of football’s greatest ever players.

Ronaldo’s latest venture into the luxury watch industry is yet another example of the 39-year-old footballer’s brand diversification. The Portuguese star is widely regarded as one of the most marketable athletes in the world, and his influence extends far beyond the football field. Over the course of his career, Ronaldo has become a business mogul, launching ventures in fashion, hospitality, fitness, and now luxury accessories.

Despite currently playing for Al Nassr in

Saudi Arabia’s Pro League, Ronaldo’s fame and appeal remain unmatched. With five Ballon d’Or awards, four European Golden Shoes, and a plethora of trophies to his name, including five UEFA Champions League titles and a European Championship with Portugal, he is considered one of the greatest players of all time. Ronaldo’s accolades extend beyond football. Forbes named him the world’s highest-paid athlete in 2016, 2017, and 2023, while “Time” included him in its list of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2014. He is also the most followed sports figure on social media, boasting a global fanbase that spans millions of followers across various platforms.

In addition to his sports and business success, Ronaldo reached another remarkable milestone in 2020, becoming the first footballer and the third athlete in history to earn over \$1 billion during his career. His new watch collection is expected to further solidify his position as one of the wealthiest and most influential athletes in the world.

Cristiano Ronaldo’s venture into luxury watches with Jacob & Co. is more than just a business move—it’s a celebration of his incredible football career. With meticulous design and a personal connection to his journey on the field, the \*Flight of CR7\* and \*Heart of CR7\* watches are set to

# LIBYA THREATENS TO SUE NIGERIA FOR BOYCOTTING AFCON QUALIFIER

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



The Libyan Football Federation (LFF) has condemned the decision of the Super Eagles to withdraw from the upcoming 2025 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier and consequently vowed to take legal action to seek redress and defend its national team's interests. Nigeria's men's national team withdrew from playing the match, scheduled for today (Tuesday), citing inhuman treatment and safety concerns after being abandoned at the Al Abaq Airport for almost 20 hours due to an unexpected flight diversion on Sunday. The LFF has now accused the Nigerian

Football Federation (NFF) of not cooperating in the organization of the match, threatening to seek legal redress. In a statement shared by The Libya Observer, LFF said, "The Libyan Football Federation condemns the measures taken by the Nigerian Football Federation by refusing to play the Libya-Nigeria match in the African Cup of Nations qualifiers scheduled for Tuesday, October 15, stressing that it will take all legal measures to preserve the interests of the Libyan national football team. The Libyan Football Federation clarifies that its Nigerian counterpart did not cooperate with it in any way, whether regarding the first or second leg match, noting that the events beyond our control do not equal a small part of what the Libyan national team was exposed to in the first leg match." The LFF offered an apology to Libyan

football fans for the confusion and delays in the match arrangement, and blamed the Nigerian Football Federation for the incident. The statement added, "The Libyan Football Federation apologizes to Libyan football fans everywhere and to the parties concerned with the match arrangements due to the state of confusion caused by the Nigerian Football Federation, which led to the match not being held on time.

# BBC WOMEN'S FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR 2024: NOMINEES ANNOUNCED



Randal Kolo Muani scored twice as France triumphed 2-1 over Belgium in an action-packed UEFA Nations League encounter in Brussels. The match was filled with drama, including two penalties, a red card, and multiple VAR interventions that kept both sets of fans on edge. Belgium started the game on the front foot and in France's favour. Wout Faes was adjudged to have

when Yuri Tielemans was fouled in the box by William Saliba. The incident, which initially went unnoticed, was reviewed by the video assistant referee (VAR) and resulted in a penalty. However, Tielemans squandered the chance by blasting his shot high over the bar, much to the relief of the Saliba and the French defense. Just minutes later, VAR intervened again, this time in France's favour. Wout Faes was adjudged to have handled the ball inside the area after a scramble on the ground, leading to a French penalty. Randal Kolo Muani stepped up confidently and sent Belgian goalkeeper Koen Casteels the wrong way to open the scoring in the 35th minute. Belgium fought back immediately, and just before the halftime whistle, they found an equalizer. Lois Openda rose highest to head in a well-placed cross from Timothy Castagne. The goal was initially ruled out for offside, but after a lengthy VAR check, it was overturned, and Belgium drew level. France nearly regained their lead

