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### Obasanjo should apologize for damaging Nigeria's democracy — Presidency

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# Obasanjo should apologize for damaging Nigeria's democracy — Presidency

By Dave Oludare Oso

In a response to former President Olusegun Obasanjo's recent scathing attack on President Bola Tinubu and his government in the faraway United States, Special Adviser to President Bola Tinubu on Public Communication and Orientation, Sunday Dare, has stated that Nigeria's democracy endured severe setbacks under the former general.

The Special Adviser claimed that successive administrations struggled to rectify the damage left by Obasanjo and that President Tinubu is now making significant progress in addressing these issues.

In a statement shared on his X account on Monday, Dare said Obasanjo has lost any moral authority to criticize the current government, stressing that he should apologize to Nigerians for failing to lay the necessary infrastructure for the country's progress.

He said, "Democracy suffered mortal wounds under his watch, only exacerbated by his destructive obsession with an ill-fated third-term bid.

"He is a man with a tremendous capacity for mischief, and Nigerians know it.

"His journey down the path of delusion has always been apparent, as has his descent into distorting facts, forgetting that he presided over a presidency that was among the most corrupt in history. His recent comments at Yale University lack sincerity.

"It is laughable that Obasanjo's pretensions about fighting corruption are failing to convince the general public."

Dare pointed out that under Obasanjo's leadership, no explanation was ever given for the \$16 billion wasted on generating "megawatts of darkness" across the nation.

"But that is not even the main issue. The Yoruba proverb, 'A o ki n wo ariwo oja, eniti a anba na oja ni a n wo,' teaches that we should not be distracted by the noise of the market. Instead, we should focus on the person with whom we are negotiating.

"This is an instructive lesson. In this market called Nigeria, the man with the 'Renewed Hope' agenda is the one that matters – President Tinubu and, indeed, Nigerians.

"Everything else is just 'ariwo oja' (market noise). This administration will remain focused on bringing relief to



Nigerians. Obasanjo's remarks are a reflection of the childish nature of market noise.

"President Tinubu will stay the course in seeing through the reforms he has initiated for a better Nigeria," he added.

The presidential aide advised Obasanjo to refrain from constantly criticizing his successors and to take time to reflect on how he has contributed to the parlous state of the Nigerian nation, which President Tinubu is now valiantly working to restore.

He concluded, "We thank former President Obasanjo for acknowledging that 'Yes, there is hope.' That's the 'Renewed Hope' agenda that President Tinubu is advancing, and it's well on track. We look forward to having that conversation with the former president."



By Dave Oludare Oso

Former President Muhammadu Buhari has reacted to the success of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Saturday's governorship election in Ondo State which returned Governor Lucky

## Buhari welcomes APC's victory in Ondo

Aiyedatiwa.

In his reaction to the outcome of the election, the former president said the voters had spoken lucidly and loudly about the confidence they have in the party and the governor.

Buhari said in a statement by his spokesperson, Garba Shehu, on Sunday that the voters had expressed their wish through the ballot box, adding that this should be respected by other stakeholders.

The former president said the election's outcome had shown that democracy remained strong and could not be easily

overturned in a country as large and diverse as Nigeria.

He, however, challenged the governor-elect to put in place policies that engender economic growth, tame high unemployment and inflation while pursuing welfare programmes to make life better for the people.

Buhari also commended the Independent National Electoral Commission and law enforcement agencies for their efforts in reducing observed shortcomings in previous elections.

He wished Aiyedatiwa and his team a successful tenure in office.

# Sit-at-home order: Gunmen kill vigilantes, abduct 7 in Anambra

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Gunmen suspected to be members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Anambra State killed four members of the Anambra Vigilante Services (AVS) were killed on Monday morning.

Three of the vigilante members were killed in Ukpo, Dunukofia Local Government Area of the state while one was killed in Abatete, Idemili North LGA.

It was learnt that the gunmen had stormed Abatete, firing indiscriminately, which led to the death of one person.

The attacks occurred following Governor Charles Soludo's directive, urging traders to ignore the Monday sit-at-home order issued by IPOB and go about their normal business.

An eyewitness reported that after killing the three AVS members in Ukpo, the gunmen set their operational vehicle ablaze and fled,



taking about seven people with them and injuring many others in the process.

It was learnt that a trader and a vigilante member escaped with bullet wounds.

According to the eyewitness, the gunmen arrived at Ukpo roundabout, shooting sporadically.

Upon sighting a Sienna bus transporting the vigilante members, they opened fire, killing three of the personnel.

The eyewitness stated, "They came

from nowhere, shooting sporadically and chanting 'No Biafra, No Freedom.' People started running for safety."

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, confirmed the incident but stated that the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of Ukpo was on the ground to investigate the matter.

Recall that two weeks ago, Governor Soludo ordered all markets in the state to open and disregard the sit-at-home order enforced by the gunmen.

## Dangote to supply IPMAN 240m litres of petrol monthly

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Dangote Refinery has entered an agreement to supply 240 million litres of petrol to the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) monthly.

The Refinery is expected to supply the Independent marketers with 60 million litres of petrol weekly which translates to 240 million litres at the end of each month.

The deal was made public by the IPMAN National Publicity Secretary, Chinedu Ukadike during an interview with journalists on Sunday.

According to Ukadike, the development is part of the recently signed agreement with Dangote to lift PMS directly from the refinery without a middleman.

He further explained that IPMAN members will begin lifting fuel on a

weekly basis from the refinery depending on patronage from this month (November).

He said, "We are going to off-take the product in millions of litres.

Before now, most of the imported products in Nigeria were distributed through IPMAN. So we can off-take the products, no matter the millions of litres that are produced. We can take from 10 million litres and above and Dangote has offered to give us over 60 million litres depending on our patronage. The 60 million litres is to be given weekly. And we can take and distribute it across the country once we start lifting the product from the refinery.



"We are finalizing discussions. You know the meeting between IPMAN and the Dangote refinery was held last week and documentation is in process. So, there are still a few pieces of documentation that we are doing now. Once they are sorted, we will off-take PMS from the plant. This is going to happen before the end of this month. The Dangote Group has assured us that even if we want to start taking products from today, we should start."



# Ondo: Tinubu congratulates Aiyedatiwa, commends INEC, others for peaceful conduct

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

President Bola Tinubu has congratulated Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa of Ondo State over his victory in Saturday's governorship election in the state.

The President also commended the peaceful conduct of the process.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday declared Aiyedatiwa of the All Progressives Congress (APC) winner of the election, having polled the highest number of votes among the 17 others candidates.

In a statement by the Special Adviser to the President (Information & Strategy), Bayo Onanuga on Monday, the President congratulated Aiyedatiwa and other candidates of the 17 political parties for the maturity and sense of purpose demonstrated during the campaigns and the election, attributing the success of the polls to the civility in the state.

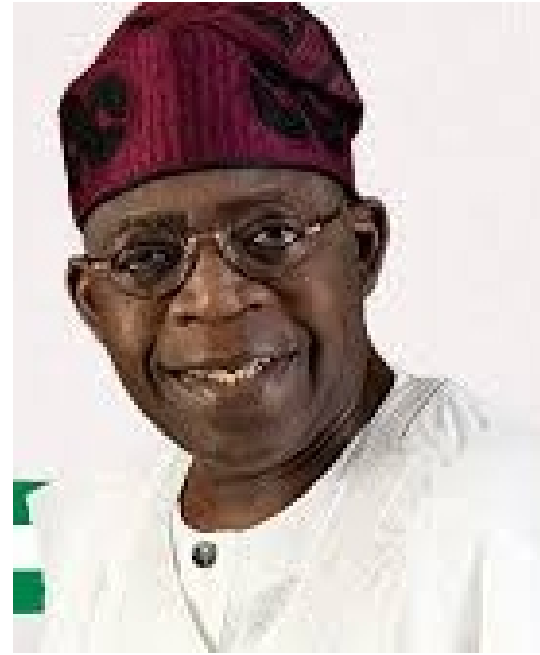
Onanuga also said President Tinubu enjoined the political actors to allow

their orderly conduct to permeate the post-election activities and processes. Part of the statement read, "President Tinubu believes the Ondo State election was another litmus test of the capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission, affirming that the electoral body justified the confidence of the people with early preparations, deployment of staff and materials, and handling of the electoral process.

"The President also commends INEC for the efficiency of uploading more than 98 percent of results on the same day of the election.

"President Tinubu extends his appreciation to the Nigerian Police Force, National Civil Defence Corps, Federal Road Safety Corps, National Youth Service Corps, the military and other security outfits for their professionalism in maintaining peace and order.

"The President urges candidates dissatisfied with the outcome of the election to explore the opportunities provided by the judicial system to



seek redress on areas of conflict."...Lauds other candidates, urges post-election peace

President Bola Tinubu has congratulated Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa of Ondo State over his victory in Saturday's governorship election in the state.

# NAF gets two new helicopters

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

Nigerian Air Force has received two new ATAK-129 helicopters for the Nigerian Air Force as part of efforts to strengthen the fight against banditry and other criminal activities in the country.

Speaking at the event on Monday at the NAF base in Katsina State, the Minister of Defence, Badaru Abubakar, expressed confidence that the addition of the helicopters would enhance military operations in the Northwest region.

He noted that the aircraft, inducted into Operation Fansan Yamma Sector 2, has unique capabilities to locate and eliminate threats with speed and precision.

"These helicopters give us an advantage over other fighter jets, ensuring that no enemy can hide from justice. With these platforms, we are confident of achieving

significant results," Badaru said.

The Defence Minister praised the dedication and sacrifices of the troops, acknowledging their role in restoring peace to troubled areas.

He noted that their efforts have already started yielding results, "as farmers are returning to their fields, children are back in schools, and businesses are recovering.

"We commend your courage and commitment. You have left the comfort of your homes to secure our future. We are grateful and will continue to provide the resources and support you need."

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Hassan Bala Abubakar, who was also present, highlighted the importance of the new helicopters in strengthening the operational capacity of the air



force.

The minister urged the troops to maintain synergy with ground forces and other stakeholders to achieve maximum effectiveness.

"With these additions, we will dominate the battle space and ensure the safety of all Nigerians," he said.

Badaru also revealed that several bandit hideouts had been destroyed in the past week through air operations, expressing optimism that continued efforts would bring an end to banditry.

# Ganduje plotting to disrupt Southwest – Adeleke

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**



**O**sun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, has accused Dr. Abdullahi Ganduje, the National President of the All Progressives Congress (APC), of attempting to destabilise the South West region and undermine President Bola Tinubu's leadership.

The accusation follows Ganduje's comments about "seizing Osun in 2026" after the APC's victory in the recent Ondo State governorship election.

In a statement issued on Monday, Adeleke condemned Ganduje's remarks as anti-democratic and said they posed a threat to the peace and unity of the South West.

The statement, signed by Adeleke's media aide Olawale Rasheed, responds directly to Ganduje's declaration, which appeared to challenge the political stability of the region ahead of the 2026 Osun State gubernatorial elections.

Adeleke said Ganduje's pledge to take control of Osun was rooted in dissatisfaction with the South West's support for President Tinubu, and that the APC national chairman was attempting to stoke political tensions to

destabilise the region as part of a broader political strategy for the 2027 general elections.

"Ganduje's comments are not just divisive; they are fundamentally anti-democratic," Adeleke said, emphasising that the APC national chairman's approach was at

odds with President Tinubu's democratic values.

"As a seasoned politician, one would have expected Dr. Ganduje to understand that electoral outcomes are determined by local factors. What works in Edo and Ondo is not necessarily applicable to Osun State," Adeleke continued.

The Osun Governor highlighted that local dynamics, including regional grievances and interests, played a major role in shaping voter behavior, and that such dynamics must be respected by all political actors.

He pointed to the example of Kano State, where the Kwankwasiyya group led by Rabiu Kwankwaso had consistently outperformed Ganduje's faction despite the latter's eight years in office as governor.

"Ganduje failed in his own state due to internal resistance; if he couldn't win over his own people in Kano, how does he expect to disregard the will of the people of Osun, who overwhelmingly endorsed me in 2022?" Adeleke asked, referring to his victory in the state's gubernatorial election.

"Osun is the heart of the Yoruba people,

where political freedom is sacred, and we have a long-standing tradition of resisting electoral fraud."

Adeleke also expressed concern that Ganduje's actions could be part of a broader scheme to undermine President Tinubu's leadership, accusing him of being an "insider threat" to the president's agenda.

