

The New Daily Prime



Presidency proposes bill to provide housing for poor, unemployed citizens

PAGE 17

65 million households watched Tyson-Paul match – Netflix

PAGE 2

EFCC once investigated me for two years – Olukoyede

PAGE 2

G20 summit: Tinubu endorses global alliance against hunger, poverty

PAGE 7

'It hurts'- Don Jazzy expresses pain over lack of partner

PAGE 22

Hezbollah agrees to ceasefire with Israel Pg30

Tinubu seeks lawmakers' approval for fresh \$2.2bn loan

PAGE 3

EFCC once investigated me for two years – Olukoyede

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ola Olukoyede, has revealed that he was under investigation by the anti-graft agency for two years over allegations of corruption.

He spoke during the opening of the sixth Annual Criminal Law Review Conference organized by the Rule of Law Development Foundation in Abuja on Monday.

Reaffirming his dedication to upholding transparency and accountability within the EFCC, Olukoyede also announced the recent dismissal of two EFCC operatives who were found guilty of corrupt practices.

He said the operatives, dismissed two weeks ago, are now facing prosecution, highlighting the agency's zero-tolerance policy towards corruption within its ranks.

The anti-corruption czar said, "We are preparing the case files of some of the people we have dismissed. If an EFCC staff will not be able to stand publicly with his two hands up and challenge the entire public; whose goat have I

collected? Whose bottle of water have I taken illegitimately?

"I have said this to Nigerians; who has ever given me one kobo in the course of my work, come out and say it. I stand to be challenged. I can't be easily influenced by things like that. Any staff that is corrupt, I will show you the way out.

"Again, there are some people who may want to be overzealous. Out of 12, you must have Judas. I can't stand here and say all is perfect. As many as you see, report them to us, and we will do justice."

Olukoyede said that he was once subjected to investigation for two years as an EFCC secretary.

"I am not just sitting there as chairman of EFCC. I have been on the other side. I have been subjected to investigation myself for two years. So, I know what it means to subject people to investigations. My major objective is to use the instrumentality of this mandate to stimulate the economy and to also



follow the rule of law," he said.

He said integrity is needed to survive, even as legal practitioners.

"Integrity is not about law. It is not about your advocacy ability to write beautiful briefs. No. It is about law and morality. Your conscience must tell you to do the right thing. That is what integrity is all about. Finally, ethics, values and standards of legal practice must also be reviewed.

"These are essential to me because the job of EFCC is to ensure that corruption does not find space in our national life," he said.

The EFCC boss said he welcomed constructive criticism of the agency.



By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

More than 60 million households around the globe tuned into the much-touted boxing match between retired boxing legend, Mike Tyson and social-media star, Jake Paul, according to Netflix.

"It was a record-breaking night for Netflix," peaking at 65 million

65 million households watched Tyson-Paul match – Netflix

concurrent streams, Netflix stated Saturday in a news release.

The Friday night fight pitting the 27-year-old Paul against someone more than twice his age finished without any knockdowns and a loss by unanimous decision for the 58-year-old Tyson.

Marred by reports of troubles with the video quality or interruptions during the undercard matches, the issues monitored by the website downdetector.com had fallen by the main event, which began about 11 p.m. local time in Texas.

Held at AT&T Stadium, the match purportedly garnered about \$40 million for Paul and \$20 million for Tyson.

Netflix acknowledged the complaints registered on social media, with X users posting heavily pixelated videos professing to be of the match.

"The boxing-mega event dominated social media, shattered records and even had our buffering systems on the ropes," the streaming service posted on X Saturday.

The subscription streaming service also said 50 million households watched Katie Taylor defeat Amanda Serrano in what Netflix said marked the most-watched professional women's sporting event in U.S. history.

Tinubu seeks lawmakers' approval for fresh \$2.2bn loan

By Dave Oludare Oso

The President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Tuesday wrote to the National Assembly, seeking the approval of a fresh \$2.2 billion loan as a new external borrowing plan in the 2024 Appropriation Act.

The President's request was contained in a letter read by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, during plenary on Tuesday.

The loan, if approved, will be used to finance part of the budget deficit of N9.7 trillion for the 2024 budget.

Tinubu also forwarded the 2025-2027 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and the Fiscal Strategy Paper (FSP) to the National Assembly for consideration and approval.

Also, the president sent the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) Establishment Amendment Bill to make the social register the primary tool for the implementation of the Federal Government's social welfare

programmes.

The letter read in parts, "Request for the resolution of the National Assembly for the implementation of the new external borrowing of N1,767,102,179.00, that is about \$2.209bn

already enshrined in the 2024 Appropriation Act.

"In accordance with the provisions of Sections 21 and 27 Subsection 1, the Debt Management Office established Act 2003 and the approval of the Federal Executive Council, I write the request for a resolution of the National Assembly to raise the sum of \$2.209bn.

"The new external borrowing enshrined in the 2024 Appropriations Act, part financed the budget to about \$9.17 trillion.

"A Euro bond of about \$1.7bn and



Sukuk financing of another \$500m the actual makeup of the financing."

Similarly, the second letter read, "Please receive the 2025-2027 MTF and FSP approved during the Federal Executive Council meeting on the 10th day of November 2024.

"The Senate is invited to note that as the 2025 budget of the Federal Government of Nigeria will be prepared based on the parameters and fiscal assumptions of the approved 2025-2027 MTF and FSP, it is imperative to seek the National Assembly's expeditious legislative action in this submission.

DSS arrests ex-Ogun PDP gov candidate, Ladi Adebutu

By Dave Oludare Oso

On Monday evening, the Department of State Services (DSS) in Ogun State arrested the 2023 governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Oladipupo Adebutu.

NEW DAILY PRIME gathered that Adebutu was arrested in respect of last Saturday's local government election in Ogun State.

He was accused of bringing 40 'illegal policemen' from MOPOL 49 in Lagos to the state on the day of the election and also going about the Ikenne local government area of the state with PDP thugs riding on motorcycles in an attempt to snatch ballot boxes while brandishing guns and other weapons. The party's publicity secretary, Kayode Adebayo, confirming his arrest to newsmen, saying he

(Adebutu) was detained for charges yet unknown.

Adebayo also noted that efforts to secure his bail proved abortive as at 10 pm on Monday.

He said, "The leader of the Peoples Democratic Party has truly been detained by the DSS for charges yet unknown.

"Several efforts have been made to secure his bail as at 10pm on Monday, 18th November, 2024 either on personal recognition or by a surety but none has yielded any result so far; his lawyers have been informed and they will take it up by tomorrow (Tuesday) morning."

He, however, urged the public and supporters of the party to maintain



calm and peace until the matter is resolved.

"However, our principal has called for calm and directed that all party members, supporters, and well-wishers should be rest assured that this time shall pass, it is one of the prices for our democracy," he added.

Share

Bwala fires back at Ndume, says 'You need prayers'

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

A new presidential aide, Daniel Bwala, on Monday, fired back at Senator Ali Ndume, who asked him to apologize for his previous attacks on the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC.)

Bwala was appointed Special Adviser to the President on Media and Public Communication by President Bola Tinubu last Thursday.

Ndume, following the appointment, had in a statement on Sunday, called on Bwala to apologize for his past conduct, particularly his opposition to the choice of Senator Kashim Shettima as Tinubu's running mate in 2023.

However, speaking during his first appearance since his appointment, in a session with State House Correspondents at the Aso Rock Villa on Monday, Bwala dismissed Ndume's advice, saying he enjoys a 'fantastic' relationship with the Vice President.

He said, "Ordinarily, I would not have

responded to his issue because when I was referred to what he said, I immediately contacted the Vice President. We both cracked jokes about that. I have a very fantastic relationship with the Vice President, which even started before the judgment of the court was delivered regarding the matter.

"The relationship became stronger in the build-up to the emergence of the leadership of the National Assembly. Since then, we've been having a very good relationship.

"But I know that the senator in question is having some troubled times; all I can say is that we need to pray for him, for God to guide and help him. But we are focused on the work of the President. It's not about Bwala. It's about the president."

He said he is replacing Ajuri Ngelale, who took an indefinite leave last September as President Tinubu's official spokesperson.

The appointment of Bwala by President Tinubu has generated intense debate, considering his vocal criticism of the president and the All



Progressives Congress and also his prior position as a spokesperson for Atiku Abubakar's 2023 presidential campaign.

With veteran journalist, Mr Bayo Onanuga serving as Special Adviser on Information and Strategy and former Sports Minister, Sunday Dare as Special Adviser on Public Communication and Orientation, Bwala's appointment also makes him the third Special Adviser to the President on a media-related role.

Fielding questions on concerns about overlap of roles, Bwala said, "There is no issue as to the differences in terms of the responsibility. Everybody knows his responsibility. I am not here to define the responsibility of anybody other than myself because it will amount to gaslighting anybody.

Gov Oyebanji approves N70,000 minimum wage

By **Friday Omosola**

Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji, has approved a minimum wage of N70,000 for all sectors of the public service in the state.

The state's head of service, Folakemi Olomjobi, disclosed this while addressing journalists at the government house on Tuesday.

Gov Oyebanji

The approval includes consequential adjustments for all categories of workers, including pensioners and local government staff.

READ ALSO: Gov Oyebanji mourns Ekiti Chief Judge

Ekiti Sjoined the growing list of states that have announced a new minimum wage for workers.



This follows the Federal negotiations with organized labour. Government's approval of the revised minimum wage after months of

Sanwo-Olu advocates export-driven economy, lauds FG's efforts

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, has stressed the need for Nigeria to focus more on export-driven economy, to improve the economy of the nation, noting that one of the fundamental issues at the root of the country's lingering economic situation is foreign exchange crisis.

The governor, however, gave kudos to the President Bola Tinubu's administration for laying the foundation to improve the exporting capacity to turn Nigeria's economy round.

Sanwoolu spoke on Tuesday, as the guest lecturer at the 36th Convocation Ceremony of Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos on the topic: "Developing Exportable Alternatives for Nigeria's Economic Recovery," where he noted sadly that the over-dependence on crude oil and gas had done far more harm than good to the economy, and to Nigerians' mindsets.

The governor said, "This crisis takes two main forms: first is the monopoly of crude oil and gas on our foreign exchange earnings. Our over-dependence in this way has done far more harm than good to the economy, and to our mindsets as a people.

"As we gradually but steadily make our way into the phase of recovery, one of the most important things we can do as a people and a nation, is to increase the focus on our export capacity and potential."

Governor Sanwo-Olu insisted that Nigeria should rather focus on exporting processed materials and not just raw materials, saying that was the only way it can take better advantage of her exportation.

According to him, countries that prosper from natural resources are the



ones that process and add value to it before exporting it, pointing out that oftentimes these were not even the countries in which those natural resources were to be found most abundantly.

This was just as he noted that President Tinubu had emerged at a most auspicious moment in the nation's journey, when, more than ever before, very tough and difficult decisions needed to be taken to shift the country away from the path of economic underperformance, onto the enduring path of productivity and prosperity.