early in the second half through Manu Koné, who fired a shot into the net after a scramble in the box. However, VAR once again came into play, ruling the goal out due to a handball by Kolo Muani in the buildup. Despite the disallowed goal, Kolo Muani remained the hero for France. In the 62nd minute, the Paris Saint-Germain forward scored his second goal of the night, heading home a pinpoint cross from Lucas Digne. The 24-year-old's powerful header proved decisive, giving France a 2-1 advantage.

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

# SABALENKA CLAIMS THIRD CONSECUTIVE WUHAN OPEN TITLE IN THRILLING FINAL

The nominees for the prestigious BBC Women's Footballer of the Year 2024 award have been revealed, with five standout players from around the globe in contention. Fans are now invited to vote for their favourite player from the shortlist, which includes Barbra Banda, Aitana Bonmatí, Naomi Girma, Caroline Graham Hansen, and Sophia Smith.

The award, now in its 10th year, was first established in 2015 to celebrate the finest talents in women's football. Voting closes on Monday, 28 October 2024, and the winner will be announced on Tuesday, 26 November across BBC World Service platforms.

Barbra Banda, a 24-year-old Zambian forward, has had a remarkable year both at club and international levels. After rising to prominence during the Tokyo 2021 Olympics, Banda further solidified her status at the 2023 World Cup. In March 2024, she became the second most expensive player in women's football when Orlando Pride signed her from Shanghai Shengli for \$740,000. Despite joining midway through the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) season, Banda quickly made her mark, scoring 13 goals and securing second place in the league's scoring charts.

Banda's Olympic performances were also historic. She became the first female footballer to score consecutive hat-tricks at



the Games and, in Paris 2024, added another four goals to her tally, including a hat-trick against Australia. Banda's achievements have made her Africa's all-time top scorer in Olympic football with 10 goals.

**Aitana Bonmatí (Spain, Barcelona)**

Spanish midfielder Aitana Bonmatí has enjoyed another stellar year, playing a pivotal role in both Barcelona's and Spain's success. The 26-year-old playmaker helped her club secure an unprecedented quadruple, winning the Champions League, La Liga, Supercopa, and Copa de la Reina. Bonmatí notched a career-best 19 goals across all competitions and was instrumental in Barcelona's triumph in the Champions League final, scoring the opening goal in their victory over Lyon. She was also named the competition's player of the season.

On the international stage, Bonmatí was vital in Spain's Nations League success, scoring four goals as her team lifted the trophy for the first time. Having already helped Spain win their first World Cup in 2023, Bonmatí is regarded as one of the best midfielders in the world, a status reinforced by her 2023 Ballon d'Or win.

**Naomi Girma (United States, San Diego Wave)**

Naomi Girma, 24, is widely considered one

of the best defenders in the world, praised for her leadership and composure on the ball. In 2024, she made history as the first defender to be named the US Women's Player of the Year. Girma's defensive prowess was a key factor in the United States' successful run to Olympic gold in Paris 2024, where she played every minute of the tournament.

Girma's influence extends beyond the international stage. With her club San Diego Wave, she won the NWSL shield and Challenge Cup, solidifying her reputation as a defensive stalwart.

**Caroline Gaham Hansen (Norway, Barcelona)**

Caroline Graham Hansen, a 29-year-old Norwegian winger, has long been one of the most underrated talents in women's football. However, her 2023-24 season for Barcelona made her impossible to overlook. Hansen's 60 goal contributions in 40 games helped her club secure a quadruple, including a dominant La Liga performance where she claimed the Golden Boot with 21 goals.

Hansen's flair for creating and finishing key moments was on full display throughout the season. Her crucial goal against Chelsea sent Barcelona to the Champions League final, while her hat-trick in the Supercopa final showcased her match-winning capabilities.