"If Ganduje truly supports President Tinubu, why is he trying to destabilize the president's home region with open threats to violate electoral laws and deny citizens their rights to vote?" Adeleke said, adding that such moves ran counter to the democratic principles that President Tinubu stood for.

In his statement, Adeleke invited Ganduje to better understand the political realities of Osun, stressing that the state's political landscape was unique, and strategies that worked in Edo or Ondo would not succeed there.

"What works in other states will not work in Osun," he warned.

The Osun governor also highlighted the growing strength of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the state, noting that several opposition members had recently defected to the ruling party, bolstering its position.

Adeleke further insisted that Ganduje did not have a mandate from President Tinubu to provoke conflicts in the South West.

As tensions continue to mount, Adeleke has called on President Tinubu to intervene and rein in Ganduje's rhetoric, urging him to prioritise unity and democratic stability in the region.



# “Becky Enenche lied” – Reno Omokri reacts to Paul Enenche’s wife’s statement on tithing

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

**A** former aide to ex-President Goodluck Jonathan, Reno Omokri has reacted to Paul Enenche’s wife, Becky’s recent statement about tithing.

It would be recalled that the clergywoman stirred mixed reactions after she declared that missing any tithe meant returning to square one.

The popular political activist took to his Instagram page to note that she had lied about what she said, claiming that the couple and their ilk are using their brand of Godliness as a means to financial gains, emphasizing that that was not the same faith that Jesus had given to mankind.

The social media figure went on to write extensively about the politicization of Christianity in the country, and how it has been utilized in various ways.

He wrote ...

“Becky Enenche lied. You do not go back to square one because you do not pay your tithe. This woman and her husband and others like her have turned the faith that Yeshua (Jesus) gave us into a scam. They are Yahoo boys, girls, men and women on the altar.

Their brand of Godliness as a means to financial gain, not as a way to grow in holiness and morals, has given Christianity in Nigeria an odious reputation.

Yeshua’s pure teachings are the best Way to God to me. However, rather than this altered and monetised farce, Islam is far better than the poisonous and cancerous commercial Christianity these opportunists teach to fleece Nigerians.

This woman’s husband was the main culprit of the politicization of Christianity during the #NigerianElections2023. He carried Peter Obi from church to church, where Obi told Christians, “church, take back your country.”

But when Peter Obi insulted the church and blamed night vigils for the



economic hardship in Nigeria, did Paul Enenche speak?

This same Paul Enenche heaped curses on those he claimed rigged the election and chested Peter Obi.

He did this on the altar, and it was recorded. Today, President Bola Tinubu looks healthier than when he assumed office. So much for Enenche’s curses!

I have read Scripture in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek languages. The word “devourer” in the King James Version of Malachi 3:11 is an agricultural term. It is common in agriculture. The devourer there just means an agricultural pest. It will be clear if you read that verse in the original Hebrew or a modern-day English version. Let me give you some versions:

“I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty.”-New International Version.

“I will also stop locusts from destroying your crops and keeping your vineyards from producing.”-Contemporary English Version.

“I will rebuke the locust for you, so that it will not destroy the produce of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not be barren, says the LORD of hosts..”-New Revised Standard Version.

The King James Bible was written in 1611. Many words used in the KJV have different meanings today. For example, the word Africa is not used in the KJV. Instead, Africa is called Cush and Black peoples are called Cushites.

In 1611, agricultural pests were called

devourers. That is why Malachi 3:11 in the King James Version says:

“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.”

It does not mean that God will kill you if you do not pay your tithes.

The reason why agricultural terms are always used when referring to tithes in Scripture and the Bible is that tithes were an agricultural tax imposed on Jews from the eleven tribes other than the tribe of Levi and meant for the Levitical priests because they were not given a land inheritance when Moses divided up the promised land.

Even Yeshua, who we follow (not worship), did not collect tithes.

Yeshua Hamasiach (Jesus Christ) only mentioned tithes when He mentioned them strictly in agricultural terms and only to the Pharisees who were under the law. We see this in Matthew 23:23:

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practised the latter, without neglecting the former.”

There is no single instance of paying monetary tithes in Scripture.

The only alternative to agricultural produce was alcoholic beverages. We see this in Deuteronomy 14:24-26.”

# NCPWD renews partnership with SUNTECH to advance assistive technology for PWDs

By Friday Omosola



The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) has renewed its commitment to improving the lives of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria through an enhanced partnership with SUNTECH, a leading provider of prosthetics and orthotics in the country.

This renewed collaboration aims to increase the local production and accessibility of assistive devices, which will play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life and independence for thousands of Nigerians living with disabilities.

The renewed partnership was formalized during a meeting in Abuja, where Chief Gufwan, Executive Secretary of the NCPWD, visited SUNTECH's state-of-the-art fabrication centre.

The facility is designed to produce high-quality prosthetic and orthotic solutions for amputees and individuals born with deformities, empowering them to regain mobility and self-sufficiency.

Speaking at the event, Gufwan lauded

the innovation at SUNTECH and expressed optimism about the positive impact the partnership will have on PWDs across Nigeria.

READ ALSO: Shettima calls for media, government collaboration

“This collaboration represents a milestone for our nation,” he said. “Nigerians are extraordinary people with immense potential to compete globally. We must seize this opportunity to expand local production of these devices, creating accessible solutions for those who need them most.”

The Executive Secretary also acknowledged SUNTECH's dedication to restoring hope for accident survivors and individuals with congenital disabilities.

He emphasised that this partnership aligns with Nigeria's commitment to fostering a more inclusive society.

During the tour, Gufwan had the opportunity to interact with several patients, who shared positive testimonials about the care and support they had received at SUNTECH. Their stories underscored the importance of accessible and affordable assistive

devices in helping individuals with disabilities live more independent and fulfilling lives.

In his speech, Gufwan reaffirmed NCPWD's broader mission to celebrate Nigeria's “living legends” and veterans with disabilities, acknowledging their significant contributions to the nation's progress.

He reiterated the Commission's commitment to empowering PWDs and ensuring they receive the respect and opportunities they deserve.

READ ALSO: Miss Universe: Obi congratulates Chidinma Adetshina

Sunny Okachukwu, CEO of SUNTECH, expressed his enthusiasm for the renewed partnership, describing Gufwan as a compassionate leader with a deep commitment to uplifting the disability community.

“Chief Gufwan is a true hero, tirelessly working at the grassroots level to improve lives through Project Beautiful Gate,” Okachukwu said. “We are honoured to work alongside the NCPWD to expand our reach and support for the disability community in Nigeria.”



## Ondo: Peter Obi, NLC scuttled my chances, aspirations – LP candidate

By Dave Oludare Oso1

The Labour Party governorship candidate in Ondo State, Ayodele Olorunfemi, has expressed his disappointment over his defeat in Saturday's election, attributing his loss to former Anambra State governor Peter Obi and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared Governor Lucky Ayedatiwa of the All Progressives Congress (APC) the winner, having secured 366,781 votes across all 18 local government areas. Agboola Ajayi of the PDP followed with 117,845 votes.

The State Returning Officer, Prof. Olayemi Akinwumi, announced, "Ayedatiwa Lucky Orimisan of APC, having satisfied the requirement of the law, is hereby returned elected."

Olorunfemi's campaign was fraught with legal battles, as his name was only reinstated on the ballot days before the election, following a Court of Appeal ruling overturning a prior judgment that had favored Olusola Ebiseni, the candidate endorsed by Peter Obi. The protracted legal tussle and lack of adequate preparation hindered his campaign efforts.

In an interview with newsmen, Olorunfemi admitted that his last-minute campaign was poorly organized and ineffective.

He said, "I have Peter Obi and the NLC to thank for that. They have scuttled my aspirations and chances to win this Ondo election. These people spoilt things for us with that PDP reject they wanted to force on the party. Their insistence on having Ebiseni on the ballot ruined everything for me.

"They just capitalized on the crisis between the Labour Party and the Nigeria Labour Congress to create problems. Can you imagine that Ebiseni wrote a letter to the court in my name without my knowledge, saying I have withdrawn from the race? They cannot exclude me from such a position."

While accepting that he knew his chances at the poll were slim after his reinstatement a few days to the poll, Olorunfemi vowed to get his pound of



flesh.

The LP deputy chairman for South also threatened to petition police authorities to investigate how his name and signature were forged by Ebiseni and the NLC.

"Thank God we got an appeal judgment and my name is back in the INEC portal. The good thing here is that the truth has prevailed. Withdrawal must be voluntary. You cannot force someone to withdraw. What they have done was an attempt to force me behind my back.

"Again, it wasn't the party that submitted it. It was the handiwork of the former President of the NLC and head of the National Transition Committee, Abduwaheed Omar. What they did is criminal.

"In fact, I am planning to petition the Inspector General of Police to probe how they wrote that letter, put my signature and presented it before the court. We will deal with that later. For now, we are still doing our underground work and doing our best for this election," he stated.

When called to defend the allegation levelled against the workers' union, acting Chairman of the NLC Political Commission, Prof Theophilus Ndubuaku, described Olorunfemi as a 'very funny character.'

"He is one human being you should never take seriously. As a result of this crisis between us and Abure, Olorunfemi became the deputy to Abure and he was given the ticket. Before this election, he was a placeholder. So what did he do? He now started shopping for who would buy the ticket from him.

"In the process, they asked Ebiseni to pay N20m to get the ticket. He paid and even added another N5m which they claimed was for expenses. When they refused to give him the ticket, Ebiseni went to court. In retaliation, the Abure's camp started working to ensure INEC didn't upload his name because of the Kagaroo judgment they went to secure.

"The only challenge we have was that before the judgment, INEC had already given the code for uploading the names of agents to Olorunfemi. We know he would have uploaded the names of suspected APC agents there. We know he is obviously working indirectly for the APC."

As of the time of filing this story, efforts to reach both Obi and Ebiseni for reactions were



# Falana challenges Pastor Adeboye's vision, claims He's building commercial centers

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) has successfully repatriated 13 trafficked Nigerian girls from Ghana, bringing the total number of rescued victims to 163 since July 2024.

In a statement released on Friday, November 15 by NiDCOM spokesperson Abdur-Rahman Balogun, the commission highlighted the continued efforts to combat human trafficking, emphasising the collaborative nature of the operation that involved key stakeholders including the Ghanaian Anti-Human Trafficking Police, Rescue Live Foundation International, and NIDO Ghana, with NiDCOM providing vital support.

The rescued girls, aged between 19 and 30, were reportedly lured to Ghana with promises of employment but were instead forced into exploitative conditions. They were subjected to labor under harsh circumstances, bound by secrecy oaths and controlled by traffickers who profited from their plight.

NiDCOM Chairman/CEO Abike Dabiri-Erewa expressed gratitude for



the successful operation, recognising the crucial role played by the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, and Ebonyi State Governor, Francis Nwifuru, in facilitating the girls' return. Dabiri-Erewa reiterated the commission's unwavering commitment to protecting Nigerians abroad, aligning with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda to address human trafficking and safeguard citizens' rights.

The victims, hailing from various Nigerian states, including Ebonyi, Benue, Kaduna, and Rivers, were able to surrender voluntarily after hearing about previous rescue efforts in locations like Kpone Katamanso and Tema, Ghana.

Akinboye Akinsola, NiDCOM's representative, accompanied the girls back to Nigeria, while Callistus Elozieuwa of the Rescue Live Foundation

International and NIDO Ghana offered temporary shelter to the victims before their return. Elozieuwa underscored the importance of international cooperation in dismantling trafficking networks.

In a statement, Valentine Uzo, Senior Special Assistant to the Governor of Ebonyi State, assured that state authorities had already set in motion plans for the victims' rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

NiDCOM's latest success is part of its broader ongoing efforts to protect vulnerable Nigerians abroad and hold traffickers accountable, while offering survivors the support they need to rebuild their lives.

# PDP rejects outcome of Ondo poll, demands review

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has rejected the result of the just-concluded governorship election in Ondo State.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday, declared Lucky Aiyedatiwa, candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), winner of the governorship election held on Saturday.

The incumbent governor, Aiyedatiwa, won the election in all 18 local government areas (LGAs) with 366,781 votes to defeat his closest rival, Agboola Ajayi of the PDP, who secured 117,845 votes.

Reacting on the outcome of the

election, PDP spokesperson, D e b o Ologunagba, in a statement issued on Sunday, said the poll "runs short of all expectations and requirements of a free, fair and credible election.