"Now, a caveat is necessary here. When I speak about agricultural exports, I do not mean raw materials and unprocessed goods. If there is one lesson we have learnt over many decades, it is that there is no value or pride in exporting raw materials to the world.

"The countries that prosper from natural resources are the ones that process and add value to it before exporting it. And oftentimes, these are not even the countries in which those natural resources are to be found most abundantly.

"President Bola Tinubu has emerged at a most auspicious moment in our national journey, a time when, more than ever

before, very tough and difficult decisions need to be taken to shift the country away from the path of economic underperformance, onto the enduring path of productivity and prosperity," the governor stated.

Speaking further, Sanwo-Olu explained that for industries in Nigeria to thrive, the government needed to put in place all the needed infrastructure to enhance their performance, assuring that his administration was doing that by providing the needed social facilities.

"One of the biggest areas of concentration and intervention for us is in infrastructure, especially transport and logistics. We played a key role in the development of the Lekki Deep Sea Port, Nigeria's first Deep Sea Port, and West Africa's most modern port complex; including holding a 20 percent stake in the transformational project," he said.

10 things to know about International Men's Day

By Dave Oludare Oso

The International Men's Day (IMD) is usually celebrated annually on November 19th. It is a global initiative that acknowledges the contributions and challenges of men and boys.

The special day also provides a platform to highlight issues affecting men, such as health and emotional well-being, while promoting positive discussions about gender equality.

The day is also an opportunity to celebrate men as caregivers, mentors, and leaders, inspiring actions that foster inclusivity and mutual respect across genders.

The NEW DAILY PRIME joins the globe to celebrate the male gender.

Listed below are 10 facts you need to know about the special day:

Formalization in 1999

International Men's Day gained global recognition in 1999, with Dr. Jerome Teelucksingh of Trinidad and Tobago championing the celebration. November 19th was selected to honor his father's birthday and to serve as a reminder of the need for role models who demonstrate positive masculinity.

Although the concept originated earlier, the movement gained traction under his leadership, highlighting the importance of celebrating the diverse contributions and challenges of men worldwide.

Celebration of Men's Contributions

The day serves as a dedicated platform to celebrate the unique roles men and boys play in families, communities, and workplaces. Their efforts as caregivers, innovators, leaders, and mentors are essential to societal progress.

International Men's Day acknowledges and appreciates these contributions, encouraging others to reflect on the positive impact men have in their lives and communities.

Focus on Addressing Key Issues

International Men's Day sheds light on critical issues faced by men, including mental health stigma,

educational challenges, workplace discrimination, and fatherhood.

The observance advocates for open dialogue and solutions, aiming to create an environment where men feel supported and understood.

Discussions also emphasize the societal benefits of addressing these challenges collaboratively.

Highlighting Men's Health

Health is a major focus of International Men's Day, emphasizing the importance of physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Men often face higher rates of illnesses like heart disease, prostate cancer, and depression but are less likely to seek help.

This observance encourages awareness campaigns and proactive health check-ups while challenging societal norms that discourage vulnerability and emotional expression.

Promotion of Positive Masculinity

Redefining masculinity is a cornerstone of International Men's Day. It promotes values such as empathy, kindness, and accountability, challenging outdated stereotypes that associate masculinity with dominance or emotional suppression.

By encouraging a healthier understanding of masculinity, the celebration helps foster more meaningful relationships and inclusive societies.

Emphasis on Inclusivity

International Men's Day is not just for men but invites participation from all genders. The observance emphasizes that addressing men's issues is integral to achieving overall gender equality.

Discussions foster mutual respect, shared understanding, and collaboration, ensuring that the observance contributes to a fair and



balanced society for everyone.

Global Participation

Over 80 countries actively celebrate International Men's Day, making it a truly global observance. Events range from educational forums and workshops to community gatherings and health awareness campaigns.

The diversity of celebrations reflects the cultural, social, and economic realities of different regions, all united by the goal of supporting and uplifting men and boys.

Complementary Role to International Women's Day

Far from being a counterpoint to International Women's Day, International Men's Day complements it by encouraging a balanced narrative around gender equity.

The observance highlights that both men's and women's rights are interconnected and that fostering understanding and collaboration between genders benefits everyone.

Focus on Supporting Boys

The observance also prioritizes young boys by addressing challenges such as bullying, academic struggles, and societal expectations.

By creating supportive environments and nurturing their emotional and intellectual growth, International Men's Day seeks to empower boys to develop into confident and compassionate men who contribute meaningfully to society.

Encouragement of Action and Appreciation

G20 summit: Tinubu endorses global alliance against hunger, poverty

By Agency Reporter

President Bola Tinubu said on Monday that the creation of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, championed by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil, was pivotal in the global fight against hunger and poverty.

Tinubu said this at the 19th G20 Leaders Summit opening session in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

He lauded the initiative and described it as the right step to address one of the world's most significant challenges.

"This bold and visionary step underscores Brazil's leadership in addressing one of the most urgent and persistent challenges facing our world today.

"The creation of this Alliance marks a significant milestone in our global efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty, and it also sends a powerful message of solidarity to vulnerable populations around the globe.

"By fostering collaboration between governments, international organizations, and civil society, this initiative offers a comprehensive approach not only to addressing immediate needs but also tackling the structural causes of hunger and poverty," he said.

Tinubu compared the global initiative to one of the eight priority areas he outlined at his inauguration 18 months ago, expressing Nigeria's eagerness to adopt international best practices to advance its economic development.

According to him, Nigeria's endorsement of the declaration of commitment to join the Global Alliance is a significant step in its efforts to address hunger and poverty by leveraging international cooperation and resources to bolster domestic strategies.

He added that by supporting the initiative, Nigeria also demonstrated a solid commitment to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1, which focuses on eradicating poverty, and

SDG 2, which aims to achieve zero hunger.

"These goals are at the core of Nigeria's development agenda, and the Alliance offers a platform to accelerate progress towards them.

"By collaborating with international partners, Nigeria aims to leverage best practices, innovative solutions, and financial support to enhance its efforts to combat poverty and hunger.

"The endorsement reinforces Nigeria's role as a key player in global efforts to promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life for all its citizens," Tinubu said.

He emphasized the urgent need for the United Nations Security Council reform to ensure its continued relevance in global interventions.

He reiterated Nigeria's readiness and capability to represent Africa within this elite group.

President Tinubu called on the G20 to champion this noble ideal, having admitted the African Union as a group member.

"The Security Council should expand its permanent and non-permanent member categories to reflect the world's diversity and plurality. Africa deserves priority in this.

"The Security Council should expand its permanent and non-permanent member categories to reflect the world's diversity and plurality better.

"Africa deserves priority in this process, and two permanent seats should be allocated to it with equal rights and responsibilities. Nigeria stands ready and willing to serve as a representative of Africa in this capacity," said Tinubu.

Tinubu, in a statement read on his behalf by Amb. Yusuf Tuggar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, noted that, "the G20 now wears a toga of a forward-looking international institution that upholds reform-minded multilateralism."



He commended the decision of the G20 to grant permanent membership to the African Union and for its consistency in sustaining the tradition of inviting guest countries to join the group.

This broad participation, he said, allowed the opportunity for more inclusive and effective discussions to address shared global challenges.

"Some permanent members of the Council have shown promising signs of support for this process, which is a positive development. We welcome this shift in attitude and call for a faster pace to the long overdue change.

"The world faces various challenges, including extreme poverty, inequality, climate change, terrorism, and global conflicts," said the President.

According to him, these issues are exacerbated by longstanding inequities in the global governance system.

He added that they had led to unsustainable sovereign debt and distortions in access to capital markets, trade imbalances, unfair representations and hindered development in the Global South.

"It is our responsibility to find pragmatic solutions to fix these imbalances.

"Particularly pressing is global taxation, which profoundly impacts developing countries.

"The current international tax system, largely shaped by the interests of more affluent nations, often leaves developing countries at a disadvantage, especially in taxing digital economies.

Int'l students in US: Nigeria 1st in Africa, 7th globally

By Dave Oludare Oso

The US Embassy in Nigeria, has disclosed that Nigeria ranks first in Africa and seventh globally in international students in the United States.

The embassy quoted the 2024 Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange, in a statement on Tuesday.

According to the report, for the 2023/2024 academic year, 20,029 Nigerian students enrolled in US colleges and universities, marking a 13.5 per cent increase from the previous year.

The report, released during International Education Week, revealed that US institutions now host a record-breaking 1,126,690 international students, the highest in history.

Nigerian students represent a significant share of this population, known for their academic excellence and commitment to higher education.

More than 55 per cent of Nigerian students in the US are pursuing graduate-level studies, enriching the academic and cultural environment of American universities.

The statement further highlighted that, "The report reveals that US colleges and

universities host a record-breaking 1,126,690 international students this year, marking an all-time high for international enrolment.

"This milestone aligns with the 75th anniversary of the Open Doors Report, the leading benchmark for international educational exchange in the United States.

"Notably, Nigeria, with 20,029 students, reinforces its position as the top sending country from Africa and the seventh largest globally,"

The steady growth in Nigerian student enrolment reflects the high demand for US education and the strong ties between the two nations.

These connections are further strengthened by educational exchanges, which promote mutual understanding and global collaboration, the statement added. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the fastest-growing region for international education, with a 13 per cent increase in student mobility this year, following an 18 per cent rise in 2022/2023.



"Sub-Saharan Africa's student mobility grew by 13 per cent in 2023/24, maintaining its position as the fastest-growing region for the second year, following an 18 per cent increase in 2022/23.

"The influx of Nigerian students is a testament to the robust educational ties between the US and Nigeria," it added.

The Open Doors Report, published by the Institute of International Education in collaboration with the US Department of State, serves as a benchmark for global educational exchange.

It was unveiled as part of International Education Week, an initiative aimed at fostering cross-cultural learning and inspiring future leaders to pursue studies in the United States.

FCT: Wike approves N70,000 minimum wage

By Dave Oludare Oso

Nyesom Wike, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), has approved the payment of N70,000, the new minimum wage for all workers.

The development was contained in a statement signed by the Press Secretary to the FCT Head of the Civil Service, Anthony Odeh, and made available to journalists on Tuesday.

According to the statement, Wike approved the payment of the minimum wage on Monday, November 18, 2024, "in a bid to ameliorate the plight of workers

under the employ of Federal Capital Territory Administration."

Following months of negotiation with organized labour, President Bola Tinubu, signed the new Minimum Wage Bill into law in May 2024, approving N70,000 as minimum wage for workers.

The FCT chapters of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) to shut down activities on November 30, 2024, following directives from



the national arms of the labour unions to embark on a nationwide strike over the implementation of the minimum wage in some states, including the FCT.

IGP strengthens policing efforts, community partnerships in Delta

By Friday Omosola

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Kayode Egbetokun made a historic visit to Asaba, Delta State on Monday as part of his strategic mission to enhance security, operational efficiency, and community partnerships. During his visit, the IGP met with the Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, at the Government House. He commended the state government for its unwavering support of the police, particularly the donation of operational vehicles under the Delta State Operation Sweep initiative.