# THINGS FALL APART: NOLLYWOOD ACTORS BETTER THAN IDRIS ELBA – BOB-MANUEL UDOKWU

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



With the casting of a British actor, Idris Elba as Okonkwo in the forthcoming adaptation of Chinua Achebe's classic novel, 'Things Fall Apart' generating diverse reactions, a Nollywood great, Bob Manuel Udokwu has said Nigerian actors can play the role better.

Udokwu was a guest on The Morning Brief podcast on Tuesday.

The actor said Nigeria has top-class actors who can play the Okonkwo role better than Idris

Elba, especially because they know where the story is coming from.

Adding that Nollywood has come of age, he said, "We no longer have to do much to prove anything to the world. I said this years ago that Nollywood has come of age. Now we don't have to do much to prove we have world-class talent here.

"There's this conversation about Idris Elba being cast as

Okonkwo in the Hollywood make of Things Fall Apart and I don't have anything against that as an actor but I think that we have people who are top-class actors in Nigeria who can play that role better knowing where that story is coming from.

"What Nollywood needs now is collaboration and it's beginning to happen. I happen to be part of another production that involves to major actors in India and another Hollywood-based actress. We need

to have more collaborations with our counterparts in Europe and North America and it's happening gradually. The bundle of talents we have in Nigeria is awesome."

## SINGER SKALES SAYS HE REGRETS NOT HAVING BABY MAMAS, STATES REASONS

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



plays a significant role in this feeling, as he is the last surviving member of his lineage and feels a strong desire to have an heir to continue his family's legacy. He said, "Right now I regret not having baby mamas. I really regret it because I'm the only person in my family bloodline that is alive right now so the whole bloodline relies on me to produce right now. I think I'm receiving applications."

to his wife, asking for her forgiveness following his public outbursts.

In November 2022, he released a song that both mocked his wife and expressed sorrow over her passing. Skales also criticized her for what he perceived as insincerity regarding the loss of his mother, who had died the previous month, hinting at underlying issues in their one-year marriage.

He urged his wife to remove a post she had made about his late mother, suggesting that her expressions of grief were more about social media than genuine emotion. In the diss track, he expressed his anger,

referring to her as the "devil" and claiming that he never imagined he would be with someone like her. He accused her of having the opportunity to help his mother but failing to do so, while later posting disingenuous messages of love online.

Skales also paid tribute to his mother in the song, describing her as a "queen with a golden voice" that he would never hear again.

However, he later acknowledged that it was a mistake to air their personal issues publicly, deleting all negative posts about his wife. He admitted to working on

In a recent interview with media personality VJ Skales married his girlfriend Adams, singer-songwriter Raoul John Njeng-Precious in September 2021. In Njeng, better known as Skales, shared an unexpected sentiment.

The "Shake Body" artist revealed that he regrets not having multiple baby mothers, a choice he sees differently from some of his peers.

Using his Instagram account, Skales explained that his unique family situation

Skales issued a heartfelt apology

## PETERSON OKOPI AND PRUDENT GABRIEL MARRY TRADITIONALLY BY FAYOMI IFEDAMOLA JOSEPH

In an enchanting display of love and cultural heritage, renowned gospel singer Peterson Okopi and celebrity stylist Prudent Gabriel have beautifully tied the knot in a traditional wedding ceremony that has captured the hearts of many.

The buzz surrounding their nuptials spread like wildfire in a captivating video that surfaced on Monday, October 14, 2024, showcasing the couple's radiant joy and the festive atmosphere of the day.

New Daily Prime recalls that, earlier on September 27, 2024, Peterson and Prudent had solidified their commitment to each other with a civil wedding, marking the first step in their journey as a married couple.

However, it was their traditional wedding ceremony that truly brought their families and friends together, celebrating the unique cultures and customs of their respective backgrounds.

As they made their grand entrance into the opulently decorated venue, the couple was a sight to behold, clad in matching silver outfits that showcased intricate beading and exquisite craftsmanship.

Their attire not only reflected their exquisite taste but also represented a fusion of modern elegance



and traditional style, setting the tone for an unforgettable celebraton.

The ceremony was awash with joy and festivity, as loved ones surrounded the couple, showering them with love and blessings. Guests were treated to a visual feast, as the venue was adorned with vibrant decorations that transcended the ordinary.