"The Peoples Democratic Party and indeed all lovers of democracy in Nigeria and across the world have just witnessed the worst election conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)."

Ologunagba said the election



"witnessed the height of electoral swindle, deceit and manipulation" allegedly perpetrated by the APC.

He said the poll "witnessed widespread election merchandising, monetization and barefaced vote buying" and voter suppression. Ologunagba said Nigerians and the international community should take "serious action" to stem all forms of election manipulation and preserve the nation's democracy.

# Conduct forensic audit before funding power sector – Shinkafi

By Agency Reporter

**E**xecutive Director of Patriots for Advancement of Peace and Social Development, Dr. Sani Abdullahi Shinkafi has called for a comprehensive audit of the Nigerian power sector.

Responding to recent statements by the Minister of Power, Adebayo Adedun, who suggested \$10 billion is needed to ensure 24/7 electricity, Shinkafi, in a recent interview with ARISE NEWS on Thursday, stated, “Nigerians are tired of hearing stories, for the past two decades since the inception of our democracy in 1999, more than two trillion us dollars have been injected into the power sector, but the canker-worm, the cancer cell of corruption in the power sector have up till today have nothing to write home about.”

He advocated for “a forensic audit, forensic accounting” before any new investments are made to hold individuals accountable for diverted funds.

On the long-standing controversy over unaccounted funds in the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Shinkafi was unequivocal in his call for an investigation.

“The issue of NNPC probe is long overdue... the tax payers money they have been taking saying they will fix refineries, there is series of promises that Port Harcourt refinery will be functional, they are doing turnaround maintenance of Kaduna refinery, Warri refinery, yet nobody sees anything – we need a total forensic audit of NNPC’s accounts,” he asserted.

He added that Nigeria’s dependence on imported fuel and the mismanagement of local refineries have further worsened the economic burden on taxpayers.

Dr. Sani Abdullahi Shinkafi also highlighted pressing economic and security challenges in Nigeria, calling for urgent reforms and forensic audits. Shinkafi critiqued President



Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s economic policies and called for unity among government officials to tackle insecurity.

Reflecting on President Tinubu’s recent trip to Saudi Arabia, Shinkafi dismissed the comparison made by the Saudi crown prince between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, citing stark economic differences.

“Looking at the micro economic indicators in Nigeria, higher rate of unemployment, basic infrastructure, energy, you can’t compare the kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the Nigerian economy,” he said, describing Nigeria’s economic state as one of “stagnation and hardship.”

Shinkafi further urged the government to prioritise both short- and long-term economic reforms to alleviate the burden on Nigerian citizens.

“The Nigerian economy needs an urgent economic reforms intervention...because the suffering Nigerians are suffering, no doubt about it. There is no time to waste, no time to apportion blames,” he stated.

He acknowledged the challenging economic situation inherited by Tinubu’s administration, but added, “He has campaigned to be the president of this country, he has no reason to complain, he has to accept the liability of being a president of Nigeria.”

When asked about tensions between Matawalle and Zamfara State Governor Dauda Lawal, Shinkafi

criticised their lack of cooperation as detrimental to local security.

“They need to come together to fight this insecurity because it is eating every segment of the society in Zamfara state including the neighbouring states,” Shinkafi said, stressing the urgency of the situation.

“The issue of insecurity has brought Zamfara state to its knees, all the economic activities are at stagnation point, people cannot go to farm, there is poverty, hunger and disease.”

Regarding the economic policies under President Tinubu, Shinkafi acknowledged the inflationary effects of subsidy removal and the naira’s floating exchange rate, but clarified that these policies were partly inherited from the prior administration’s 2023 budget.

“The floating of the naira...also increased the economic hardship,” he stated, adding that while subsidy removal could be beneficial, “looking at the removal of subsidy skyrocket the inflation in the history of Nigeria for over four decades.”

Dr. Shinkafi urged the government to fulfil campaign promises and meet Nigerians’ high expectations.

“The government has to sit up and make sure that he fulfil his campaign promises,” he concluded, pressing for meaningful action on both economic stability and security.

Share



# Proposed tariff hike splits telecom operators, subscribers

By Dave Oludare Oso

The proposed hike in internet data tariff, voice calls, and short message services (SMS) have pitted telecom operators and subscribers against each other.

Recently, telecoms operators under the aegis of the Association of Telecommunication Companies of Nigeria (ATCON), and the Association of Licenced Telecoms Operators of Nigeria (ALTON), said the sector may not survive if the regulatory body, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) fails to approve a new tariff regime.

The associations argued that rising operational costs, weakening Naira, and increasing the price of energy and infrastructure maintenance have severely affected telecom companies. This has, however, attracted a swift response from subscriber associations like the Association of Telephones, Cable TV and Internet Subscribers of Nigeria (ATCIS), who insist that telecom operators do not have any justification to propose a tariff hike, owing to the current economic realities.

In its first half (H1, 2024) financial report, MTN Nigeria reported an after-tax loss of N519.1 billion, driven by forex volatility and inflationary pressures.

Airtel Africa, Nigeria's second-largest telecom operator by market share, also reported after-tax losses to the tune of \$89 million for its full year ended March 2024.

To make matters worse, incessant vandalism, fibre cuts and theft of equipment already cost telecom operators billions of Naira to replace, in addition to the service disruption the concerns trigger.

While the price of internet data has remained relatively stable in the past decade, calls for an upward review by telecom operators may change the status quo.

President of the ATCON, Tony

Emoekpere argued that the current tariff structure is no longer tenable and a price increase has become imperative to guarantee quality service delivery.

According to PREMIUM TIMES, Emoekpere said, "These tariffs have been frozen for such a long time and to keep them stagnant is totally unrealistic.

"We understand the fact that any price increase will have an effect but what the tariff hike will provide is better quality of service to subscribers."

Emoekpere said in its talks with the NCC, the regulatory body urged telecom operators and companies to focus on improving the quality of their services and explore other measures rather than a tariff hike. He however expressed confidence that an approval is imminent.

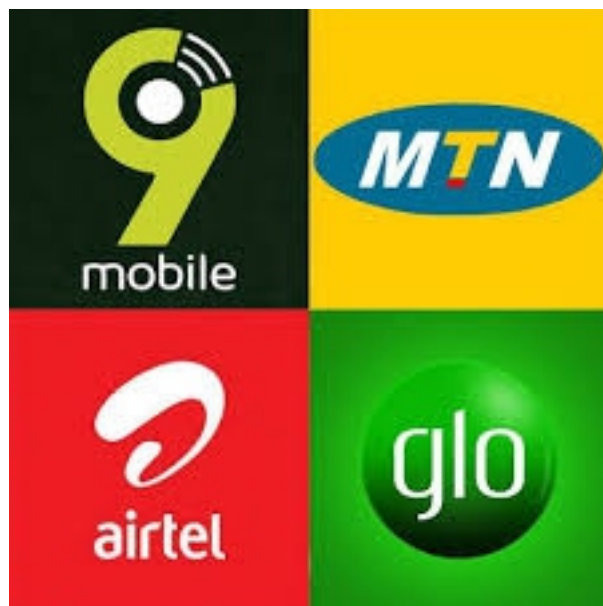
"I don't think there will be a rejection; I think the worst-case scenario is that the NCC may approve a lesser percentage of what is being requested," he added.

An increase in the price of voice calls, short message services (SMS) and data could undermine Nigeria's efforts to bridge the digital divide and achieve a broader broadband penetration, according to some subscribers.

NCC data shows that the country's broadband penetration currently stands at 41.56% as of September, falling short of the ambitious 70% target set for 2025.

The National Bureau of Statistics, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, reported in a 2021 survey that only 22% of informal businesses in Nigeria use the Internet for their daily operations. Considering Nigeria's economic downturn, this number may suffer a decline if the proposed tariff hike is implemented.

The proposed tariff hike has made subscribers and business owners like Taiwo Matthew very concerned, as his business centre and browsing cafe



outlet depend heavily on good internet connectivity for smooth operations.

Matthew said he has managed to keep his business afloat for 20 years despite Nigeria's harsh economic conditions. However, a tariff hike threatens to deliver the ultimate blow, he said.

To guarantee sustainability, the businessman noted that his customers will bear the burden of increased costs as price adjustments will be made.

He said, "It doesn't make sense at all, because the country is hard. So if they increase their tariff that means it will affect customers because there will be an increase in prices."

ATCIS President, Sina Bilesanmi, condemned the proposed tariff hike, especially in the face of Nigeria's current economic decline.

He stated that not only do telecom operators not have a ground to hike the price of internet services, but consumers must be consulted before any decision is made.

Bilesanmi said telecom operators should call for a proper stakeholder meeting, where details of the proposed tariff hike can be discussed with consumers.

He said, "They cannot do it alone, all stakeholders must come to an agreement.

The ATCIS president also raised concern over NCC's effectiveness in regulating the telecoms sector, under the new administration.

# G20 leaders grapple with climate, taxes, Trump comeback

By Agency Reporter

**G**20 leaders gather in Brazil on Monday to discuss fighting poverty, boosting climate financing and other multilateral initiatives that could yet be upended by Donald Trump's impending return to the White House.

US President Joe Biden will attend his last summit of the world's leading economies, but as a lame duck whom other leaders are already looking beyond.

The main star of the show is expected to be Chinese President Xi Jinping, who has cast himself as a global statesman and protector of free trade in the face of Trump's "America First" agenda.

Brazil's left-wing President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will be using his hosting duties to highlight his championing of Global South issues and the fight against climate change.

The summit venue is Rio de Janeiro's stunning bayside museum of modern art.

Security is tight for the gathering, which comes days after a failed bomb attack on Brazil's Supreme Court in Brasilia by a suspected far-right extremist, who killed himself in the process.

The summit will cap a farewell diplomatic tour by Biden which took him to Lima for a meeting of Asia-Pacific trading partners, and then to the Amazon in the first such visit for a sitting US president.

Biden, who has looked to burnish his legacy as time runs down on his presidency, has insisted his climate record would survive another Trump mandate.

## SPOTLIGHT ON CLIMATE

The G20 meeting is happening at the same time as the COP29 climate conference in Azerbaijan, which has stalled on the issue of greater climate finance for developing countries.



All eyes have turned to Rio for a breakthrough.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for G20 members, who account for 80 percent of global emissions, to show "leadership and compromise" to facilitate a deal.

A Brazilian diplomatic source said fast-developing nations like China were refusing pressure by rich countries to join them in funding global climate projects, but added that he was hopeful of progress at the summit.

The meeting comes in a year marked by another grim litany of extreme weather events, including Brazil's worst wildfire season in over a decade, fuelled by a record drought blamed at least partly on climate change.

At the last G20 in India, leaders called for a tripling of renewable energy sources by the end of the decade, but without explicitly calling for an end to the use of fossil fuels.

One invited leader who declined to come to Rio is Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose arrest is sought by the International Criminal Court and who said his presence would "wreck" the gathering.

Lula, 79, told Brazil's GloboNews channel on Sunday that the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East would be kept off the summit agenda to focus on

the poor.

"Because if not, we will not discuss other things which are more important for people that are not at war, who are poor people and invisible to the world," he said.

## TAXING BILLIONAIRE

The summit will open on Monday with Lula, a former steelworker who grew up in poverty, launching a "Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty." "What I want to say to the 733 million people who are hungry in the world, children who go to sleep and wake up not being sure if they will have any food to put in their mouths, is: today there isn't any, but tomorrow there will be," Lula said at the weekend.

Brazil is also pushing for higher taxes on billionaires.

Lula had faced resistance to parts of his agenda from Argentina, but on Sunday a Brazilian diplomatic source said negotiators from all G20 members had agreed on a draft final statement to be put to their respective leaders.

The head of the Argentine delegation, Federico Pinedo, told AFP that Buenos Aires has raised some objections and would not "necessarily" sign the text, however, he did not elaborate.



# Asari-Dokubo faces backlash from Rivers group over remarks on Tinubu, Wike

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

A group in Rivers State, the Rivers Restoration Movement (RRM), has strongly criticised former Niger Delta militant leader, Mujahid Asari-Dokubo, for his recent comments attacking President Bola Tinubu and Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike.

The group described Asari-Dokubo's statements as baseless, malicious, and an unwarranted attack on the president and the political leadership of Rivers State

The controversy stems from an interview in which Asari-Dokubo accused President Tinubu of supporting Wike in efforts to destabilize Rivers State and to manipulate judicial decisions.