The vehicles were later commissioned by the Egbetokun alongside Governor Oborevwori.

IGP Kayode Egbetokun

Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Kayode Egbetokun during his visit to Delta State [PHOTO CREDIT:X]

The visit also featured the inauguration of the Police Public Relations Experts Conference, a groundbreaking event designed to improve public engagement strategies and build trust between the Police and the public.

READ ALSO: IGP to investigate, address concerns over detained minors
In his address, the IGP emphasised the

critical role of effective communication in modern policing and called on participants to leverage the conference to strengthen Police-Community relations.

Egbetokun engaged with key stakeholders, including traditional rulers, community leaders, civil society organizations, and the business community, in a collaborative dialogue to address security concerns and devise tailored solutions for the state.

At the Delta State Police Command Headquarters, Egbetokun commissioned the newly constructed Police Officers Mess, a modern facility aimed at improving officers' welfare and providing a professional and social hub.

Furthermore, he addressed officers and personnel of the Delta State Command, commending their dedication to maintaining law and order.

He assured them of the Police's commitment to prioritising their welfare and operational needs while urging them to remain professional and disciplined.

READ ALSO: IGP debunks ill-funding



allegation, calls for investigation

The IGP applauded the collaborative efforts of the Delta State government and its people, emphasising the importance of synergy between the police and the community in achieving lasting peace and security.

The visit underscores Egbetokun's commitment to reinforcing the operational capacity of the police while fostering meaningful partnerships with stakeholders to ensure a safer and more secure Nigeria.

Abducted NDLEA officers regain freedom in Delta

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Two Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) officers who were kidnapped in Delta State have regained their freedom.

Some gunmen abducted the officers on Thursday night some distance away from the head office of the agency located off the Isah-Ogwashi-Uku Road, Aniocha South Local Government Area of the state.

NDLEA, Delta State Command spokesperson, Mr John Kennedy, who confirmed the development to the NEW DAILY PRIME on Monday in Asaba, said the officers were released on Sunday night after much pressure

from the agency and other sister agencies.

Kennedy said, "I want to confirm the release of our officers, they were released on Sunday night after much pressure from the agency and other sister agencies."

"The senior officer was not abducted along with his orderly as it was reported, the senior officer was abducted and another officer was abducted in another location entirely."

While applauding other sister agencies for their efforts that resulted in the



release of the officers, the NDLEA spokesperson was silent about whether or not ransoms were paid for their freedom.

Tinubu's policies have saved Nigeria from economic crisis – Finance Minister

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, has credited President Bola Tinubu's initiatives, particularly the decision to halt the importation of fuel, for rescuing Nigeria from a potential economic disaster.

Edun made this statement on Monday, November 18, in Bauchi, during the opening of the National Council on Finance and Economic Development (NACOFED) conference, which carried the theme, "Fostering Economic Growth in Challenging Times."

He explained that while President Tinubu's administration inherited both the nation's assets and liabilities, decisive steps were necessary to stabilise the economy and move forward.

According to Edun, one of the key actions taken was ending the fuel subsidy, which he described as "bleeding" the economy at a rate of five percent of Nigeria's GDP annually.

The subsidy, he noted, only benefitted a small segment of society and neighboring countries, while

Nigerians at large gained little from the arrangement.

"The President has stopped the bleeding," Edun said.

"The fuel subsidy was costing the country billions and providing no real benefit to the masses. It was only helping a few individuals and neighboring nations, while Nigeria's own resources were being drained."

With the subsidy removed, Edun highlighted that the federal, state, and local governments would see increased revenue flows into the federation account.

These funds, he emphasised, would be used to invest not only in critical infrastructure but also in vital social services such as education and healthcare.

"The way is now clear for private sector investment, and we are back on track for industrialisation," Edun continued, pointing to developments in Nigeria's domestic petroleum refining sector.

"Crude oil is no longer just being exported; it is being refined locally, providing both fuel for the domestic market and raw materials for



industries."

Edun also took the opportunity to thank Bauchi State Governor Bala Mohammed for hosting the event and commended the organisers for their efforts in making the conference a reality.

In his remarks, Governor Bala Mohammed assured the attendees that every effort would be made to ensure the conference exceeded expectations, promising a productive and successful gathering.

32 saved by whiskers in Lagos-Ibadan Expressway nine-vehicle collisions

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

The Ogun State Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Agency (TRACE) has disclosed that about 32 persons were saved from death following the collisions of nine vehicles along the Danco area of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway on Monday.

TRACE Commandant, Seni Ogunyemi, in a traffic update on Monday, said the accident occurred due to excessive speeding and loss of control on the part of one of the drivers which resulted in multiple collisions with other vehicles.

The TRACE boss noted that 32 persons were involved in the accident

including 20 adult males and 12 adult females.

According to the traffic report, a Scania truck loaded with perishable items had fallen on the expressway after losing control due to speeding and thereby obstructing a section of the highway.

Ogunyemi said another driver who was not driving with caution had rammed into the fallen truck from the rear thereby leading to collisions with other vehicles. He said, "According to an eyewitness, excessive speed, loss of control by the driver of the Scania truck loaded with perishable goods and fell on the road. Also, excessive speed, and impatient by the Sino truck driver loaded with granites hit the Sienna from the rear which



affected the other mentioned vehicles."

He identified the vehicles involved as "a Ford jeep (KTU 980 FP), a Nissan jeep (GGE 440XP), a Sienna (AAA 609 LA), a Toyota Highlander (WDE 831AAA), and a Mazda bus (GNN 860 XB).

"Others are Toyota bus (SMK 860 FK), Sinotruck (JBD 51 XB), Scania truck (T.22058LA), and Toyota Camry (SRA 669 BL)."

Gov Oyebanji approves N70,000 minimum wage

By Friday Omosola

Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji, has approved a new minimum wage of N70,000 for state workers, effective from December 1.

The approval follows the signing of a wage negotiation report between the state government and leaders of organised labour.

The new minimum wage will apply to all categories of workers in the state, including pensioners. The agreement was signed by the state's Head of Service, Folakemi Olomjobi, on behalf of the government, while labour leaders signed on behalf of the workers. Olomjobi commended Governor Oyebanji for his unwavering commitment to workers' welfare and well-being, describing him as a "worker-friendly" leader.

She praised the patience and collaboration of the labour leaders in reaching the agreement, as well as the dedication of Ekiti workers who have waited for the outcome of the negotiation.

READ ALSO: Gov Oyebanji mourns Ekiti Chief Judge

"This is a significant milestone in Ekiti State's history. The governor put together a committee on August 31, 2024, to negotiate the minimum wage.

After over eight weeks of deliberations, the Governor has prioritized workers' needs, ensuring the best deal possible despite the state's financial constraints," she said.

The Head of Service also highlighted that the new wage agreement includes consequential adjustments and covers all sectors, from local government employees to workers in parastatals and Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs).

According to the Head of Service, pensioners will also benefit from the new minimum wage.

Labour leaders, including the Chairpersons of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Trade Union Congress (TUC), and Joint Negotiating Council (JNC), all expressed their appreciation for Governor Oyebanji's efforts.

They commended him for delivering one of the best wage agreements in the country.

Meanwhile, Governor Oyebanji reiterated his administration's commitment to workers' welfare, emphasising that the new minimum wage reflects the state's determination to



support and motivate its workforce for better service delivery.

READ ALSO: Oyebanji commissions Ikole township road, electricity project

He said since assuming office in October 2022, he has demonstrated a strong commitment to workers' well-being.

He said this includes regular salary and pension payments, and the introduction of a special wage award of N15,000 for workers and N10,000 for pensioners in response to the economic challenges following the fuel subsidy removal.

Additionally, the Governor announced he has allocated N4.5 billion over the last two months to settle outstanding gratuities owed to pensioners from previous administrations.

"With this new minimum wage, Ekiti State remains focused on improving the quality of public service and uplifting the welfare of its workers", he said.

Gov Diri inaugurates 15 Permanent Secretaries

By Friday Omosola

Bayelsa State Governor, Douye Diri, has inaugurated 15 newly appointed Permanent Secretaries in the state's Civil Service.

In a statement on his X page, Mr Diri urged the new Permanent Secretaries to leverage their wealth of experience in the performance of their duties, emphasising the need to strengthen and build a resilient public service.

The governor was joined at the inauguration by his deputy, Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo.

The statement partly read: "This afternoon, and in the company of the Deputy Governor of our dear State, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, we

inaugurated 15 newly appointed Permanent Secretaries in the Bayelsa State Civil Service.

READ ALSO: Gov Diri presents N689.4bn 2025 budget to assembly

"I am delighted to say that these

appointments were based on merit following the rules and regulations governing the civil service, as I charged them to lead with integrity and accountability."



He urged them to continue supporting the policies and programs of the current administration, as outlined in the second-term Assured Prosperity Agenda, to drive the state's development.

Police, Osun Park Management clash over shooting of chairman

By **Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE**



The Osun State Park Management System has accused the police of shooting its chairman, Nurudeen Iyanda, also known as Alowonle, while he was in custody.

The accusation followed Iyanda's arrest in connection with a domestic issue on Tuesday, November 19 morning.

In a statement issued by the group's Secretary, Mukaila Popoola, the Park Management System alleged that Iyanda was shot in the early hours of Tuesday under circumstances that warrant a full investigation.

Popoola urged members to remain calm and avoid taking the law into their own hands, assuring them that the matter would be pursued through the appropriate legal channels.

"We assert that our chairman was shot while in police custody, and we demand a thorough investigation into the matter," the statement read.

However, the police have responded to these allegations, with the acting Police Public Relations Officer for the Osun Command, Emmanuel Giwa-Alade, offering a different version of

events. Giwa-Alade claimed that Iyanda was shot while attempting to escape custody.

According to the police account, Iyanda had been arrested on Monday, alongside several associates, on charges of murder, attempted murder, unlawful possession of firearms, and malicious damage.

The arrest followed a petition filed by the complainant, which led to an investigation by the Anti-Kidnapping Unit of the Osun State Police Command.

Giwa-Alade explained that the police had acted on credible intelligence, which led them to a location on Ring Road, Osogbo, where Iyanda and his associates were allegedly planning to attack the complainant. When the police arrived, the suspects reportedly opened fire but were subdued, with nine individuals, including Iyanda, taken into custody.

As the suspects were being transported, the police claimed they were ambushed by a group of Iyanda's supporters, who forcibly freed him and four other detainees, all while still in handcuffs.

Following this escape, police traced Iyanda and his associates to a hideout in the Susi area of Oke Baale, Osogbo, where Iyanda was rearrested. During a search of his vehicle, the police recovered a Barrett pistol, six rounds of 9mm ammunition, and an expanded empty shell. Giwa-Alade stated that Iyanda attempted to escape again during the search, prompting the officers to shoot him in the process.

He confirmed that Iyanda was now receiving medical treatment and was in stable condition.

In response to growing tensions, the military has deployed soldiers to the Ilesha Garage area of Osogbo to maintain order and prevent any further unrest. Armed soldiers have temporarily halted passenger boarding activities in the area, effectively restricting movement around the motor park.