The air was filled with a palpable sense of love and togetherness, making it evident that this moment was not just about the couple, but also about the communities that rallied around them in support.

In a delightful twist, the couple later chose to embrace their cultural roots by donning vibrant Idoma attire for their second outfit.

The rich colours and traditional patterns served as a beautiful homage to their heritage, highlighting the importance of culture in their union.

As they took to the dance floor, in a video posted on his instagram handle, the atmosphere transformed into a lively celebration, with the couple mesmerizing their guests through graceful

moves and infectious energy. Their romantic dance to the enchanting tunes of Timi Dakolo's "Iyawo Mi" and D'Banj's "Fall In Love" served as a fitting soundtrack to an unforgettable moment, leaving everyone in attendance in awe of their chemistry and connection.

The traditional wedding ceremony was a private affair, attended by a close-knit circle of family and friends, all of whom bore witness to the union of these two remarkable individuals.

The joyous occasion was a testament to the love and respect that Peterson and Prudent share for one another, as well as the unwavering support of their loved ones.

In the aftermath of the ceremony, social media erupted with heartfelt congratulations and well-wishes from fans and fellow members of the entertainment industry.

Many took to platforms to express their admiration for the couple, celebrating not only their love but also their commitment to uplifting their cultures and communities.

This outpouring of affection is a testament to Peterson and Prudent's significant impact in their respective fields and the genuine connection they have fostered with their audience. As this beloved couple embarks on their new life together, there is no doubt that they will continue to inspire others through their artistry and shared journey. Peterson Okopi and Prudent Gabriel's love story resonates well beyond the walls of their wedding venue, serving as a reminder of the power of love, tradition, and the bonds that unite us all.

Their traditional wedding marks an important chapter in their lives, filled with promises of joy, laughter, and unyielding support for one another.

As they step into this new phase, the world watches with bated breath, eager to see how their story unfolds, and filled with hope as they continue to brighten the lives of those around them through their creativity and passion.

Congratulations to the newlyweds, Peterson Okopi and Prudent Gabriel, on this special occasion! May your life together be filled with lasting happiness, love, and countless beautiful memories.

## R. KELLY'S DAUGHTER ALLEGES FATHER OF CHILDHOOD ABUSE

By Fayomi Ifedamola Joseph

Nollywood actress Biodun Okeowo, popularly known as Omoberty, has vehemently refuted claims alleging that she 'snatched' the husband of veteran actress Lola Idije's daughter.

In a recent Instagram live session that attracted significant attention, Okeowo addressed the swirling rumours head-on, providing clarity and context to the situation that has generated widespread speculation.

During her live broadcast, she emphasized that her husband has no prior association with any of Idije's daughters. "My husband does not know any of Actress Lola Idije's daughters," she asserted emphatically.

In what seemed to be a deliberate attempt to set the record straight, Okeowo revealed that the first conversation between her husband and actress Lola Idije occurred through her introduction. "I did not snatch anyone's husband," Okeowo added, firmly denying the allegations that have tarnished her reputation.

She directed her comments towards her friend Tosin, who she



accused of being the source of the rumours. "Tosin, they said you are the one posting sub, please come out and clear these allegations," she urged, suggesting that her friend might have played a role in perpetuating the false narrative.

Okeowo's passionate defence comes in light of her recent marriage to Adeniyi Olabiyi, which took place in July 2024. The couple's union was celebrated within the entertainment community, marking a significant milestone in the actress's life.

However, it appears that the joy of this new chapter has been marred by unfounded rumours.

This public statement marks a notable moment in Okeowo's response to the media frenzy surrounding her personal life.

The actress has often found herself in the public eye, both for her impressive body of work and her

often tumultuous waters of fame.

As details of the situation unfold, fans and followers alike are left waiting to see how both Okeowo and Tosin will address the continuing fallout from these allegations.

The actress's refusal to let the rumours simmer unchecked showcases her determination to regain control of her narrative and maintain the integrity of her marriage and personal associations.