The former freedom fighter further alleged that the duo was conspiring to remove the state's governor, Siminalayi Fubara, and that something would happen if their plan succeeded.

In a press release issued on Monday by the group's Director-General, Hon. Johnson Georgewill, the Rivers Restoration Movement rejected these claims, calling them "empty threats" and "misleading statements." The statement strongly defended both Tinubu and Wike, emphasizing their commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

RRM's Response to Asari-Dokubo's Allegations

"We are aware of the malicious and misleading statement made by Chief Asari-Dokubo on a national television station, where he accused President Tinubu of supporting Minister Wike to destabilise Rivers State and procure court judgments," the statement began.

"RRM, as the leading group that supported the emergence of Governor Fubara in 2023, would ordinarily ignore these baseless statements. However, in the interest of public clarity, we have chosen to respond."

The group, which played a crucial



role in ensuring the victory of Governor Fubara in 2023, emphasised that Asari-Dokubo's accusations were false and misleading.

"We take exception to these direct insults against Mr. President. We all know that President Tinubu is a democrat who believes in the rule of law and would never support illegality or injustice," Georgewill continued, pointing to the president's record on governance and his response to elder statesman Pa Edwin Clark.

RRM also dismissed Asari-Dokubo's threatening remarks, stating that they had "no place in Nigeria's constitutional democracy."

The group assured the public that such threats were "empty" and would not deter the lawful processes in Rivers State.

"We assure Nigerians that all threats made by Alhaji Asari, claiming that 'something will happen' if the law takes its course, are baseless and will not succeed," the statement read.

Criticism of Asari-Dokubo's Political Influence

The RRM also took aim at Asari-Dokubo's claim that he spent over \$2 million in an attempt to sway voters in Rivers State during the 2023 elections.

"His claim of spending over 2 million dollars when he couldn't even win his unit for President Tinubu is laughable

and a barefaced lie," the group stated, suggesting that Asari-Dokubo was an opportunist with little political influence in the region.

The Rivers Restoration Movement emphasized that the victory of President Tinubu and Governor Fubara in the 2023 elections was largely due to the efforts of Nyesom Wike and his political family, along with the support of Rivers State's electorate.

"The victory of President Tinubu and Governor Fubara in the 2023 general elections in Rivers State was solely due to the efforts of the leader of Rivers State politics and the FCT Minister, alongside his political family, with the help of God Almighty," Georgewill said, dismissing any claims to the contrary.

Call for Unity and Rule of Law

The RRM called on Asari-Dokubo to channel his energy into supporting his political allies in a constructive manner, rather than engaging in divisive rhetoric.

"We urge Chief Asari to advise his benefactor, whom he did not support in 2023, to obey the rule of law, rather than acting on sentiments," the statement read.

"Rivers State can never be a lawless society, and we will continue to uphold democratic values."

# Canada raises off-campus work hours for Nigerian students

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**A** cheering development has come the way of Nigerians in Canada as the Canadian government has adjusted its regulations to allow eligible Nigerians and other international students to work up to 24 hours per week off-campus during academic terms, an increase from the previous limit of 20 hours.

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship (IRC), Marc Miller, explained that the decision strikes a balance between enabling students to gain valuable work experience and ensuring their focus on academics remains intact.

Miller stated, "This change will give students more flexibility to manage their time and gain practical experience."

The adjustment builds on a policy direction highlighted in October 2022, when Miller underscored the importance of work opportunities for international students.

At the time, he remarked, "With the economy growing at a faster rate than employers can hire new workers, Canada needs to look at every option so that we have the skills and workforce needed to fuel our growth."

"Immigration will be crucial to addressing our labour shortage. By allowing international students to work more while they study, we can help ease pressing needs in many sectors across the country while providing more opportunities for international students to gain valuable Canadian work experience and continue contributing to our short-term recovery and long-term prosperity."



In addition to increasing the weekly work limit, the updated policy permits students to work full-time during academic breaks, such as summer and winter holidays.

This measure is designed to help students boost their income without interfering with class schedules, enhancing their financial stability while they pursue their education.

# Canada-based Nigerian tells diasporans to stop sending money home

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**A** Nigerian-Canadian medical practitioner, identified as Dr. Zo, has stirred conversations on social media after advising Nigerians abroad to reconsider sending money to people in Nigeria. In a now-viral video, Dr. Zo expressed his belief that Nigerians living in the country enjoy a better lifestyle compared to their counterparts abroad.

He highlighted the vibrancy of life in Nigeria while urging diasporans to reflect on their financial sacrifices.

Admiring the beauty of Lagos, he said, "See when you are abroad, I mean if in the west, making money, and you are sending money to anybody in this Nigeria, just understand that the person has a better lifestyle than you, the person is enjoying more than you."

Sharing his recent experiences, he continued, "Nigeria is a lovely place. In fact, I think we should fast and pray that this govt need to work because the jollof in Nigeria, you can not get it in any country of the world."

Dr. Zo also disclosed his plans to invest in a home in Nigeria, citing the

country's unique appeal.

He said, "As I go now, I'll book my house in Nigeria. I pray the country gets better so I can come back and enjoy this life with everyone here. Anyone I send money to in Nigeria now, I'll tell them, 'This is mountain going to Muhammad.' You guys are enjoying more than us."

In a follow-up video, Dr. Zo doubled down on his stance, emphasizing the differences between life abroad and in Nigeria.

He said, "I've been abroad for quite a while, traveled to four different continents, and I'm a top medical practitioner in Canada. But after just a day or two here, I maintain my stand. Even the food here is different—better."

He added, "If I could find someone to



pay me even 20% of what I earn now, I'd move back to Nigeria. This is a lovely life. You'd be among your people, enjoying the unique culture and energy."



# Shettima launches innovation drive for indigenous healthcare solutions

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has launched Grand Challenges Nigeria (GCNg), a national initiative aimed at transforming Nigeria's healthcare sector through locally developed solutions.

Shettima in a post on his X page Monday said the programme, which is part of the global Grand Challenges network, focuses on addressing maternal and child health challenges in its first phase.

During the launch at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, Shettima emphasised the urgency of this initiative, noting the rapid pace of global advancements in science and technology.

He stressed the importance of creating tailored solutions for Nigeria's unique healthcare needs, a central message of President Bola Tinubu's administration.

"This initiative is not just a response to problems; it is a platform for groundbreaking research, building local expertise, and fostering strategic partnerships to create culturally relevant solutions," said Shettima.

The Vice President also highlighted that the programme would integrate with existing government healthcare initiatives, such as the Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative (NHSRII) and the Nutrition 774 programme.

READ ALSO: Shettima calls for media, government collaboration  
Shettima painted a vision for a Nigeria where every child has access to proper nutrition, families can rely on quality healthcare and public health metrics continue to improve.

He also announced an immediate call for proposals on advancing innovative solutions for maternal, newborn, and child health, and explained that the initiative would address critical issues like infectious diseases, food security, and climate resilience.

"We must recognize that our progress

is linked to the progress of the global community," Shettima said, reiterating the Tinubu administration's commitment to providing the necessary support to turn these aspirations into reality.

He expressed excitement about the innovations that would emerge from Nigeria's brightest minds, ensuring they receive the funding and support needed.

In his speech, the Minister of Innovation, Science, and Technology, Uche Nnaji, emphasised that the initiative aligns with President Tinubu's 8-point agenda to use innovation as a driver of prosperity and growth.

READ ALSO: Tinubu, Shettima, others present as Lagbaja buried

He highlighted the programme's commitment to fostering research and innovation in education and environmentally sustainable projects.

Chike Okafor, Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Nutrition and Food Security, commended the initiative's focus on food security and nutrition, pledging the support of the House of Representatives for its framework.

He stressed that this would complement ongoing efforts to tackle food insecurity and malnutrition in Nigeria.

Muhammad Sanusi II, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Nutrition Society of Nigeria, noted that



addressing malnutrition and food insecurity requires coordinated efforts, which the Grand Challenges Nigeria initiative is designed to facilitate.

He commended the Vice President for his leadership in promoting nutrition-related agendas across the country.

Salisu Abubakar, President of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria, also lauded the initiative, emphasising the importance of leveraging locally developed solutions to improve health outcomes.

READ ALSO: Oscar Awards: Shettima rallies support for 'Mai Martaba'

Uju Rochas-Anwulah, Special Assistant to the President on Public Health, underscored that the launch reflects President Tinubu's commitment to reforming the economy and ensuring food security through homegrown solutions.

She emphasised that the initiative would take an inclusive approach, utilizing resources from grassroots communities to solve local health challenges.

# Miss Universe: Obi congratulates Chidinma Adetshina

By Friday Omosola

The 2023 presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi, has congratulated Chidinma Adetshina on emerging as the first runner-up at the recently concluded Miss Universe competition.

The New Daily Prime reported that Adetshina, representing Nigeria, secured the first runner-up position at the 73rd Miss Universe Competition held in Mexico.

The grand finale, hosted at the Arena CDMX in Mexico City, culminated in a thrilling face-off on Sunday morning between Nigeria and Denmark, as both contestants stood poised to claim the coveted crown.

READ ALSO: Obi urges unity as national grid collapses again

Miss Denmark, Victoria Kjaer Theilvig, clinched the title, succeeding Miss Universe 2023, Sheynnis Palacios of Nicaragua.

In a statement posted on his X page on Monday, Obi lauded Adetshina as a beacon of hope, particularly for Nigerian youths navigating various challenges on their path to success.

Chidinma Adetshina [PHOTO CREDIT: New Daily Library]

He commended her resilience, emphasizing that despite Nigeria's difficult times, Adetshina remained steadfast, proving that "success lies ahead" for those who persevere through hardship.

"I followed with keen attention the journey of our Nigerian beauty queen, Chidinma Adetshina, and her rise to stardom. I can only describe her journey as a demonstration of resilience, perseverance, and dedication. Through her struggles and the very challenging times, she held on to faith, hope, and her determination to rise to the top.



READ ALSO: Obi demands reversal of sudden fuel price hike

"And today, she has emerged victorious. She may not have received the 2024 Miss Universe crown, but competing against over 120 contestants from around the world and securing the first runner-up position in the competition and first position in Africa is a giant stride of which we are proud", the former Anambra State Governor said.

Obi praised Adetshina for her unwavering belief in herself and Nigeria, stating, "To everyone who contributed to her success today, your dedication and effort have truly paid off."

He reaffirmed his commitment, as well as Nigeria's, to creating a better future for the nation's exceptionally talented youth, emphasizing that no obstacle is insurmountable.



# Ondo: Seek redress in court, Tinubu tells aggrieved losers

By Dave Oludare Oso



In the immediate aftermath of the just-concluded Ondo State governorship election, President Bola Tinubu has asked political parties and candidates unhappy with the outcome of the election, to seek redress in court.

The President spoke in a statement issued on Sunday by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared the incumbent governor, Lucky Aiyedatiwa of the All Progressives Congress (APC) was declared as the winner of the election on Sunday.

In the statement, Onanuga said, “The President urges candidates dissatisfied with the outcome of the election to explore the opportunities provided by the judicial system to seek redress on areas of conflict.”

He stated that Tinubu who congratulated Governor Aiyedatiwa on his victory, expressed his joy with the outcome of the election and applauded INEC, the police and other security agencies for their roles during

the poll.

The presidential spokesman further stated that President Tinubu said, “Aiyedatiwa and other candidates of the 17 political parties for the maturity and sense of purpose demonstrated during the campaigns and the election, attributing the success of the polls to the civility in the state.”

The statement added, “President Tinubu believes the Ondo State election was another litmus test of the capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission, affirming that the electoral body justified the confidence of the people with early preparations, deployment of staff and materials, and handling of the electoral process.

“The President also commends INEC for the efficiency of uploading more than 98 per cent of results on the same day of the elections.”

The State Returning Officer, Professor Olayemi Durotimi Akinwunmi of the Federal University Lokoja, announced Aiyedatiwa as the winner of the election at about 2:30 pm on Sunday.

Aiyedatiwa secured 366,781 votes to defeat his closest rival, Agboola Ajayi

of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Ajayi polled 117,845 votes to come second.

The APC made a clean sweep in the election, winning all 18 local government areas.

The 18 LGAs are Ifedore, Ondo East, Ileoluji Oke-Igbo, Idanre, Irele, Akoko South West, Owo, Ondo West, Akoko South East, Akoko North West, Ose, Akoko North East, Akure South, Akure North, Okitipupa, Odigbo, Ilaje and Ese Odo.