The situation remains tense, with both the police and the Park Management System accusing each other over the circumstances of Iyanda's arrest and shooting.

FRSC moves against fake diplomatic, unauthorized number plates

By Agency Reporter

The Corps Marshal, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Malam Shehu Mohammed has directed the immediate clampdown on the proliferation of fake diplomatic and other unauthorised number plates, as seen on some vehicles plying Nigerian roads.

Mohammed said this in a statement issued by the Corps Public Education Officer (CPEO) Mr Olusegun Ogungbemide on Tuesday in Abuja.

The FRSC boss said that the directive had become necessary in line with his administration's proactive approach towards contributing to enhancing national security.

He said that these identified number plates were fraudulently produced by suspected criminals, as they were neither produced by any of the production plants of the FRSC in the country nor issued by the Motor Licencing Authorities of states.

"The identified fake and unauthorized number plates include, but not limited to those with the following inscriptions:

"DIPLOMATIC NUMBER PLATES, NYCN, PEACE AMBASSADOR, NAUS, CYMS, UN-UNITY 01, UN-AMB, NANS among others," he said.

The FRSC Corps Marshal therefore approved immediate commencement of tactical enforcement across all formations of the Corps.

This, he said, was to ensure speedy arrest and impoundment of all vehicles on Nigerian roads with the above identified fake number plates or any other of its kind.

"By this notice, the public is hereby cautioned that these fake and unauthorized number plates are mostly used for nefarious and criminal activities.

"Pursuant to the foregoing, members of the public are advised to report anyone using such number plates to law enforcement bodies.

"Members of the public who are presently using such vehicle identifications are by this publication warned to immediately discontinue the use of these fake and unauthorised plates as defaulters will be prosecuted," he said.

The FRSC boss said that the corps would collaborate with other security agencies to uncover the sources of the fake number plates for necessary apprehension and prosecution.

"To achieve maximum impact in the aggressive enforcement, the Corps Owners of such vehicles shall be prosecuted along as accomplices.

"The Corps is committed to this action and will ensure that not even one of these nefarious individuals who are only driven by pecuniary gains to compromise the security architecture of the country will be left unarrested," he assured.

Alleged Corruption: EFCC dismisses two staff members

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has dismissed two of its staff members over allegations of corruption, with plans for their prosecution now underway.

EFCC Chairman, Mr. Ola Olukoyede, made the disclosure on Monday, November 18, at the opening of the 6th Annual Criminal Law Review Conference organised by the Rule of Law Development Foundation in Abuja.

Olukoyede revealed that the two staff members were dismissed two weeks ago for misconduct, emphasising that such actions are in line with ongoing reforms within the commission.

"We cannot be fighting corruption with dirty hands," Olukoyede stated.

"Those who come to equity must have clean hands." He further confirmed that, beyond dismissal, the commission would prosecute any staff found guilty of corrupt practices, as they would be held to the same standards as the individuals the EFCC prosecutes.

"Just two weeks ago, I caused the dismissal of two staff members," he



said.

"I will not only be dismissing them, but I will also be prosecuting them. We are already preparing case files for some of those dismissed."

Olukoyede also shared a personal experience, revealing that during his tenure as EFCC secretary, he was investigated for two years, underscoring the importance of

integrity in the fight against corruption.

He stressed that legal practitioners, in particular, must maintain high ethical standards to survive in the profession.

Additionally, Olukoyede confirmed that he had issued a directive to streamline EFCC prosecutions, specifying that no case should exceed a 15-count charge to improve efficiency in the commission's operations.

Sampson 'King Sax' Udo raped a girl and got away with it

By Agency Reporter

On October 6, Sampson Udo, a Lagos-based saxophonist known popularly as King Sax, was at the Elegushi Beach to attend an event his acquaintance invited him to. While there, he lured this lady to his car and raped her. When her sister went public with it a month later, he got her arrested and then raped her as well, as confirmed by voice notes listened to by FIJ.

When 27-year-old Destiny Ameh (not real name) invited Sampson Udo to attend an event she organized at Elegushi Beach, Lagos, she had no idea he would rape her.

Ameh and Udo had met each other online a while ago, and while she would not describe him as a friend, she says she extended him an invitation to support her event which brought her from Akwa-Ibom to Lagos.

Grace, Destiny's younger sister, told FIJ and the police that when Udo arrived at the beach on October 6, he called Destiny, saying he needed help locating her. She met him a while after, and then followed him outside the beach to where he parked.

There, Udo convinced her to get into the backseat of his car, "saying they should catch up, since the last time he saw her was on January 8, 2022 when he played his saxophone for her 25th birthday."

"While in his car, he locked the doors, got on top of Destiny and forcefully raped her. He covered her mouth and put his weight on her," Grace said.

She said Destiny left after the incident and then sent cuss words to him when she got home, but never filed a report as she was too stunned. Two weeks later, the victim opened up to Grace, and the matter took a new turn.

"Without mentioning to me or anyone about the incident, my sister went back to Akwa-Ibom where she is based," Grace added.

"Two weeks after the incident, she told me. I then called his number. He claimed the sex was consensual, so I



asked why my sister would slam his car door if it was consensual and why she would send him those messages after. He went mute and dropped the call. I then called him multiple times after but he did not pick. I sent him WhatsApp messages, but he did not reply, so I took to X to call him out."

This callout gained some online traction and forced Udo's hand. What followed was a public statement, police report and monetary demand.

UDO, POLICE CONSPIRE

On October 25, Udo took to his social media handles on X, Facebook and Instagram to accuse Grace of falsely alleging rape.

He wrote: "My attention has been drawn to a post on Twitter (sic) by (redacted), with the username (redacted) already going viral. The post is to the effect that I had forceful carnal knowledge with someone she claims to be her sister.

"I am innocent of this accusation. The publication was made to malign and ridicule my fast-growing personality and brand. I have consulted my legal

team."

Udo then called Destiny, asking why she allowed Grace to put out the X post. Soon after, the police invited Grace to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Panti, Lagos.

On October 30, she showed up.

"There were four male policemen interrogating me, and I felt uncomfortable," Grace said. "I thought there would be at least one woman. Those policemen started mocking my sister and I. One said, 'Does this fresh boy look like someone that can rape somebody?'"

"Udo and his lawyer then said I must pay N15 million and retract my X post, and then publish an apology on two national dailies. I agreed to delete the post but refused the monetary demand. Then the policemen said I would be detained since I could not settle Udo monetarily."

The police held her in detention for two days, demanded two sureties and a N1 million payment for what they described as bail. Grace managed to

part with N450,000 to secure her freedom. On November 11, she returned to the station where Udo dropped his monetary demand to N7 million and threatened a lawsuit if she did not pay the first installment of N2 million before 9 pm that day.

A SECOND RAPE

When Grace and her lawyer made to leave the station, Udo offered to drop her off at her location. She said she declined, but seeing that her lawyer would be in the vehicle, she obliged.

“He dropped my lawyer off first, and then began taking me through my route when I told him to drop me halfway as I was not comfortable with him knowing where I lived,” Grace continued.

She said he asked her to be comfortable and said he would take care of her.

”He then drove to a restaurant and ordered alcohol but I declined. Soon after, I asked to leave as I needed to raise N2 million before the day ended to avoid a defamation lawsuit, but before I could get into the Uber I ordered, he asked me to give him my body in exchange for the money. I left.

”The next day, he sent his address and kept calling my phone, so I finally picked. He sounded angry, said I was not serious and he was going to take me to court if I didn’t give him what he wanted in exchange for his withdrawal of the case. His lawyer was also calling and harassing me. I then thought to see him to beg so he could consider dropping the case, but when I got there, he pounced on me, ripped my gown apart and raped me.”

THE RECORDINGS THAT WILL SEND SAX TO JAIL

The day before, Grace made a phone recording of Udo making advances to her, and when she asked why he was approaching her after raping his sister, he laughed and said he could be interested in sisters.

Believing she could obtain evidence by speaking with him, she again recorded the call they both had on the morning of November 12. When he refused to say much on the phone, she visited him and began recording. What her device would capture was more horror than had already happened.

FIJ listened to both audios but cannot publish them due to their mental horror

content.

As she fought him off, she ordered an Uber, and when the driver called, Udo yelled at him to wait. This Uber driver would later serve as a witness to the saxophonist’s crime.

“I ran out half naked and into the vehicle so the driver could take me straight to the police,” Grace told FIJ. “The Uber driver gave a statement, too and relayed all that he witnessed.”

On Thursday morning, the SCID police arrested Udo and have remanded him pending when they would charge the matter to court. The police also returned Grace’s N450,000.

Meanwhile, FIJ learnt from Serah Ibrahim, an activist, that Udo’s lawyer and girlfriend have been soliciting an out-of-court settlement since the police arrested him.

Ibrahim and Inibehe Effiong; a lawyer, and others had been following the case closely since Grace was first arrested.

The Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that combats injustice, holds power to account, and speaks for the voiceless.

Property owners on Kuje-Airport road corridor to get N1.1bn compensation

By Dave Oludare Oso

Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has earmarked N1.1 billion as compensation to owners whose properties are to be affected by the ongoing expansion of Kuje-Airport road.

The Minister disclosed this to newsmen on Tuesday during an inspection tour of the road in Kuje to ascertain the pace of work.

He said: “I have come here to see for myself the report on the valuation of what we are supposed to pay. When I got the files for approval, I said, look, it would be proper for me to see for myself the kind of structures that we are going to pay for.

“Well, if I remember vividly, the entire estimate they gave is about 1.1 billion Naira, and to pay for those whose properties are affected, like some of

these buildings you have seen here, down to the community.

“So it’s about 1.1 billion and we are going to make it available so that the contractor will not find any excuse for delay.”

Speaking on the approved 70,000 Naira minimum wage and three months arrears for Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) staff, Wike who reaffirmed Federal Government’s commitment under the Renewed Hope Agenda, said the move was aimed at increased staff productivity to drive city development.

“Well, first of all, it is the commitment made by the federal government under the Renewed Hope Agenda that workers’ wages should be increased,



and in line with that, we have also adopted it and have also approved for the payment of the arrears as agreed with the labour.

“I expect that the workers will also see this as a boost and be more committed for us to achieve the development that is required in the city.”

Businessman jailed 21 years for fraud in Lagos

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



An Ikeja Special Offences Court on Monday, sentenced Philips Fatuyi, ex-chairman of the Natural Oil and Gas Suppliers Association of Nigeria (NOGASA), to 21 years imprisonment for N43.5 million fraud.

Justice Mojisola Dada, in her judgment, held that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) proved the two-count charge of obtaining money by false pretences and stealing against Fatuyi beyond reasonable doubt.

The anti-graft agency had charged Mr Fatuyi alongside his company, Oceanview Oil and Gas Ltd.

Fatuyi, who was first arraigned on 7 April 2022, had pleaded not guilty to the charge.

But Justice Dada held that the prosecution proved the charge against him beyond reasonable doubt and found him culpable on all counts.

The court also held that the convict failed to pay the naira equivalent of the funds to the nominal complainant, saying that the case could not be further prolonged.