Overall, Biodun Okeowo's response to the accusations is a reminder of the impact that rumours can have on the lives of public figures. Her insistence on setting the record straight demonstrates not only her resilience but also the complexities of interpersonal relationships within the entertainment industry.

As the story develops, many will be watching closely to see what further actions are taken by those involved, while also reflecting on the broader implications of rumours and relationships in the world of Nollywood.

relationships. The current series of allegations, however, seems particularly troublesome, as they strike at the heart of her family life and marital commitments.

Her swift rebuttal through social media highlights the growing trend of public figures utilizing platforms like Instagram to address their allegations and maintain their reputations.

By taking control of the narrative, Okeowo aims to alleviate any misconceptions surrounding her marriage and her relationships with fellow actors.

Relationships within the Nollywood industry can often be complex, and the dynamics can lead to misunderstandings that escalate into public gossip.

Okeowo's candid approach in responding to rumours reflects her commitment to protecting her personal life while also navigating the

## Diddy Faces New Sexual Assault Lawsuits:

By Fayomi Ifedamola Joseph

In a dramatic turn of events, music mogul Sean Combs, also known as “Diddy,” is now facing a multitude of new legal challenges, including a serious allegation of molesting a minor.

The announcement of these federal civil complaints was made by the legal team spearheading the filings on Monday.

These lawsuits, submitted anonymously in Manhattan, include two claims from women identified only as Jane Does, along with four complaints lodged by men known as John Does.

The allegations contained within these legal documents reportedly span from 1995 to 2021, according to the lawyers involved in the case.

This recent surge of lawsuits is part of a larger wave of legal actions expected against Combs, as articulated by Texas attorney Tony Buzbee.

Earlier this month, Buzbee revealed that over 100 alleged victims were planning to take legal action against the 54-year-old rapper, who was arrested on sex trafficking and racketeering charges last month.

“We anticipate filing numerous additional cases in the coming weeks that will name Mr. Combs and possibly others as defendants,” Buzbee stated in a written statement. “This will continue as we gather more evidence and prepare our filings.”

Among the new lawsuits, there is one particularly



harrowing allegation wherein an accuser claims that Combs sexually assaulted him at the age of 16 during a notorious white party in the Hamptons in 1998.

This individual has alleged that Combs fondled his genitals, emphasizing that at the time, the rapper implied that such behaviour was a crucial stepping stone to breaking into the music industry.

Reportedly, Combs asked the young boy, “Don’t you want to break into the business?” The recent suits, filed under the Victims of Gender Motivated Violence Protection Act, mark yet another chapter in the cascading downfall of Combs.

Before these allegations, Combs was already embroiled in a host of similar civil lawsuits.

This has intensified since federal authorities arrested him on multiple criminal charges, which include allegations of sexual abuse against women, coercing them into drug-fueled sex parties, all while employing a network of employees and associates to facilitate his alleged

misconduct.

Judges have denied Combs bail, a decision rooted in prosecutorial fears of potential witness tampering. He has pled not guilty to all charges.

The timeline for his criminal trial is set for May 5, 2025, but prosecutors have indicated that they may unearth more evidence as the investigation continues, suggesting that additional charges could be added to the existing indictment against the celebrated artist.

Since late last year, public allegations surrounding Combs have been steadily accumulating.

A significant turning point emerged when singer Cassie, whose birth name is Cassandra Ventura, accused Combs of subjecting her to over a decade’s worth of coercive control through physical violence and drugs.

She also claimed to have been raped by him in 2018, illuminating a troubling pattern of alleged abusive behaviour. The growing list of lawsuits and criminal charges continues to mount, casting a dark shadow over the once celebrated music mogul’s legacy.

As these legal battles unfold and new revelations emerge, the public

watches in anticipation, awaiting further developments in this extraordinary saga that has captivated and shocked audiences worldwide.

In the face of these serious accusations, the music industry and fans alike are left to grapple with the implications of such behaviour from a figure who has been a mainstay in hip-hop culture for decades.

The impact of these legal proceedings promises to reverberate through the music world and beyond, as the allegations unfold in a case that highlights the pressing issues surrounding power dynamics and abuse in the entertainment industry.