The PDP’s agent for Idanre Local Government Area earlier raised serious concerns, alleging widespread irregularities, including vote buying and ballot box snatching.

Furthermore, the agent claimed that voting didn’t take place in some parts of Idanre. Citing these grievances, the agent formally requested that the results from Idanre be nullified.

# Minimum Wage: FG to allocate N6.5tn for personnel costs in 2025

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

The Federal Government has disclosed that its expenditure on personnel costs will rise by at least 60 percent in 2025, following the implementation of the newly approved national minimum wage and consequential salary adjustments for federal civil servants.

According to the newly released Medium Term Expenditure Framework and Fiscal Strategy Paper (MTEF), the government's personnel costs will increase by N2.46 trillion, bringing the total personnel budget to approximately N6.56 trillion for the 2025 fiscal year.

The increase is directly linked to President Bola Tinubu's approval of a new minimum wage for Nigerian workers in July 2024, which raised the monthly pay from N30,000 to N70,000.

While federal employees have already started receiving the new wage, many state governments are still in the process of adopting the new minimum wage, with some even pledging to pay more than the federal benchmark.

As of August 2024, the government had disbursed N2.67 trillion, or 65 percent of the N4.1 trillion appropriated for personnel costs in the 2024 budget.

The government now projects a significant increase in personnel costs in 2025, due to the nationwide implementation of the higher wages and associated adjustments for all civil service cadres.

The MTEF report noted that personnel costs for 2025 are expected to soar by 60 percent. Specifically, the report highlighted that the 2025 personnel cost will increase from N3.83 trillion in 2023 to N6.56 trillion in 2025, driven by the impact of the minimum wage adjustment.

The report also pointed out that the government's pension obligations and contributions to the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) will also



increase as part of the personnel cost adjustments.

“The 2025 Federal Government personnel cost expenditure is expected to increase significantly due to the updated National Minimum Wage and the consequential adjustments. This is expected to directly impact employees' salaries, pension contributions, and NHIS deductions,” the report stated.

N9.64tn for Personnel and Pension

In total, the government has allocated N9.64 trillion for personnel and pension costs in the 2025 budget, marking an increase of 58.7 percent over the 2024 allocation. This includes N1.02 trillion for government-owned enterprises (GOEs), which also fall under the personnel costs.

The MTEF document stressed that the sharp increase in these expenditures is largely due to the implementation of the new wage structure and related benefits. The government's spending on personnel costs and the new minimum wage are significant factors contributing to a projected budget deficit of N13.08 trillion for 2025, which represents 3.87 percent of Nigeria's estimated Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This is a notable increase from the N9.18 trillion deficit anticipated in 2024.

The increase in the deficit is attributed to rising personnel and pension costs, as well as higher debt servicing obligations.

Given the limited scope for external financing, the government has outlined plans to manage the deficit through domestic borrowings.

“The budget deficit is primarily driven by the increased minimum wage, pension obligations, and other consequential salary adjustments, as well as escalating debt costs,” the MTEF report explained.

“The administration aims to reduce the deficit over the medium term in line with the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) 2025.”

The Federal Government's decision to increase spending on personnel costs as a result of the new minimum wage will significantly impact the 2025 budget, contributing to a projected N13.08 trillion bud

While the increase in workers' pay is a positive development for many civil servants, it also underscores the growing fiscal challenges facing the Nigerian government, which will have to balance wage increases with other economic priorities in the coming years.



# PDP condemns Tinubu's decision to honor Modi with GCON

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has sharply criticised President Bola Tinubu for conferring the Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON), Nigeria's second-highest national honor, on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The party called the gesture a "misplaced priority," questioning the justification for awarding such a prestigious honor based on diplomatic relations alone.

The criticism came shortly after a high-profile meeting between President Tinubu and Prime Minister Modi in Abuja, where the Indian leader was honored during the Nigeria-India Bilateral Meeting held at the Presidential Villa.

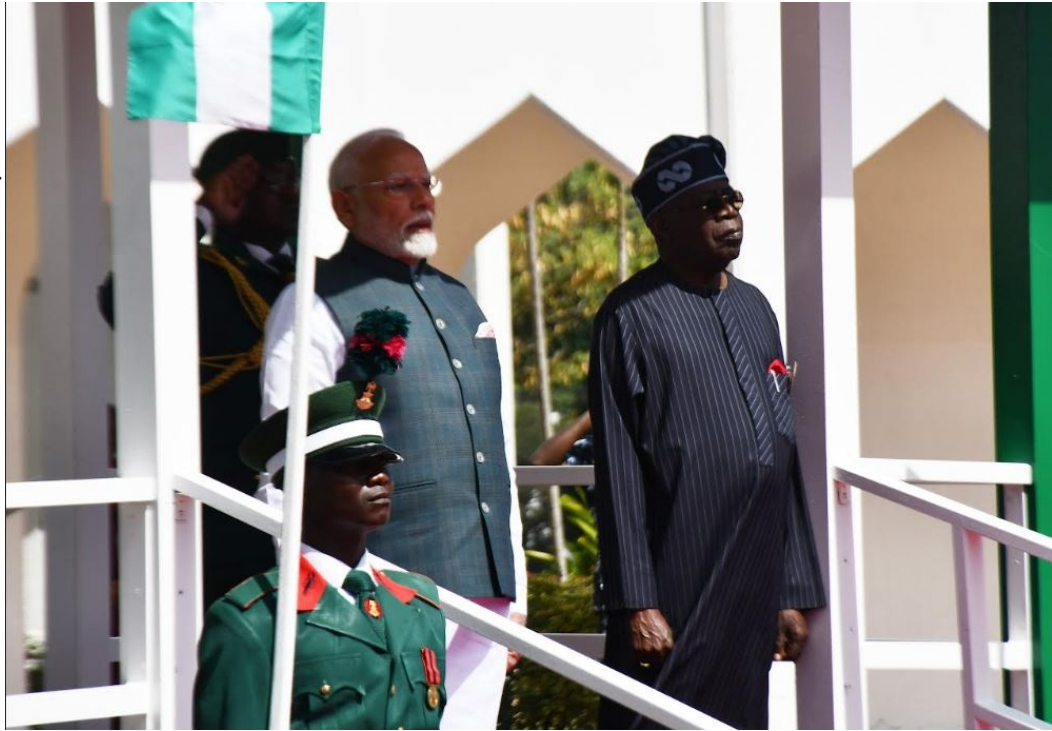
Speaking to our correspondence on Sunday, November 18, Timothy Osadolor, the Deputy National Youth Leader of the PDP, expressed disappointment with the decision, asserting that the award was not warranted.

"It is not something you dish out for the sake of friendship," Osadolor said. "I don't know what the Indian Prime Minister has done to have warranted such an honor. This is the second-highest honor in the land, and it is a misplacement of priorities."

Osadolor suggested that the conferral of such a significant honor should be based on tangible achievements or contributions, not merely diplomatic relations.

He went on to question why President Tinubu did not take the opportunity to seek insights from Modi on India's remarkable economic growth, especially given the contrast between India's transformation and Nigeria's ongoing economic struggles.

"I would have thought that the President should have asked the Indian Prime Minister how India moved from being the poverty capital of the world to becoming one of the fastest-growing economies,"



Osadolor continued.

"The biggest tech moguls across the globe at the moment are all Indians. Look at Microsoft and the startups in Silicon Valley – they're all being run by Indians. I would have thought that Tinubu would have been humble enough to ask for guidance, rather than dishing out unnecessary awards."

During the ceremony, President Tinubu praised Modi for his leadership, highlighting the historical strength of Nigeria-India relations.

"You have been doing a good job historically. Winning three consecutive elections in a complex society is a feat that we respect so much," Tinubu said, before bestowing the GCON award on the Indian Prime Minister.

In his remarks, Modi expressed appreciation for Nigeria's partnership and commiserated with the country over the devastating floods that recently ravaged several cities, including Maiduguri in Borno State.

Modi also promised to send 20 tonnes of relief materials to support the flood victims. Additionally, he emphasised the potential for expanding bilateral ties in key sectors such as defense, technology, trade, health, and education.

Despite the praise from Tinubu and Modi's diplomatic gestures, the PDP maintained that such national honors should not be awarded lightly.

The party contended that awarding such a prestigious honor without clear criteria for Modi's accomplishments within Nigeria or Africa was inappropriate, especially when the country faces significant challenges, including economic difficulties and infrastructure gaps.

In response, Nze Chidi Duru, the Deputy National Organizing Secretary of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), defended the President's actions, arguing that conferring the GCON on Modi was not an unprecedented move. Duru suggested that the award reflected the deepening ties between Nigeria and India, and should not be viewed as controversial.

Despite differing views within the political establishment, the controversy over the GCON conferment on Modi has sparked a wider debate on the criteria for awarding national honors in Nigeria and whether such recognitions should be linked to tangible contributions to the country's development.

# The President needs a Chief Media Adviser

By Agency Reporter

A seemingly innocuous “Did you know?” can be the starting point in a journey of discovery that scrapes the veneer off long-held perceptions.

Such as learning that your branded “luxurious Italian leather” handbag has more Nigeria in it than Italy.

Or, for that matter, being told that several famous Italian and Spanish brands source at least part of their leather from tanneries in northern Nigeria.

Leather from Nigeria, especially red Sokoto goatskin, is acknowledged globally for its superior quality.

**DRIVER OF EMPLOYMENT, FOREIGN EXCHANGE**

Although Nigeria has fewer tanneries now than a decade ago, leather continues to be one of the drivers of employment and foreign exchange in Africa’s most populous nation.

According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, about 16.6 million agricultural households raise approximately 124 million goats and sheep annually, translating into ready hide availability for the leather industry. Tanneries in northern Nigeria, especially in the commercial hub of Kano, rely almost entirely on small-scale farmers to supply raw material that is processed into leather for export and domestic consumption.

“The leather industry holds immense promise for economic growth and diversification,” Dr Jerry Tagang, lecturer at the Nigerian Institute of Leather and Science Technology (NILEST) in Zaria, tells TRT Afrika.

**90% OF NIGERIAN LEATHER IS EXPORTED**

“The country’s abundant raw materials, skilled artisans, and supportive government policies (such as the National Leather and Leather Products Policy) create a fertile ground for the sector to grow.”

While data from the Nigerian Exports Promotion Council suggests that 90% of the leather produced in Nigeria is exported, Dr Tagang says domestic



demand alone is significant enough to sustain the livelihood of thousands of Nigerians.

“Nigeria’s leather and leather products industry currently employs over 750,000 workers, with about 500,000 of them being engaged in the finished goods sector,” says Dr Tagang.

“The industry can potentially create more jobs for Nigeria’s youth and women, provided the leather value chain is properly explored.”

**COMPETE AT GLOBAL LEVEL**

Many of those in the domestic sector work for Winston Leather, which has diversified into making leather products from merely exporting leather.

In a video posted on the company’s TikTok account, CEO Winston Udeagha says the company’s leather products are of the same quality as top European brands, albeit cheaper.

“We are part of the ‘made-in-Africa’ brand equity that can compete at the global level,” he tells TRT Afrika.

“So, if you see a bag made in Nigeria now and you see a bag you want to buy from any other country where you go shopping, know that they are on par in terms of quality.”

**EXPORT-FOCUSED TRADE**

The Nigerian Export Promotion Council website states that 71% of leather exports

from the country are to Italy and Spain.

Premium goatskin leather mainly goes to Italy, accounting for 68% of the trade in this category. Spain imports 21% of Nigeria’s goatskin leather and China sources around 4%.

India takes the lion’s share of Nigerian sheep and lamb leather with 36%, followed by China with 22%.

Ali Muhammad Tilashi has been engaged in the trade for about a decade, sending container loads of leather to Italy, Spain, China and India. “Whatever you produce that is of good quality, they will buy,” he says

**VALUE ADDITION**

Even for a small player in the business, Tilashi’s export output is about 10 container loads of cargo at a time.

“It is estimated that up to 544 million square feet of light leather (worth US \$272 million) was exported from Nigeria last year,” Dr Tagang tells TRT Afrika.

Even with raw materials like leather, a country tends to lose revenue as those processing these into finished products reap the highest benefit.



## Nigeria launches Mpox vaccination programme in Abuja

By Helen Okechukwu

Nigeria has commenced the long-awaited Mpox vaccination drive on Monday, as healthcare workers and individuals with poor immune systems in hospitals receives their dose across Abuja.