She held that though \$8,000 (the equivalent of N12.8 million) had been

recovered from the defendant during the investigation, Fatuyi had remained unrepentant.

“The first defendant never had the intention of giving the nominal complainant the naira equivalent of the dollar,” the judge said.

She, thereafter, sentenced the convict to 14 years imprisonment on count one, and seven years imprisonment on count two.

The judge sentenced Mr Fatuyi without an option of a fine and held that the sentence would run concurrently.

The court further ordered the convict to pay back the full sum of N43.5 million to the nominal complainant within 90 days of the judgment.

The judge directed the convict’s company to pay a fine of N500,000 on count one and an additional fine of N250,000, on count two.

She directed the company to pay the fine within 30 days of the judgment or the face winding up.

Earlier, the EFCC Prosecutor, Spiff Owede, told the court that the convict committed the offences on 28 September 2016, in Lagos.

The prosecutor stated that the convict, with the intent to defraud, obtained the aggregate sum of N43.5 million from

one Elochukwu Okoye and Elebana Unique Ventures Nigeria Ltd on behalf of WAPCIL Nigeria Ltd under the false representation that he would sell to WAPCIL Nigeria Ltd \$98,870, a representation he knew to be false.

EFCC submitted that the convict stole the sum of N43.5 million, property of WAPCIL Nigeria Ltd.

The prosecutor said the offences contravened Section 1(3) of the Advance Fee Fraud Act 2006, and Section 285 (1) Criminal Law of Lagos State 2011.

After EFCC presented its fifth and final witness on March 30, 2023, the prosecution closed its case.

Fatuyi thereafter opened his defence on 16 June 2023.

He told the court that he had given \$100,000 (equivalent of N160 million) to one Olumide Adegbite to convert to naira.

According to him, Mr Adegbite told him he had connections with the Central Bank of Nigeria and could secure a preferential exchange rate.

Source: NAN

Tinubu restructures media and communications team

By Friday Omosola

In a move to enhance the efficiency of government communication, President Bola Tinubu has approved the restructuring of the State House media and communications team.

Bayo Onanuga, his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy said the changes involve the re-designation of roles for two recently appointed officials.

Onanuga said the restructure is aimed at streamlining communication efforts and ensuring clarity in the dissemination of government policies and engagements.

The new designations are as follows: Sunday Dare previously Special Adviser on Public Communication and National Orientation, is now Special Adviser, Media and Public Communications.

Daniel Bwala initially appointed as Special Adviser, Media and Public



Communication, is now Special Adviser, Policy Communication.

These appointments, along with Onanuga's existing role as Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, emphasised a team-based approach to government communication.

The statement clarified that there is no single individual serving as the

spokesperson for the presidency. Instead, all three Special Advisers will collectively represent the government's communication efforts. The restructuring aims to ensure a more effective and consistent delivery of the administration's messages to the public.

Presidency proposes bill to provide housing for poor, unemployed citizens

By Dave Oludare Oso

A bill has been proposed by the Presidency to provide housing for low-income and unemployed citizens.

The bill has now been sent to the National Assembly.

Fredrick Nwabufo, Senior Special Assistant to President Bola Tinubu on Public Engagement, revealed this on Tuesday, stating that the proposed bill, titled National Social Housing Fund (NSHF), seeks to ensure all Nigerians, regardless of income level, have access to decent housing.

According to Nwabufo, a memo on the bill will be submitted to the Federal Executive Council (FEC) for review. He added that funding for the project will come from budgetary allocations and donations.

“Progress has been made to establish a

National Social Housing Fund (NSHF) in line with the President's Renewed Hope Agenda to ensure that all Nigerians including the low and no income, vulnerable and underprivileged groups have access to decent and dignified accommodation.

“A memo to the Federal Executive Council (FEC) and an Executive Bill to the National Assembly is underway for the creation of a National Social Housing Fund. Potential sources of funding include budgetary provision, donations from philanthropic organizations, corporate social responsibility, and voluntary donations from Nigerians.



“President Tinubu is confronting Nigeria's housing challenge with gravitas and a deliberate plan, understanding the criticality of the situation. He is determined to renew the hope of citizens on affordable and functional housing,” Nwabufo wrote on his X handle.

Over half of Nigerian Startups face funding challenges – Report Reveals

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

A new report by TLP Advisory, a Nigerian venture law firm, reveals that 51% of startups in Nigeria face significant challenges in securing funding, with currency volatility and limited access to investors cited as the primary barriers.

The report, titled “A Decade of the Nigerian Venture Ecosystem: Numbers, Insights & Stories,” was launched on Tuesday, November 19, offering a detailed analysis of Nigeria’s startup landscape over the past ten years. It highlights the growth of the ecosystem, as well as the ongoing challenges, especially amid the country’s economic instability.

Despite a record \$3 billion in venture capital investments in 2021, over half of the startups surveyed reported that securing funding remains a major obstacle. According to the report, “51% of startups surveyed reported difficulties in securing funding, largely due to currency volatility and limited access to investors. Angel investors have proven essential during this period.”

In addition to funding challenges, the report identifies other key obstacles for Nigerian startups, including regulatory hurdles and difficulties in talent retention.

TLP Advisory, which has been involved in some of the continent’s largest tech deals, called for deeper collaboration between startups and corporations, increased investment in talent development, and more active engagement with policymakers to create a supportive business environment.

The report also recognizes



significant players in the ecosystem, such as early investors like Olumide Soyombo’s Leadpath, and enablers like CcHUB and the Lagos Angel Network, who have played pivotal roles in the growth of Nigeria’s venture ecosystem.

Co-founder of TLP Advisory, Odunoluwa Longe, commented, “Despite the current tough macroeconomic climate, engaging with participants in this project has reignited in me renewed hope and optimism for our ecosystem. We embarked on this project as our way of celebrating the ecosystem that made us, and this report reflects both the resilience and evolution of the Nigerian tech landscape.”

Longe added, “It’s not just about technology; it’s about building a future where founders, investors, and the public sector collaborate to make Nigeria a leader in innovation and digital solutions. Over the past decade, we’ve witnessed incredible success stories born from collaboration and adaptability, and we believe the best is yet to come.”

Adenike Adeyemi, Executive Director of FATE Foundation, pointed out that one of the most unexpected challenges for entrepreneurs in Nigeria has been the unstable and inconsistent regulatory and business environment. She emphasized the importance of a supportive policy framework to unlock the full potential of Nigerian startups.

Kola Aina, Founder of Ventures Platform, echoed this sentiment, stressing the need for more proactive policy engagement.

“The ecosystem must become more deliberate in engaging in government policy design, ensuring we shape the policies that govern our industry,” Aina said.

The report’s findings underline the resilience and adaptability of Nigerian startups, even as they face a range of challenges. However, it also points to the need for continued investment, collaboration, and policy reform to help these businesses thrive in a competitive global market.

Shettima urges governors to step up efforts in ending open defecation

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has called on governors of Nigeria's 36 states to intensify efforts in the national campaign to end open defecation, aiming for a clean, open defecation-free Nigeria by 2025.

Shettima's spokesperson, Stanley Nkwocha in a statement said he made the call during the 5th anniversary celebration of the "Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet" campaign, where he also officially launched a new Strategic Plan for the initiative.

Speaking at the event held at the Banquet Hall of the Presidential Villa in Abuja, the Vice President, represented by Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, emphasised the significant health, economic, and social benefits of eradicating open defecation.

Kashim Shettima

Vice President Kashim Shettima [PHOTO CREDIT: The New Daily Prime Library]

Shettima noted that tackling this issue would improve public health, enhance productivity, and restore dignity and safety to Nigerians.

The Vice President urged state governments to actively mobilize political support for the campaign, particularly at the sub-national level.

He stressed that the sanitation sector presents enormous economic opportunities, which, if aligned with the government's renewed hope agenda, could drive job creation, energy solutions, and biological fertilizer production.

"It is against this backdrop that we must re-strategize and increase our advocacy to achieve the goal of reasonable access to toilets by 2030," Shettima stated.

"I urge governors to provide the necessary support to drive this campaign at the state and local government levels to ensure Nigeria is open defecation-free within the next



five years."

He also highlighted the dangers posed by open defecation, including contamination of water sources, disease spread, and adverse effects on education, economic productivity, and quality of life.

Shettima noted the disproportionate impact on women, girls, and vulnerable communities, and reassured Nigerians that the current administration is fully committed to ending open defecation as part of its commitment to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 6.2 by 2030.

Shettima reiterated the federal government's determination to ensure that all Nigerians have access to clean sanitation facilities, promising that the Tinubu administration will remain dedicated to this cause.

Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation, Joseph Utsev, echoed these sentiments, recalling that the campaign was launched in 2019 under Presidential Executive Order 009.

He revealed that Nigeria currently has one of the highest rates of open defecation globally, with an estimated 48 million people practising it.

However, he celebrated the progress

made, including 135 local government areas (LGAs) achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status and over 30,000 communities being certified ODF.

Despite these accomplishments, Utsev acknowledged that progress has been slower than expected, with the nationwide target of 2025 still a challenge.

He called for continued efforts to meet the goal of an open defecation-free Nigeria.

Eze Kenneth Emeka, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Water Resources, also commended the government's efforts, emphasising the importance of staying focused on the 2025 deadline for eliminating open defecation.

The event coincided with World Toilet Day, which is recognised globally by the United Nations to accelerate efforts toward ending open defecation worldwide.

The "Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet" campaign continues to gain momentum, with increasing collaboration from state governments, local governments, international partners, the private sector, civil society, and the media.

Adebutu released from DSS custody

By **Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE**



Hon. Ladi Adebutu, the 2023 gubernatorial candidate for the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Ogun State, has been released from the custody of the Department of State Services (DSS).

Adebutu was detained earlier this week in connection with alleged security breaches during the local government elections held in Ogun State on Saturday, November 16, 2024.

Adebutu, a former lawmaker, was released at around 7 a.m. on Tuesday, November 19, after being invited by the DSS for questioning over his alleged involvement in the disturbances in Iperu, Ikenne Local Government Area, during the election.

In a statement he personally signed, titled "My Experience and Release from the DSS," Adebutu denounced the allegations against him, calling them "baseless" and accusing the authorities of attempting to silence him as an opposition voice.

He reiterated his stance on the need for financial autonomy for local governments, which he believes can only be achieved through free and fair elections.

"I was released by the DSS in Abeokuta following an invitation to answer to various spurious accusations related to the November 16 Local Government election in Ogun State. The allegations were so baseless that it became clear their purpose was to silence me as a voice of the opposition," Adebutu said in his statement.

He went on to emphasise that his belief in the importance of local government autonomy and his advocacy for free and fair elections were not partisan issues but were rooted in national development. Adebutu also noted that President Bola Tinubu shares his view on the matter, indicating that this was a national concern and not a political one.

"Desperation has set in to emasculate the third tier of government completely; this is the struggle for our development," Adebutu added, alluding to the political dynamics in Ogun State over the past five years, which he said would soon be made public.

Despite the ature of his detention, Adebutu expressed appreciation for the professionalism and fairness with which the DSS handled his case during his

detention.