According to Reuter, it was acknowledged that this rollout comes over a month behind schedule.

The country, Africa's most populous, received its first batch of 10,000 vaccine doses from the United States in August. The delivery followed the World Health Organization's renewed declaration of mpox as a global public health emergency – the second in two years.

Mpox is endemic in Nigeria, which has reported 94 confirmed cases so far this year, with no recorded fatalities, according to the WHO's update last month.

At the Federal Medical Centre in Abuja, medical personnel kitted up with gloves and masks while they administered the first doses to 30 recipients, marking the start of the programme.

"It is not a mass vaccination. It's a



target-ringed vaccination for health care workers and immuno-compromised persons, that is, people living with HIV," Hafsat Abdullazeez from the Institute of Human Virology told Reuter in Abuja.

Hardley Ikwe of the U.S. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention stated that the initial phase of the programme will last 10 days.

It will focus on Abuja and seven states,

including Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Rivers, which have reported several cases.

The WHO recently allocated 899,000 vaccine doses for nine African nations most affected by the mpox outbreak, signaling an effort to curb the virus on the continent.

## NGO trains police on handling mental health victims in Kaduna

By Helen Okechukwu

A non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Idimma Health Initiative has trained the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) on the ways to identify and respond to people living with mental issues in Kaduna State.

In the two-day workshop, the Executive Director of the group, Aisha Buba, explained the role of security personnel in responding to mental health victims, including those attempting to commit suicide.

The security force is trained to be first responders to such cases.

Buba highlighted the importance of the training, saying it will aid in equipping the force to handle such health issues quickly and ensure the victims receive adequate support before further steps.

She further explained that the shortage of mental health professionals was the purpose of the training

She said, "For the fact that we do not have adequate psychiatrists, psychologists, and other mental health professionals, we are training other stakeholders like police officers.

"We are here to train the police officers on psychological first aid, which essentially equips them with skills to identify mental health issues when they are called into crisis situations, enabling them to handle and respond to such cases better."

Buba explained that in Nigeria, suicide is considered a crime punishable by up to a year in



prison. However, educating police to see it as a mental health issue could lead to more compassionate responses.

"When crises occur, the first person typically called to the scene is a police officer. Even if the situation is medical or injury-related, the police are often the first to assess the situation before any further action is taken," she noted.

# We'll work closely with Fed Min for enforcement of free C-S in Ekiti-Health Com

By **Helen Okechukwu**

The Ekiti State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Oyebanji Filani, says the state health ministry will work closely with the Federal Health Ministry to enforce a free Caesarean Section (S-C) for all expecting mothers.

Dr. Filani said this development will boost maternal healthcare services in public facilities in the state as he lauded the Federal Government's policy of free C-S.

While flagging the off-refresher training of frontline health workers under the aegis of Ekiti State Health Vanguard on Monday, he made this declaration.

The training aims to improve the competency of healthcare workers in the state.

The chairman of the Forum of Health Commissioners of Nigeria, Dr. Filani, said, "We will work closely with the Minister of Health, Prof. Mohammed Pate, to ensure that the free CS programme is delivered."

On 7 November, The New Daily Prime reported that the Health Minister, Prof. Pate, announced that C-S will be free for all Nigerian mothers, aims to reduce the child mortality rate in Nigeria.

Addressing the health worker, he said, this development will lessen pressure on citizens while recounting the existing state Basic Healthcare Provision Fund (BHPF).

Highlighting the benefit, he noted that the Federal Government declaration and implementation will be a plus to the state ministry.

"It gives us more resources to cover additional services that people might need.

Adding that, "So we look forward to working closely with the National Health Insurance Agency, the National Primary Healthcare



Development Agency, and the Federal Ministry of Health on this laudable initiative that President Bola Tinubu has put together."

Marking its official kickoff of the Health Vanguard programme, he acknowledged the programme as a grassroots sensitisation and health promotion, noting that primary healthcare services in the state were free.

For community outreach and knowledge sharing, Dr. Filani said the event aims to address the issue of "prompt diagnosis and treatment as a key to reducing the severity of malaria and preventing its spread in Ekiti State."

"They will also aid with sensitising pregnant women on the benefits of patronising the health facilities and urge them to visit health facilities for antenatal care," Dr. Filani noted.

Additionally, he said, "They are to serve as a link between the people and health facilities, mainly the primary healthcare facilities, thus bringing in more people to come and enjoy the

services that the Governor Biodun Oyebanji administration has put in place.

"We want to ensure that every pregnant woman in Ekiti State has access to safe delivery in our PHCs. Our goal is to encourage pregnant women to come to the facilities and also to ensure that people who have malaria can be treated safely and effectively in our communities."

Ayodele Alegbeleye, Project Director for Solina Health under the IMPACT Project, stated that the aim is to deliver healthcare services directly to beneficiaries across Ekiti State.

He explained that two Health Vanguard are assigned to each of the 177 wards, ensuring free services, including maternal care, through programs like the BHPF or Ulerawa, available at all 177 primary health centres.

Share



## Bobrisky refuses female awards, blames Eniola Ajao

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian crossdresser Bobrisky has publicly declared that he will no longer accept any awards or recognitions designated for women. This bold statement comes in the wake of a series of events that he attributes directly to an award he received from actress Eniola Ajao. According to reports from New Daily Prime, Bobrisky was honoured with the prestigious 'Best Dressed Female' accolade at the premiere of Ajao's latest movie in March 2024.

However, what should have been a moment of triumph quickly turned into a nightmare.

Shortly after receiving the award, Bobrisky was arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for alleged naira abuse during the same ceremony.

He subsequently faced a six-month incarceration as a result of these charges.

In a shocking twist, shortly after Bobrisky completed his jail term, an audio recording surfaced online that purportedly featured the crossdresser admitting to bribing EFCC officials to sidestep charges related to money laundering.

Adding to the scandal, he claimed to have served his sentence in a luxurious apartment, a revelation that triggered a firestorm of outrage across social media.

The ensuing controversy ultimately led to his re-arrest, compounding his legal troubles and further tarnishing his public image.

Following his escape from Nigerian shores, Bobrisky took to social media to assign blame for his predicament, placing the responsibility squarely on Eniola Ajao.

In a candid and reflective post shared on his Instagram Stories, he expressed his belief that all of his troubles began with the award he accepted from the actress.



"My problem started when I collected the best dressed female award with an N1 million prize," Bobrisky lamented. "For my life, if I see an award for best-dressed female, I go disappear from that location ASAP. Everyone knows the truth that I am a baddie in class; you wanna compete with me? Your mummy never!!!! But when the problem wan too much make I run," he added, seemingly expressing both defiance and resignation in the face of his challenges.

The unfolding drama around Bobrisky has not only captivated followers and fans but has also incited widespread discussions about the pressures and implications of gender roles within the Nigerian entertainment scene.

As an influential figure in the LGBTQ+ community, Bobrisky's experiences highlight the ongoing struggles faced by individuals in the spotlight who do not conform to traditional gender norms.

At this time, actress Eniola Ajao has not responded to the allegations put forth by Bobrisky.

This silence only adds fuel to the fire as public speculation runs rampant regarding the intricacies of their

relationship and the circumstances surrounding the awards ceremony.

As the narrative continues to evolve, many are left questioning the future of Bobrisky's career and his plans moving forward.

With his recent declaration of avoiding female awards, will he redefine his presence in the industry, or will he further distance himself from the female recognition that once garnered him acclaim?

Regardless of the outcome, Bobrisky's story serves as a reflection of the complex interplay between fame, identity, and societal expectations in contemporary Nigeria.

As the nation grapples with issues surrounding gender and sexuality, the developments in Bobrisky's life are sure to resonate widely, sparking debates and conversations for months to come.

As this situation unfolds, fans and critics alike remain eager to see what steps Bobrisky will take next.

One thing is certain: the world will be watching closely as this crossdresser navigates the turbulent waters of fame, scandal, and identity in an industry that often embraces both

# Davido to celebrate birthday with N300m donation to orphanages

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**A**frobeat icon David Adeleke, widely recognized by his stage name Davido, has recently made an inspiring announcement that he will be celebrating his 32nd birthday with a remarkable philanthropic gesture.

This year, he plans to contribute a staggering N300 million to support orphanages across Nigeria.

The acclaimed musician divulged his charitable intentions through a post on his X handle early Monday morning, much to the delight of his fans and followers.

In his heartfelt message, Davido articulated that this substantial donation would not only benefit orphanages but would also extend to a charity dedicated to combating drug abuse among the youth.

With a vibrant career spotlighted by chart-topping hits and countless accolades, Davido continues to use his platform to effect change and uplift vulnerable populations in society.

His commitment to philanthropy stands as a testament to his dedication to not just his music but also to the betterment of his community.

In his social media post, Davido expressed, "Once again, for my birthday this year, we are donating to orphanages and a charity that helps young people stay away from drug abuse & addiction. This year is N300m. Details to follow soon."

The anticipation surrounding his charitable actions is palpable, with many fans eagerly awaiting further details that he promises to share in subsequent posts.

This latest initiative is not an isolated event in Davido's philanthropic journey. The singer has a well-documented history of charitable giving, particularly during birthday celebrations.

Fans of the artist will recall that in November 2021, he made headlines when he donated N250 million to 292 orphanages as part of his 29th birthday festivities.

This groundbreaking donation set a precedent in the entertainment industry and showcased the potential for social responsibility among artists.

Davido's unwavering commitment to supporting orphans and vulnerable youth is commendable, especially in a country where many children face challenges due to poverty and social injustice.

By directing funds towards orphanages, Davido aims to provide a lifeline for these children, offering them not just financial support but also hope for a brighter future.

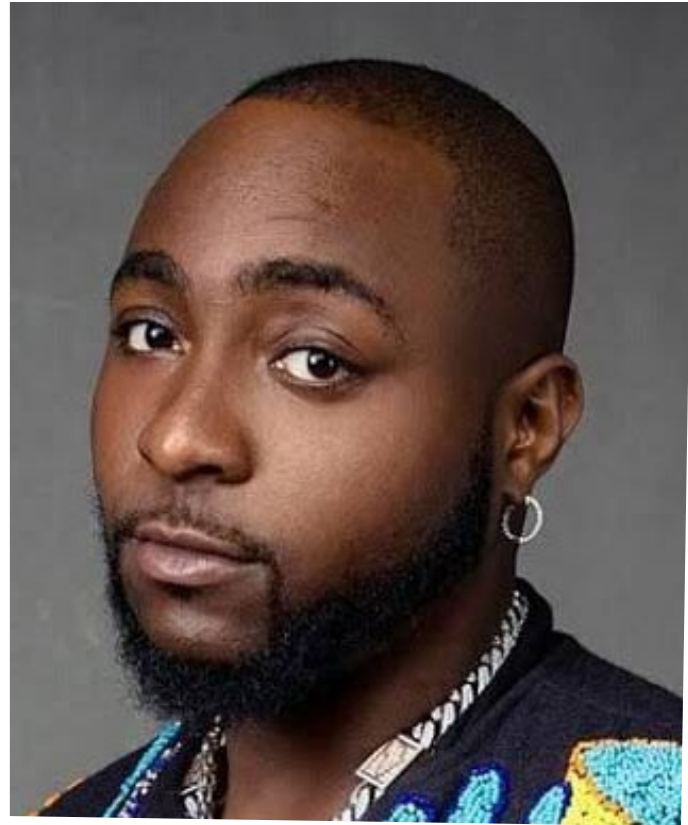
Furthermore, his decision to incorporate a focus on drug abuse prevention aligns with a critical issue affecting many young people in Nigeria and around the world.

The opioid crisis and rising drug addiction statistics emphasize the urgent need for awareness and intervention, particularly among youth who are particularly vulnerable to such influences.

By contributing to an organization that tackles these pressing challenges, Davido is taking a proactive stance against substances that could lead to addiction and subsequent life-altering consequences.

As the countdown to his birthday begins, the excitement surrounding Davido's generous announcement serves as a reminder of the profound impact that celebrities can have on society.

It encourages other public figures to engage in charitable endeavours, fostering a culture of giving back.



With a substantial donation set to preside over his birthday celebration, Davido stands yet again as a beacon of hope for many less fortunate individuals in Nigeria.

His unwavering dedication to charitable action transforms not only his milestones into moments of significant societal impact but also inspires his fans to take part in nurturing the community.

As the day approaches, the anticipation of Davido's benevolence looms large, and one can only imagine the joy that his donations will bring to those in need.

The music star's example is a powerful reminder of the difference that one individual can make.



# I'm wife material' – DJ Cuppy claims

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian disc jockey and music producer Florence Otedola, affectionately known as DJ Cuppy, has proudly proclaimed herself as “wife material.”

In a recent social media post, DJ Cuppy shared a candid image of herself engaged in household chores, specifically doing laundry.

Accompanying the photograph, she took the opportunity to celebrate her qualities, emphasizing her hardworking nature and loving disposition.

Her playful caption read, “Wifey material: doing laundry and trying not to break hearts at the same time,” showcasing her light-hearted yet confident demeanour.

The 32-year-old music icon, who has made waves not only in the entertainment industry but also among her followers, made headlines last year with her surprising engagement to British professional boxer Ryan Taylor.

However, her romantic journey has seen its fair share of ups and downs. DJ Cuppy finds herself in the public eye as a single woman, navigating the complexities of love and personal growth.

In a recent online confession, DJ Cuppy revealed that any prospective suitor aiming to marry her must first seek divine guidance.

She expressed her desire for a deep spiritual connection, stating, “God may I be so deep in you that my husband has to seek you first before he may find me.”

This poignant message highlights her commitment to her faith and her intention to prioritize spiritual alignment in her future relationships. DJ Cuppy's relationship history has garnered considerable media attention, particularly following her engagement to Ryan Taylor.

The pair's whirlwind romance took many by surprise when they announced their engagement in November 2022, but just seven months later, in July 2023, their

relationship came to an unexpected end.

The split left fans and followers speculating about the reasons behind the separation, as the couple had seemingly enjoyed a brief but passionate connection.

As a prominent figure in the Nigerian music scene, DJ Cuppy continues to captivate audiences with her talent and charisma.

Her dedication to her craft, along with her vibrant personality, makes her a beloved character both on and off the stage.

Despite the challenges she faces in her personal life, she remains focused on her career and her aspirations.

Cuppy's social media presence is a blend of her musings, professional milestones, and glimpses into her entertaining lifestyle.

Her decision to openly discuss her thoughts on marriage and relationships, particularly her insistence on spiritual compatibility, resonates with many of her followers who appreciate her authentic approach to love and life.

In a time when many people are encouraged to share their vulnerabilities, DJ Cuppy's candidness about her current single status and the search for a meaningful partnership sets her apart in the entertainment industry.

Her contemplation of what it means to be “wife material” reflects not only her values but also the modern struggles many young women face as they navigate romance in a complex world. As she forges ahead, DJ Cuppy's story serves

as a reminder of the importance of self-worth, the significance of seeking



divine guidance in relationships, and the power of embracing both personal ambition and the potential for love.

In a world that often conflates celebrity with romance, DJ Cuppy's unabashed self-assertion as ‘wife material’ sparks conversations about the evolving expectations of relationships.

As fans eagerly await her next career move, they are equally invested in her journey toward love and fulfilment, rooting for her every step of the way.

It remains to be seen what the future holds for DJ Cuppy, but her journey of self-discovery and affirmation continues to inspire many.

# Marriage often stops artists' careers- Phyno

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian rapper Chibuzor Nelson Azubuike, better known by his stage name Phyno, has opened up about the challenges faced by celebrities when they decide to tie the knot.

In a candid discussion on a recent episode of the "In My Opinion" podcast, Phyno highlighted the precarious nature of balancing a demanding musical career with the commitments and responsibilities that come with marriage.

Phyno, famed for his hit single "Alabam," articulated his views on the pressures of the music industry, referring to it as "jealous and tasking."

His reflections shed light on a common trend he has observed: many artists experience a downturn in their careers after getting married.

He mentioned, "Check everybody, statistically, I feel so [most celebrities' careers crash when they get married]." This comment resonates with the lived experiences of numerous artists who have watched their careers falter after making significant life decisions.

According to Phyno, the music industry demands unwavering dedication. He remarked, "Music basically is a jealous career. That's why people drop out of school to face music."

This statement underscores the sacrifices many musicians make, often prioritizing their craft over formal education or other life pursuits.

Those who attempt to balance both worlds, he acknowledged, deserve immense recognition. "You have to give them kudos because it's not easy," he stated, reflecting on the relentless commitment required to thrive in such a competitive field.

The rapper elaborated further on the nature of the music-making process, emphasizing that the depth of an

artist's work often stems from their personal experiences. "Music is tasking; it takes all your time," he explained.

This assertion speaks volumes about the emotional and mental investment required to create music that resonates with audiences.

Phyno pointed out that genuine artistry demands authenticity, and life experiences play a significant role in the creation of compelling music.

Read Also: Why I rap in Igbo – Phyno

He continued, highlighting the juxtaposition of happiness in songwriting while grappling with personal strife:

"Another thing about music is that it is what you pass through that you put into it life experiences except if you use songwriters."

Phyno's honesty about the challenges faced by musicians echoes a broader narrative within the industry, where personal struggles can often influence creative expression.

He poignantly noted that it is difficult to write about joy and fulfilment while navigating tumultuous personal relationships, saying, "But if you write your songs, you can't be talking about happiness when you've got a girlfriend that's stressing you."

As Phyno navigates his own career, his insights serve as a reflection of a broader phenomenon in the entertainment world, where the collision of personal and professional lives can often lead to



unforeseen challenges.

The rapper's thoughts serve as a cautionary tale, particularly for aspiring artists who may overlook the demands of their chosen path in light of the allure of fame and success.

Phyno's candid revelations serve as an important reminder of the complexities faced by artists in the music industry.

While the desire for love and companionship is universal, the interplay between marital commitments and a demanding career often presents unique challenges.

As artists continue to navigate their paths, Phyno's insights may resonate deeply with many, prompting a more nuanced understanding of the sacrifices involved in pursuing both love and a successful music career.



# Biden becomes first sitting US president to visit Amazon rainforest

By Dave Oludare Oso

President Biden urged leaders to work to protect the environment on Sunday, during a visit to the Amazon rainforest that marked the first such trip by any sitting U.S. president in history, warning that “history is literally atching us now.”

“Today, I’m proud to be here — the first sitting U.S. president to visit the Amazon rainforest — to recommit to protecting the rainforests, like this one” the president said.

He added that “the fight to protect our planet is literally a fight for humanity for generations to come.”

Biden has made addressing climate change a key part of his policy agenda, approving legislation that reduces emissions, while setting the country on a path toward a transition to green energy. With the visit Sunday, the president highlighted his commitment to combatting global deforestation and conserving forests as part of what the White House calls Mr. Biden’s “historic climate legacy.”

The president said the “fight against climate change has been a defining cause of my presidency,” touting rejoining the Paris Agreement, launching a global methane pledge and delivering on climate financing.

The president announced during the visit that the U.S. has reached its goal of increasing its climate finance to over \$11 billion a year, up from \$1.5 billion when Biden took office. He also designated Nov. 17 as International Conservation Day, while the administration announces new conservation efforts including \$50



million for the Amazon Fund, among other initiatives.

And he cited the passage of the “most significant climate change law in history,” referring to the Inflation Reduction Act, which cuts carbon while creating clean energy investments and jobs.

Biden outlined that leaders “don’t have to choose between the environment and the economy,” urging that “we can do both.”

He was joined by his daughter, Ashley Biden and granddaughter Natalie Biden as they visited, the Amazon Rainforest in Manaus, Brazil, before heading to Rio de Janeiro for the G20 Summit.

Earlier Sunday, Biden took an aerial tour of the Amazon rainforest and he met local and Indigenous leaders and toured a local museum, before he’s set to head to Rio de Janeiro for the G20 summit with world leaders

The trip comes after the president has been attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in

Peru in recent days, where he met with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping.

The historic visit comes as climate advocates have warned of the environmental consequences of President-elect Donald Trump’s plans to roll back the Biden administration’s efforts to combat climate change.

The president addressed his term coming to an end in his remarks, saying he’s leaving his successor and country with “a strong foundation to build on, if they choose to do so.”

“It’s true, some may seek to deny or delay the clean energy revolution that’s underway in America, but nobody, nobody can reverse it,” Biden said, adding, “The question now is —which government will stand in the way, and which will seize the enormous economic opportunity.”

# America will use military for mass deportation – Trump

By Dave Oludare Oso

Incoming United States President, Donald Trump has confirmed that he plans to declare a national emergency on border security and use the US military to carry out a mass deportation of undocumented migrants.

During the election campaign, immigration was a top issue, and the then Republican candidate promised to deport millions and stabilize the border with Mexico after record numbers of migrants crossed illegally during President Joe Biden's administration.

Fast-forward to Monday (today), on his social media platform, Truth Social, Trump amplified a recent post by a conservative activist that said the president-elect was "prepared to declare a national emergency and will use military assets to reverse the Biden invasion through a mass deportation program."

Alongside the repost, Trump commented, "True!"

The former president sealed a remarkable comeback to the presidency in his November 5 defeat of Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris.

He has been announcing a cabinet featuring immigration hardliners, naming former Immigration and Customs Enforcement acting chief, Tom Homan as his "border czar."

Homan appeared at the Republican National Convention in July, telling supporters: "I got a message to the millions of illegal immigrants that Joe Biden's released in our country: You better start packing now."

Authorities estimate that some 11 million people are living in the United States illegally. Trump's



deportation plan is expected directly to impact around 20 million families.

While the US government has struggled for years to manage its southern border with Mexico, Trump has super-charged concerns by claiming an "invasion" is underway by migrants he says will rape and murder Americans.

During his campaign, Trump repeatedly railed against undocumented immigrants, employing incendiary rhetoric about foreigners who "poison the blood" of the United States and misleading his audiences about immigration statistics and policy.

Trump has not elaborated on his immigration crackdown in any detail but during his election campaign repeatedly vowed to invoke the Alien

Enemies Act of 1798 to speed up deportations.

Critics say the law is outdated and point to its most recent use during World War II to hold Japanese-Americans in internment camps without due process.

The number of US border patrol encounters with migrants crossing from Mexico illegally is now about the same as in 2020, the last year of Trump's first term, after peaking at a record 250,000 for the month of December 2023.



# Trump picks Musk's ally, Brendan Carr to head FCC

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

President-elect Donald Trump has named Republican Brendan Carr, an Elon Musk-backed critic of big tech, to lead the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), calling Carr a "warrior for Free Speech" in a statement on Sunday.

Carr has "fought against the regulatory Lawfare that has stifled Americans' Freedoms" and will "end the regulatory onslaught that has been crippling America's job creators and Innovators, and ensure that the FCC delivers for rural America," Trump said in the statement.

Carr said on Musk's social platform X that he was "humbled and honored" to take on the role of FCC chairman.

"We must dismantle the censorship cartel and restore free speech rights for everyday Americans," he wrote in another post Sunday.

It is a phrase he has used repeatedly, posting on Friday: "Facebook, Google, Apple, Microsoft & others have played central roles in the censorship cartel," adding that it "must be dismantled."

Carr was already the senior Republican on the FCC, an independent agency that regulates licenses for television and radio, pricing of home internet, and other communications issues in the United States.

The five-person commission will have a 3-2 Democratic majority until next year, when Trump will get to appoint a new member, The Associated Press points out, adding that Carr has also been the commission's general counsel and was confirmed unanimously by the Senate three times and nominated by both Trump and President Biden to the commission.

Long rumored as a contender for FCC chair, he has built an alliance with billionaire Musk, Trump's wealthiest backer, whose Starlink satellite internet service could benefit from access to federal cash.



The New York Times reported that Starlink received an \$885 million grant in late 2020 from the FCC, but that the Democrat-led commission later revoked it because the service couldn't prove it would reach enough unconnected rural homes.

Carr "vociferously" opposed the decision, the newspaper reported.

"In my view, it amounted to nothing more than regulatory lawfare against one of the left's top targets: Mr. Musk," he wrote in a Wall Street Journal opinion article last month.

Carr has also publicly agreed with the incoming Trump administration's promises to slash regulation and punish television networks for what they say is political bias.

Trump has repeatedly called to strip major broadcasters such as ABC, NBC and CBS of their licences.

During the 2024 campaign, he singled out CBS, saying its licence should be revoked after its flagship news programme "60 Minutes" aired an interview with his Democratic opponent, Kamala Harris.

Trump had declined to sit for a similar interview.

Trump sued CBS News, alleging the network's "deceitful" editing of the 60

Minutes interview of Harris misled the public and unfairly disadvantaged him.