He also thanked the judiciary for the favorable ruling obtained in a recent case, which sought to exclude the PDP from participating in the local government elections.

"I must say I am pleasantly surprised at the professionalism and fairness the DSS has treated this matter till date, particularly during my stay in their office," he acknowledged.

Adebutu concluded by thanking all stakeholders, including both supporters and critics, and urged everyone to continue working toward advancing good governance in the state.

The release of Adebutu comes amidst growing political tensions in Ogun State following the controversial local government elections.

Northern Nigeria's development key to national prosperity – Tinubu

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has reaffirmed that the development of Northern Nigeria is critical to the prosperity of the entire nation.

Speaking at the Stakeholders Roundtable on Northern Youth Development in Abuja on Tuesday, the President, represented by Vice President Kashim Shettima, unveiled a comprehensive youth development strategy aimed at transforming the region's economic landscape.

The event, organised by the Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation, was held in honour of the late Sardauna of Sokoto and former Premier of Northern Nigeria.

In his address, President Tinubu invoked the legacy of the late Sir Ahmadu Bello, emphasising the importance of inclusive development.

“The North cannot progress in isolation, and Nigeria cannot prosper unless every part of this nation thrives,” he stated, underscoring that regional development is integral to national growth.

The President further warned that disruptions in one region's growth can impede the entire nation's progress, pointing to the alarming statistics of Nigeria's large number of out-of-school children.

Vice President Kashim Shettima representing President Bola Tinubu at the event [PHOTO CREDIT: X]

Vice President Kashim Shettima representing President Bola Tinubu at the event [PHOTO CREDIT: X]

“This is not a source of pride, but a challenge that must be addressed urgently,” he said, calling for swift action to transform the nation's population growth into a demographic advantage.

Outlining his administration's initiatives for youth empowerment, President Tinubu highlighted the 3 Million Technical Talent (3MTT) programme, the Presidential Initiative for Youth Enterprise Clusters, and other transformative



projects aimed at boosting the nation's creative and digital economy.

These include the Skill-Up Artisans Programme (SUPA), the Nigerian Youth Academy (NIYA), and the National Youth Talent Export Programme (NATEP). The President also noted key investments in sectors critical to the nation's future, including agriculture.

“Investments in agriculture and industrialisation will position the North as Nigeria's agricultural hub,” he declared, stressing the region's strategic importance.

Plans for a National Youth Development Bank and a Youth Data Bank were also revealed as part of the administration's efforts to provide financial and informational support to young Nigerians.

READ ALSO: Tinubu receives Indian PM, Modi at Aso Rock

On security, President Tinubu outlined measures to restore stability in the North, including strengthening community policing, rehabilitating displaced persons, and addressing cross-border challenges like smuggling and insurgency.

With Nigeria projected to become the world's third-largest nation by 2050, with three-quarters of its population under the age of 21, the President called

for urgent action to ensure the country's future is defined by order, stability, and safety.

“This task is both urgent and achievable,” he said, emphasising the crucial role of youth in shaping the nation's future.

Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, former Governor of Niger State and Chairman of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, also addressed the forum, marking the 15th anniversary of the Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation.

He urged the government to act on the recommendations discussed at the event, stressing the importance of youth in driving the nation's development.

Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar II, also spoke, emphasising the critical role of education in shaping Nigeria's future. “Our youths are not just the leaders of tomorrow; they are leaders today,” he said, urging continuous dialogue between the government and youth across Northern Nigeria.

The Sultan further highlighted that education must be the government's top priority, noting that it is essential for both national development and spiritual growth.

'It hurts'- Don Jazzy expresses pain over lack of partner

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

*Suspect wants to do suspect challenge
but no suspect partner. 🚶*

Ok goodnight



Nigerian music mogul, Don Jazzy, has recently shared candid reflections on his relationship status, sparking conversations among his fans and followers.

In a heartfelt message posted on his Instagram page this past Monday, the renowned executive expressed his interest in joining the viral trend known as the 'suspect challenge'.

This latest social media phenomenon sees couples engaging in light-hearted banter as they take turns teasing one another, adding an element of fun and playfulness to their interactions.

However, the 41-year-old founder of the Mavins record label faced an unfortunate reality – he is currently without a partner to join him in the challenge.

In his post, Don Jazzy humorously lamented, stating, "Suspect wants to do a suspect challenge but no suspect partner."

The light-hearted tone of his words juxtaposed with his poignant admission highlights a genuine sense of longing for companionship, as he shared that the situation "It hurts".

The post resonated deeply with many of his followers, who took to the comments section to express their support and share their own experiences regarding the challenges of relationships.

It seems that Don Jazzy's candidness struck a chord, reminding fans that even public figures experience personal struggles in love and companionship.

This isn't the first occasion that the influential artist has opened up about his relationship status.

Don Jazzy, who has been a significant figure in the Nigerian music industry for years, has occasionally shared insights about his personal life, often drawing both sympathy and encouragement from his dedicated fanbase.

His willingness to discuss such intimate matters showcases his authenticity and relatability amidst his celebrity status.

As one of the leading figures in Nigeria's vibrant music scene, Don Jazzy has made a substantial impact as a producer, songwriter, and entrepreneur, yet he remains just as human as anyone else when it comes to matters of the heart.

His reflections serve as a reminder that, despite the glitz and glamour that often accompany fame, the quest for meaningful connection is a universal endeavour.

As fans eagerly await any updates regarding Don Jazzy's journey in love, they continue to cheer him on, proving that support from the community can offer solace in times of introspection.

The 'suspect challenge' may have begun as a light-hearted social media trend, but for Don Jazzy, it has unwittingly opened up a dialogue about love, loneliness, and the search for connection in the public eye.

Actress Dayo Amusa welcomes first child

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Renowned Nollywood actress Dayo Amusa has joyously welcomed her first child in the United States.

The exciting news was made public by Seun Oloketuyi, the esteemed founder of the Best of Nollywood (BON) Awards, who took to his Instagram page on Monday to share the delightful announcement.

In his post, Oloketuyi expressed his congratulations to Amusa, stating simply, “@dayoamusa delivers baby in the US. Congratulations!”

Shortly after Oloketuyi’s announcement, Amusa herself took to her own Instagram account to confirm the arrival of her bundle of joy.

The 41-year-old actress shared her exuberance with her followers, revealing that she has given birth to a healthy baby boy.

She expressed her gratitude and joy with a heartfelt message, writing, “ALHAMDULILAH, My treasure has arrived. It’s a boy.”

Fans and well-wishers have taken to



social media to celebrate this momentous occasion, flooding Amusa with messages of congratulations and support.

The actress, who is known for her vibrant performances and contributions to the Nigerian film industry, has been an inspiration to many, and this new chapter in her life is being met with overwhelming enthusiasm from her admirers.

As Dayo Amusa embarks on this new journey of motherhood, her fans eagerly await updates on her experiences as a new

parent.

Her remarkable news comes at a time when the entertainment industry is buzzing with excitement, and Amusa’s milestone adds a touching narrative to the broader Nollywood story.

This new arrival not only marks a significant personal achievement for Amusa but also strengthens the bond of pride and support within the Nollywood community.

Johnny Drille celebrates daughter’s 1st-year birthday, shares beautiful pictures

By Eytayo Jemimah Ajayi

Sensational musician, Johnny Drille shares beautiful pictures of his family to celebrate his daughter, Amaris on the occasion of her first year birthday.

To celebrate this occasion, the musician shared six slides of beautiful pictures of his family. As an apple does not fall far from its tree, his daughter, Amaris embodies beauty and charm.

Johnny Drille is conversative concerning his private life and this is the first time he would be exposing his daughter’s face in public. His level of privacy can be detected when he took a year to announce his wedding to his Sierra Leonean spouse, Rima.

Rima is the Director of Artists and Repertoire at the Mavin Record



Label, the record label which her husband is signed to. She actually relocated to Nigeria from New York in 2017 due to the dictates of her job at Mavin Records.

Johnny Drille is currently preparing for his music concert, Johnny’s Room Live 6

which will hold in Port Harcourt by November 24. The first lap of this edition was held in Lagos on November 17.

Focus beyond numbers- Kizz Daniel urges colleagues

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian singer Daniel Anidugbe, widely known as Kizz Daniel, has made a compelling argument against the relentless pursuit of number-one songs on popular streaming platforms.

Instead, he advocates for a renewed focus on artistic integrity and the development of one's musical craft.

Kizz Daniel's remarks come amid a growing trend within the music industry where artists often measure their success by streaming numbers and chart positions.

However, the acclaimed artist believes this approach hampers creativity and may lead to superficial gains that do not necessarily reflect genuine artistry.

"Leave social media algorithms, focus on your craft," he stated in a recent post, highlighting the discrepancies that can exist between the metrics on different platforms.

He emphasized that numbers on one streaming service may not align with those on another, suggesting that relying on these figures can be misleading.

"Have you ever heard of a guy called Killer Mike? Guess not... four-time Grammy winner," he added, using the renowned artist as an example to illustrate that true talent often transcends fleeting trends and algorithmic advantages.

Further elaborating on his views, Kizz Daniel expressed his concerns regarding the current landscape in the music industry, where artists are heavily focused on achieving top spots on streaming charts.

Read Also: Kizz Daniel pauses music until 2026 after mother-in-law's death

I'm tired of dropping hits alone- Kizz Daniel

"Stop chasing number 1 song, it's meh now—everything can be controlled," he said, implying that the quest for chart supremacy is often a fruitless endeavour driven more by

marketing strategies than by genuine artistic expression.

In another post, Kizz Daniel clarified that his intention was not to disparage the use of streaming bots or other marketing tactics designed to enhance visibility.

He contended that while these methods can be seen as a form of marketing, they might not be appropriate for established artists who should rely on their artistry to gain recognition.

"Farming isn't a crime, it's marketing... for placement and all... but na for who gets the money," he explained, acknowledging that while boosting streams is

commonplace, it should not replace authentic talent and hard work.

Importantly, the singer emphasized that his commentary is not meant to undermine his peers but rather to inspire and uplift emerging artists.

He called on newer musicians to embrace their creative instincts and release their work without the fear of not achieving immediate success on streaming platforms.

"We ain't shading anybody here before una start, just tryna push the new generation to drop those hidden gems... I won learn," he asserted, reflecting on his artistic journey and the lessons he has gathered along the way.

Kizz Daniel's call to action serves as both a reminder and an encouragement to artists navigating the complexities of the



music industry.

By prioritizing authenticity over algorithm-driven results, he hopes to foster a culture where creativity flourishes and musicians can produce heartfelt, meaningful work.

In a world where the pressure to achieve quick success can overshadow genuine talent, Kizz Daniel's words resonate as a powerful affirmation of artistic integrity.

His message is a clarion call for both established artists and newcomers alike to focus on what truly matters: craftsmanship, originality, and the joy of creating music that resonates with listeners on a deeper level.

Indeed, it is this commitment to true artistry that will stand the test of time in an ever-evolving industry.

Regina Daniels' suitors included pastors and film producers- Ned Nwokwo

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Billionaire businessman and influential lawmaker, Senator Ned Nwoko, has shared intriguing details about the extensive list of suitors that pursued popular actress Regina Daniels before she ultimately decided to marry him.

This revelation sheds light on the glamorous world of celebrity romance and the factors that led to their union.

In a heartfelt video that Regina Daniels posted on her Instagram account this past Sunday, Nwoko lavished praise on his beloved wife.

The couple celebrated their love in the presence of Regina's mother and an intimate gathering of close friends and family.

During the video, Nwoko candidly expressed his gratitude that Regina had chosen him amid what he described as a 'competition' that included a mix of diverse suitors ranging from influential reverend pastors and glamorous film producers to wealthy oil magnates.

"I am acutely aware of the many suitors who sought Regina's affection," Nwoko stated.

"Her list was impressive, featuring individuals who showered her with extravagant gifts. Yet, despite all of their attention, she remained steadfast and chose to embrace love with me."

The billionaire emphasized his admiration for Regina, referring to her as "such a gem." He noted that despite overwhelming interest from these influential individuals, her loyalty and commitment were unwavering.

"There were messages, gifts, and offers," Nwoko recounted. "But Regina's heart was clear; she didn't say 'yes' to anyone else." Senator Nwoko also extended his heartfelt appreciation to Regina's mother for her role in their relationship.

He expressed gratitude for the nurturing environment that enabled her daughter to maintain strong

values.

"I am especially thankful that Regina embodies virtuous qualities, including her decision to remain a virgin until marriage," he remarked.

"That strength of character is truly admirable." Adding a personal touch, Nwoko revealed that his approach to winning Regina's heart was straightforward.

In a world where relationships often involve lengthy courtship and traditional rituals, he opted for a more direct route.

"As someone who respects tradition, I typically would visit various family members before proposing. However, in Regina's case, I simply approached her mother, and everything fell into place perfectly," he stated.

This romantic journey has become a remarkable chapter in their lives, demonstrating that love can flourish even within a highly competitive environment.

New Daily Prime reports that Nwoko and Regina Daniels joyfully celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary on May 28, 2024.

Regina took to her social media platforms to commemorate the special occasion, describing it as "a remarkable five years of marital bliss."

With a heartfelt sentiment, she reflected on their journey together, stating, "These past five years have been filled with immeasurable love, joy, and mutual respect. We have built a beautiful life together, and there is so much more to come."

The couple's flourishing relationship



serves as an inspiration to many. As public figures, they highlight the importance of strong family values, loyalty, and commitment amidst the trials of fame and fortune.

The story of Senator Ned Nwoko and Regina Daniels is not just about a love story but a narrative of choice poised between luxury and genuine affection.

Their ability to emerge from a crowd of admirers, fortified by values and mutual respect, paints a compelling portrait of what true love embodies in today's fast-paced world.

As the couple continues to share more milestones, fans and followers can expect to see more of their journey unfold, reinforcing the belief that love triumphs above all, regardless of external distractions or competitive pursuits.

Hong Kong jails 45 pro-democracy campaigners, earns international condemnation

By Dave Oludare Oso

In the city's largest national security trial, a Hong Kong court on Tuesday, sentenced 45 pro-democracy activists under its national security laws, with former law professor, "mastermind" Benny Tai receiving the longest term of 10 years. The defendants were charged with subversion for holding an unauthorised primary election in 2020 aimed at selecting pro-democracy candidates. International condemnation was swift, with Western countries and rights groups slamming the sentencing as evidence of the erosion of political freedoms in the city since Beijing imposed a security law in 2020.

Tai's sentence was the longest yet handed out under the security law, which was brought in to quash dissent after massive, sometimes violent pro-democracy protests in 2019.

His 44 co-defendants were sentenced to shorter terms beginning from four years and two months.

All were charged with subversion after holding an informal poll in 2020 as part of a strategy to win a pro-democracy electoral majority.

The group includes some of the most prominent figures of Hong Kong's once-diverse political opposition.

After Tai, the second-longest sentence of seven years and nine months was handed to young activist Owen Chow.

In a Facebook post before the sentencing, Chow had said he was "absolutely not optimistic".

"But I see hope because even (if) I am far from the day of release, we have now seen the end point," he wrote.

'Gravely concerned'

On Tuesday, the 45 were crammed into the defendant's dock, from where they occasionally waved to the public.

Many have already spent more than 1,300 days in jail.

Pro-democracy politicians Au Nok-hin, Andrew Chiu and Ben Chung were singled out as organizers, but received lesser sentences after testifying against Tai.

"Long Hair" Leung Kwok-hung, the 68-year-old co-founder of the city's last standing opposition party, received a term of six years and nine months.



His wife and party leader Chan Po-ying told AFP that the term was "within our expectations".

"It is what it is – no matter (whether) I laugh or I cry, so I choose to laugh a bit," she said.

After the sentencing, the mother of defendant Hendrick Lui silently took out a placard reading "The righteous shall live, the wicked shall perish".

She was taken away in a police van within seconds, according to video footage from Hong Kong media.

'Refused to be tamed'

Leticia Wong, a former district councillor, told AFP that she found the terms were "encouraging people to plead guilty and testify against their peers".

"For those who refused to be tamed, punishment is obviously heavier," Wong said.

Western countries and international rights groups have condemned the trial as evidence of Hong Kong's increased authoritarianism.

Australia's government said it was "gravely concerned" after dual citizen Gordon Ng received a sentence of seven years and three months, and said it would continue to advocate for his "best interests".

A spokesperson for the US consulate in Hong Kong said the United States "strongly condemns" the sentencing.

China on Tuesday said such Western criticism "seriously desecrates and tramples on the spirit of the rule of law", and warned against interference.

Taiwan's presidential office said "democracy is not a crime" and condemned the "use of judicial measures and unfair procedures" to curtail political

participation and freedom of speech. The sentences show "how fast Hong Kong's civil liberties and judicial independence have nosedived", international NGO Human Rights Watch said.

Another closely watched national security trial will see a key development on Wednesday when jailed pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai testifies in his collusion trial.

China and Hong Kong have repeatedly pushed back against criticisms, saying the security law restored order following the 2019 protests.

Hong Kong's security minister Chris Tang said Tuesday's sentences "reflected the severity of the crime", but added the government would study the ruling on individual sentences and decide whether to appeal them.

'Constitutional crisis'

Forty-seven people were initially charged after they were arrested in January 2021.

Thirty-one pleaded guilty, and 16 stood a 118-day trial last year, with 14 convicted and two acquitted in May.

The aim of the election primary, which took place in July 2020, was to pick a cross-party shortlist of pro-democracy candidates to increase their electoral prospects.

If a majority was achieved, the plan was to force the government to meet the 2019 protesters' demands – including universal suffrage – by threatening to indiscriminately veto the budget.

Hush money trial: Prosecutors urge judge to postpone Trump's sentencing

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

President-elect Donald Trump's six-year New York criminal odyssey might need to continue for at least another four, prosecutors said Tuesday.

Lawyers for Manhattan District Attorney, Alvin Bragg wrote in a letter to Justice Juan Merchan that Trump should not be sentenced for his crimes until after he completes his second term in office. That would be the year 2029, more than a decade after the investigation into Trump's coverup of a "hush money" payment began.

"Consideration must be given to various non-dismissal options that may address any concerns raised by the pendency of a post-trial criminal proceeding during the presidency, such as deferral of all remaining criminal proceedings until after the end of defendant's upcoming presidential term," the filing said.

Merchan had been slated to rule on Nov. 12 on whether presidential immunity should have prevented jurors from seeing certain evidence at Trump's trial this spring, but he postponed his decision.

Merchan said he wanted to hear from prosecutors about how to proceed with the case, which entered uncharted terrain when Trump was reelected president.

Prosecutors said in their filings that they intend to oppose any effort by Trump to dismiss his case outright.

Trump's lawyers said in a previous letter that they would do so, claiming his election meant the case might cause "unconstitutional impediments to President Trump's ability to govern."

Prosecutors said in the short term, they are also unopposed to delaying Trump's sentencing, currently on the schedule for Nov. 26, while his attorneys awaiting and responding to his motion to dismiss.

Trump is the first person in American history to win the presidency after being convicted of crimes. He was



also the first former president to face trial for crimes.

Trump promised minutes after a unanimous jury found him guilty of felonies in May to fight his conviction. Weeks later, the Supreme Court ruled former presidents are immune from prosecution for official acts and that evidence related to Trump's work as president could not be used at trial.

Trump's lawyers argued the Supreme Court's ruling meant the conviction should be set aside, and his sentencing canceled. They said jurors heard testimony from former White House staff that should have been out of bounds during the trial.

The legal team was led by Todd Blanche and Emil Bove, who Trump has said he will appoint next year to senior posts in the U.S. Department of Justice.

Bragg's office has argued that the material protested by Trump's team was "a sliver of the mountains" of evidence the jury considered — so small it shouldn't mean tossing aside the jury's decision.

The jury found that Trump committed 34 felonies, largely by authorizing a plan to conceal reimbursements to Michael Cohen, his former attorney and fixer.

Cohen paid \$130,000 to adult film star Stormy Daniels, days before the 2016 presidential election, in exchange for her silence about an alleged sexual encounter with Trump. The payment has often been referred to as a "hush money" payment.

Trump insists he is not guilty of

falsifying business records — the charge he was convicted on — and has vehemently denied Daniels' story.

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office, then led by Cyrus Vance Jr., began investigating the "hush money" deal in 2018. It soon widened into an expansive probe into Trump's finances.

Trump assailed the investigation during his first presidency, fighting a subpoena to the Supreme Court, which in a landmark 2020 decision allowed the office to get Trump's tax returns.

When Bragg took office in 2022, he pared down the investigation, refocusing it on the "hush money" deal. A grand jury indicted Trump on March 31, 2023 and his trial began in April of this year.

The seven-week trial ended with his conviction. The jury deliberated for less than two days.

After hearing guilty 34 times, Trump turned around, clasped his son Eric's hand for a moment, and walked out of the courtroom.

Prosecutors were still packing their briefcases as Trump's voice could be heard from just beyond the doors.

He was decrying the case, and campaigning for a return to the White House.

UK sanctions Russians over 'forcible deportation' of Ukrainian kids

By Agency Reporter

The UK on Tuesday slapped sanctions against 10 people and entities behind Russia's "forcible deportation and attempted indoctrination of Ukrainian children", 1,000 days after Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The curbs target "those who prop up this insidious programme", the foreign ministry said, and follow similar sanctions in 2022 and 2023 against individuals and bodies involved in the alleged forced deportations.

They include several Russian officials and the All-Russian Young Army Military Patriotic Social Movement, a paramilitary organization that London said is "central" to the effort.

The sanctions are the latest imposed by Britain and Western allies in response to Russian President Vladimir Putin ordering troops into Ukraine in February 2022.

The measures have primarily targeted the Russian economy, aiming to reduce its ability to fund the war, but have also been

aimed at those accused of rights abuses.