In a statement, CBS News called the former president's claims "completely without merit" and said the network intended to vigorously defend against the lawsuit.

Carr also wrote a chapter on the FCC in the controversial Project 2025 document that purported to lay out a vision for a second Trump administration, in which he also called for the regulation of the largest tech companies, such as Meta, Google and Apple.

The FCC needs to bring new urgency to four main goals: reining in big tech, promoting national security, "unleashing" economic prosperity and ensuring FCC accountability, he wrote in the document by the conservative Heritage Foundation.

Carr was a strong foe of the FCC's reinstatement in April of landmark net neutrality rules that were repealed during the first Trump administration, the Reuters news agency notes. The Biden FCC rules were in turn put on hold by a federal appeals court.

# Iran slammed fresh EU, UK sanctions for arming Russia

By Dave Oludare Oso

The European Union on Monday announced an expansion of sanctions against Iran following its longstanding support for Russia in its war against Ukraine.

The new sanctions include targeting vessels and ports involved in the transfer of drones and missiles.

The 27-nation group has decided to ban any deal with ports used to transport Iranian drones, missiles or Russian-linked technology and components, it said in a statement during a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels.

Meanwhile, Britain also announced new sanctions earlier Monday against the Iranian airline, the Iranian shipping company and the Russian ship Port Olya-3, according to an update from the British government.

The EU's new measures prohibit any transactions with ports owned or controlled by sanctioned individuals or entities involved in these transfers.

However, the EU clarified that assistance could still be provided to vessels in distress, in accordance with maritime safety laws.

In addition to targeting ports, Brussels has sanctioned Iran's state-run shipping company, IRISL, and its director, Mohammad Reza Khiabani, as well as three Russian shipping firms accused of transporting weapons across the Caspian Sea to



Russia.

These actions followed earlier sanctions on Iranian officials and airlines suspected of aiding Russia's war effort.

The UK has also taken action, freezing the assets of IRISL and Iran Air, which has been accused of transporting ballistic missiles and military equipment to Russia.

The British government has further banned the Russian cargo vessel Port Olya-3 from entering any UK port.

These moves by the EU and UK build on earlier sanctions imposed by the E3 powers (UK, France, and Germany) in response to Iran's alleged supply of short-range missiles to Russia.

Iran rejects Western accusations it has transferred missiles or drones to Moscow for use against Kyiv.

Ahead of the new sanctions' announcement, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Sunday

that the EU was using the "non-existent missile pretext" to target its shipping lines.

"There is no legal, logical or moral basis for such behaviour. If anything, it will only compel what it ostensibly seeks to prevent," Araghchi wrote on X.

"Freedom of navigation is a basic principle of the law of the sea. When selectively applied by some, such shortsightedness usually tends to boomerang."

The sanctions came at a difficult time for Iran, which is already struggling under US sanctions imposed after Washington's 2018 withdrawal from the nuclear deal.

Iran's economy continues to face significant pressure, and the government has warned that it will carefully consider its response to the new measures.



# Saboteur Chad security personnel arrested over collaboration with militants

By Agency Reporter

Chadian authorities have reportedly detained several security personnel accused of colluding with Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) factions to facilitate attacks on defensive sites in Baggara, Lac Province.

The arrests, part of Operation Haskinate, were revealed in a series of interrogation videos received on 15 November 2024.

The videos depict the suspects, including one from the Guran ethnic group, known for historical opposition to the late President Idriss Déby and his Zaghawa-led administration.

The Guran, associated with the late Hissène Habré, have been implicated in tensions with the Zaghawa tribe, currently led by President Mahamat Idriss Déby.

During interrogation, one detainee reportedly expressed allegiance to Boko Haram and jihadist ideals.

Statements made during the questioning included: A declaration that the Zaghawa tribe, despite holding power,

“does not follow the Quran properly.” Claims of seeking “Shahada” (martyrdom) as part of his faith. Assertions that “power belongs to Allah and Muslims,” while labeling the Sara ethnic group, predominantly Christian, as having no legitimate role in Chad.

When questioned about potential jihadist networks, the suspect indicated a global presence of sympathizers, mentioning countries such as Saudi Arabia, Palestine, and Chad.

He called on Chadian Muslims to rise against perceived “unbelievers,” while denying any intention of outright war, instead advocating for “fighting” in a religious context.

Troops involved in the operation reportedly reassured the suspect that he would not be executed, despite his



statements challenging the state's authority.

The arrests come amid growing concerns over insurgent activity and alleged infiltration within security ranks in Chad's Lac Province, a region plagued by instability and cross-border militant movements.

# Xi's Olive branch to Trump comes with warning on red lines

By Agency Reporter

Xi Jinping used his final meeting with Joe Biden to send a clear message to Donald Trump: China wants to be friends, but is ready for a fight if necessary.

With Biden set to leave the White House in January, China's leader took Saturday's meeting as a chance to spell out his approach toward Trump.

That entails finding a way for the world's two biggest economies to get along, with Xi emphasizing that the US and China shouldn't fight a “new Cold War,” and a conflict between them isn't inevitable.



# Russian ballet star, Vladimir Shklyarov plunges to death

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

One of ballet world's brightest stars, Vladimir Shklyarov, is dead.

He was aged 39.

Shklyarov, a principal dancer with the iconic Mariinsky Theatre, known for his extraordinary talent, captivated audiences across the globe with his performances.

The Mariinsky Theatre announced his passing on Saturday, describing it as a "huge loss not only for the theatre's staff but for all of contemporary ballet."

Russian media reported that Shklyarov fell from the fifth floor of a building in St. Petersburg while taking painkillers, and federal authorities are investigating. The theatre shared its grief in a statement: "Our condolences to the artist's family, loved ones, friends, and all the numerous admirers of his work and talent."

Shklyarov leaves behind his wife, fellow Mariinsky dancer Maria Shklyarov, and their two children.

Born in Leningrad, Shklyarov's passion for dance began at the prestigious

Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet, where he graduated in 2003. He joined the Mariinsky Theatre the same year and rose to the rank of principal dancer in 2011.

Over two decades, he became a leading figure in the company, starring in classic productions like *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Don Quixote*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

His talent and artistry brought him to some of the world's most renowned stages, including London's Royal Opera House and New York's Metropolitan Opera. In 2014 and 2015, he performed as a guest artist with the American Ballet Theatre, which shared a moving tribute on Sunday.

The American Ballet Theatre wrote on Instagram, "We mourn the tragic loss of Vladimir Shklyarov, an extraordinary artist whose grace and passion inspired audiences worldwide.

"Your light will continue to shine through the beauty you brought to this



world."

Shklyarov's contributions to ballet earned him numerous accolades, including the Léonide Massine International Prize in 2008. In 2020, he was named an Honoured Artist of Russia.

Reflecting on his legacy, the Mariinsky Theatre said, "He forever inscribed his name in the history of world ballet."

# UK will be respectful, consistent, Starmer assures Xi

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Britain's Prime Minister, Keir Starmer met briefly with China's President, Xi Jinping at the Sheraton Hotel, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil moments before the commencement of the G20 summit meeting on Monday.

UK media reported that Starmer told the Chinese President Xi Jinping that Britain will be a "predictable, consistent, sovereign actor committed to the rule of law" in their bilateral ties.

According to Britain's Press Association, Starmer was said to



have told his Chinese counterpart, "We want our relations to be consistent, durable, respectful" and

to "avoid surprises where possible."

The summit has since commenced.



# Ademola Lookman shortlisted for CAF African player of the year award

By **Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE**

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has revealed its final shortlist for the prestigious African Player of the Year award, with Nigerian striker Ademola Lookman among the standout nominees.

The announcement on Monday highlighted a competitive field of five top African footballers vying for the coveted honor.\*

Lookman, who has enjoyed a remarkable season with Atalanta, is joined by South African goalkeeper Ronwen Williams, Morocco's defensive star Achraf Hakimi, Ivory Coast winger Simon Adingra, and Guinea's prolific striker Serhou Guirassy. The talented five are set to compete for the title of Africa's best male footballer, with each player having made significant contributions for their respective clubs and national teams.

Lookman's inclusion in the shortlist comes on the back of his stunning performance in the UEFA Europa League

final last season, where he scored a memorable hat-trick to help Atalanta defeat Bayer Leverkusen 3-0.

The Nigerian forward's form in European competition has seen him emerge as a favorite for the award, with many experts tipping him to claim the title.

While Lookman is a prominent contender, other nominees have also made waves on the continental stage. Hakimi continues to shine as one of Europe's top defenders with Paris Saint-Germain, while Guirassy has been in sensational form for Stade Rennais in Ligue 1. Adingra, too, has impressed with his pace and creativity on the wing for Club Brugge.

Victor Osimhen, Nigeria's other star forward, claimed the 2023 African Player of the Year award after an outstanding season with Napoli, where he helped the Italian club secure their first Serie A title in over



three decades.

Osimhen's move to Galatasaray on loan for the current season has not diminished his status as one of Africa's most prominent talents.

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

Manchester United manager, Ruben Amorim is reportedly exploring a swap deal to bring in Napoli's star forward, Victor Osimhen. Amorim eyes the deal in the January transfer window.

The proposed deal would see United offer Dutch striker Joshua Zirkzee plus cash to secure Osimhen's services.

Zirkzee, who joined Manchester United from Bologna last summer, has struggled to make an impact, scoring just once in 17 appearances.

Reports suggest that the Red Devils are ready to offload the 22-year-old as part of their efforts to strengthen their attacking options.

Napoli currently values Osimhen at €75 million, but United's initial proposal, according to Il Mattino (via Cn24), will include €30 million in cash alongside Zirkzee.

The club hopes this combination will tempt the Serie A side into a deal.

Osimhen, who is on loan at Galatasaray continues to attract interest from top European clubs due to his exceptional form.

## Amorim targets Zirkzee-Osimhen swap deal for Manchester United



# Tottenham's Bentancur given seven-game ban for racial slur

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Tottenham Hotspur midfielder, Rodrigo Bentancur has been slapped with a seven-match domestic ban by the Football Association (FA) following an alleged racist comment made about his teammate, Son Heung-min, during a TV interview.

The 27-year-old was charged by the FA in September over an incident that occurred in his home country of Uruguay.

The former Juventus player had been asked in June about a Spurs player's shirt, to which he responded, "Sonny's? It could be Sonny's cousin too as they all look the same."

Bentancur, who has also been fined £100,000 (\$126,000), later apologized to Son, the South Korean international. However, the comment was deemed an "aggravated breach," leading an independent regulatory commission to review the case.

The commission decided to uphold the FA's charge, resulting in Bentancur's

ban.

The panel upheld the charge and Bentancur will have to sit out Tottenham's next seven domestic fixtures, though he will be able to play in Europa League matches against Roma and Rangers.

The FA said in a statement that it was alleged that the incident constituted an "aggravated breach... as it included a reference, whether express or implied, to nationality and/or race and/or ethnic origin."

"Rodrigo Bentancur denied this charge, but the independent regulatory commission found it to be proven and imposed his sanctions following a hearing," it added.

Son, speaking in late September, said: "He apologized straight afterwards when we had holiday. I was at home. I didn't even realize what was going on. He sent me a long message and you could feel it was coming from his heart."



Tottenham manager, Ange Postecoglou said Bentancur had acknowledged his mistake and had pleaded for leniency.

Bentancur will not return to domestic action until December 26, missing Premier League matches against Manchester City, Chelsea and Liverpool as well as Tottenham's League Cup quarter-final against Manchester United.

# Horrific scenes in Honduras: fans bleed Mexico coach's head

By Dave Oludare Oso

Mexico national football team coach, Javier Aguirre suffered a head injury after being hit by an object late in the quarter-final match from the League of Nations against Honduras on Friday, reports AP.

At the end of the match, which Mexico lost 2-0 in San Pedro Sula (Honduras), Aguirre went to congratulate Colombia coach, Reynaldo Rueda when he was hit by an object, apparently a beer can, which cut him and left his head bleeding.

"Nothing, it's just football, the match was difficult, they played better. I don't need to mention the incident, I'm not one to complain. It's just football, nothing happened," Aguirre said at a press conference after the match.

The 65-year-old specialist is starting for Mexico for the third time, after taking over in August last year.

"I am sad about what happened at the end of the match because he is a human being. I want to apologize to the Mexican people and to Aguirre, this shouldn't happen,"



commented Rueda.

Mexico will host Honduras next Tuesday in the second leg of the tournament's quarterfinal series.