"As Ukraine reaches the grim milestone of 1,000 days of bravely defending against Putin's illegal invasion, the UK's support is iron-clad," Foreign Secretary David Lammy said in a statement.

"With our international partners, we stand with Ukraine to confront Russian aggression and fight for freedom, liberty and victory."

Britain claims more than 19,500 Ukrainian children have been forcibly transferred or deported by the Russian authorities to Russia and temporarily occupied territories in Ukraine.

An estimated 6,000 Ukrainian children have been relocated to a network of re-education camps, according to the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office. Once there, they are subjected to indoctrination efforts which "seek to erode their Ukrainian identity and instil pro-Russian sentiments", it said.

The strategy dates back to Russia's illegal



annexation of Crimea in 2014, the ministry added.

"No child should ever be used as a pawn in war, yet President Putin's targeting of Ukrainian children shows the depths he will go to in his mission to erase Ukraine and its people from the map," said Lammy.

Among those sanctioned by Britain on Tuesday was Tetiana Zavalska, the Russian-appointed head of Kherson Children's Home, from where London said 46 children were forcibly removed to Russia for adoption.

Saudi Arabia executes over 100 foreigners in 2024 – Report

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Saudi Arabia has executed more than 100 foreigners this year, according to an AFP tally.

The latest execution, on Saturday November 16, in the southwestern region of Najran, was of a Yemeni national convicted of smuggling drugs into the Gulf kingdom, the official Saudi Press Agency reported.

That brought to 101 the number of foreigners executed so far in 2024, according to the tally which is compiled from state media reports.

This is almost triple the figures for 2023 and 2022, when Saudi authorities had put to death 34 foreigners each year, according to AFP tallies.

The Berlin-based European-Saudi Organization for Human Rights (ESOHR) said this year's executions had already broken a record.

"This is the largest number of executions of foreigners in one year. Saudi Arabia has never executed 100 foreigners in a year," said Taha al-Hajji, the group's legal director.

The oil-rich kingdom executed the third-highest number of prisoners in the world after China and Iran in 2023, according to Amnesty International.

In September, AFP reported that Saudi Arabia had carried out its highest number of executions in more than three decades, surpassing its previous highs of 196 in 2022 and 192 in 1995.

Executions have continued at a rapid clip since then and totalled 274 for the year as of Sunday, according to AFP's tally.

Foreigners executed this year have included 21 from Pakistan, 20 from Yemen, 14 from Syria, 10 from Nigeria, nine from Egypt, eight from Jordan, and seven from Ethiopia.

There were also three each from Sudan,

India and Afghanistan, and one each from Sri Lanka, Eritrea and the Philippines.

Saudi Arabia in 2022 ended a three-year moratorium on the execution of drug offenders, and executions for drug-related crimes have boosted this year's numbers.

There have been 92 such executions so far this year, 69 of them of foreigners, according to the AFP tally.

Diplomats and activists say that foreign defendants usually face a higher barrier to fair trials, including the right to access court documents. Foreigners 'are the most vulnerable group', said Hajji of the ESOHR.

Not only are they often 'victims of major drug dealers' but also 'subjected to a series of violations from the moment of their arrest until their execution,' he said.

Ukraine fires US-supplied long range missiles into Russia

By Agency Reporter

Russia says Ukraine has fired US-supplied long-range missiles into the country, a day after Washington gave its permission for such attacks.

Ukraine used the Army Tactical Missile System (Atacms) in a strike on Russia's Bryansk region this morning (Tuesday), the ministry of defence in Moscow said.

Five missiles were shot down and one damaged, with its fragments causing a fire at a military facility in the region, it said.

The strike represents the first time the long-range missiles have been used on Russia's internationally-recognized territory after Washington signalled Ukraine had permission to do so. Russia has vowed to "react accordingly."

On Tuesday, Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov said Russia would "proceed from the understanding" that the missiles were operated by "American military experts".

RUSSIA VOWS PROMPT RESPONSE

"We will be taking this as a renewed face

of the western war against Russia and we will react accordingly," he told a press conference at the G20 in Rio de Janeiro.

Moscow said on Monday that any strikes inside its territory with the US missiles would prompt an "appropriate and tangible response".

Ukraine has already been using Atacms in Russian-occupied areas of its own territory for more than a year.

The missiles can hit targets at a range of up to 300km (186 miles) and are difficult to intercept.

Kyiv is now able to strike deeper into Russia using the missiles, including around the Kursk region, where Ukrainian forces hold over 1,000 sq km of territory. Ukrainian and US officials reportedly expect a counter-offensive in the region.

EARLY MORNING STRIKE

In a statement, Russia's defence ministry said the strike was launched at 03:25 (00:25 GMT).

A fire caused by fallen debris from one of the missiles was quickly extinguished and there were no casualties, it said.

Ukraine's military earlier confirmed that it



had struck an ammunition warehouse in the Russian region of Bryansk, but it did not specify whether Atacms were used.

It said the attack, on a depot around 100km from the border near the town of Karachev, caused 12 secondary explosions.

PUTIN TINKERS RUSSIA'S NUKE DOCTRINE

Meanwhile, earlier on Tuesday, Putin approved changes to Russia's nuclear doctrine, setting out new conditions under which the country would consider using its arsenal.

It now says an attack from a non-nuclear state, if backed by a nuclear power, will be treated as a joint

Doctor walks around hospital naked, performs sexual acts in front of workers

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A northeast Arkansas doctor's licence has been suspended after allegations he performed a sex act with a staff member as other workers watched.

Dr. David Diffine's licence was suspended on an emergency basis Oct. 14, according to records from the Arkansas State Medical Board.

The board found that Diffine's actions "exhibit an ongoing danger to the public in his continued practice of medicine."

Diffine operates three family practice clinics – the Diffiner Family Practice – in Blytheville, Paragould and Bono, according to his website.

The medical board says it received a complaint on July 17 that Diffine engaged in sexual contact with his staff, who are also his patients, and sexually

harassed those staff members.

The complaint was accompanied by a video from a security camera inside the clinic that allegedly showed Diffine "performing a sexual act with a staff member while other staff members were present and watching. The video also shows Diffine walking throughout the clinic naked," the records state.

Dr. Bradley Diner with the Arkansas Medical Foundation reviewed the video, according to records. He called the behaviour "perverse" and recommended a formal professional evaluation.

The video, which has now been released to the public, shows Diffine walking around naked, including in the hallway between patients' rooms.

Diffine faces a disciplinary hearing



before the state medical board on Dec. 6.

In 2017, Diffine was under investigation after being accused of prescribing "excessive amounts of controlled substances." Those charges were dropped due to a lack of evidence, records show.

Hezbollah agrees to ceasefire with Israel

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Hezbollah and Lebanon have reportedly agreed to a ceasefire with Israel, subject to a number of comments in the agreement as the US envoy to the issue, Amos Hochstein arrives in Lebanon.

Reuters reported on Monday night that Ali Hassan Khalil, an aide to Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, announced that Lebanon and the Hezbollah terrorist organization have agreed to a ceasefire with Israel subject to several comments in the agreement.

“Lebanon presented its comments about the potential deal in a positive atmosphere,” Khalil said, declining to provide further details. “The success of the initiative now depends on Israel,” he added.

“The comments we made are fully based on UN Resolution 1701,” he said. Khalil also referred to the Israeli air

strikes in Beirut, saying Israel was trying to “negotiate under fire.”

He added that “the airstrikes do not affect Lebanon’s position.”

The US envoy to the issue, Amos Hochstein, made his way to Lebanon tonight, and according to reports in Lebanon, he is indeed there this morning (Tuesday).

Hochstein made the journey only after having understood from the Lebanese that the chances of an agreement are over 50 percent, since, according to Wint, without this he would not have come to the region, because he does not come to negotiations. He is expected to arrive in Israel this weekend.

US National Security Adviser, Jake Sullivan also addressed talks for a ceasefire tonight and expressed optimism that an agreement can be reached.

Sullivan told PBS, “There is no agreement yet, but we believe there is



progress, but we think both sides, both the Lebanese side and the Israeli side, have shown a willingness to do it and get it done in a short time.”

Hamas executes dozens of Palestinians accused of stealing aid

By Dave Oludare Oso

Hamas-controlled Interior Ministry officials in Gaza confirmed that over 20 local residents were killed by Palestinian security forces for allegedly stealing humanitarian aid.

The operation, carried out with the assistance of tribal committees, targeted individuals suspected of hijacking aid trucks entering the Gaza Strip.

According to reports, the victims were part of organized gangs that had taken control of aid shipments.

In a statement on Hamas’s Al-Aqsa channel, officials declared that the operation was the start of a larger security crackdown aimed at eradicating theft from aid trucks, a crime that has caused widespread hunger in southern Gaza.

“These security actions will continue until the gangs behind the thefts are

eliminated,” officials said.

They also emphasized that the operation was not directed against the tribes themselves, but specifically focused on those involved in the theft of aid.

Despite the involvement of some tribal members in the theft operations, Hamas officials defended the tribes’ long-standing history of sacrifice, claiming that their involvement in the thefts would not tarnish their reputation.

The Ministry also reported that the security forces had intercepted communications between the thieves and Israeli forces, alleging that the latter had provided cover for the criminal



activities. The operation received support from Palestinian factions, who endorsed the crackdown as part of a broader national effort.

In recent months, disturbing videos have surfaced showing Hamas militants torturing suspected aid thieves, with reports indicating that some victims were executed or left severely wounded.

Harry Kane eyes future beyond 2026 World Cup, unveils statue at childhood club

By **Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**

England captain Harry Kane has hinted that the 2026 FIFA World Cup in North America might not be his last international tournament, as the prolific striker remains in peak form at 31.

Kane extended his record as England's all-time leading scorer to an impressive 69 goals in 103 appearances during Sunday's 5-0 demolition of the Republic of Ireland in the UEFA Nations League. Despite being rested for Thursday's 3-0 win over Greece, Kane remains a cornerstone of England's ambitions under the incoming manager Thomas Tuchel.

In an exclusive with PA, the Bayern Munich forward dismissed notions that his advancing years signal the twilight of his career.

"I think there's a perception when you get to your thirties that you're coming to an end," Kane said. "But for me, I'm performing at the highest level I have ever performed and feel as good as I've ever felt. It's about taking in the

moment."

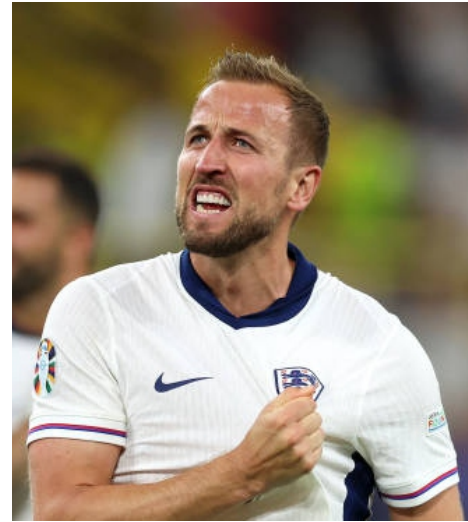
Kane emphasized his commitment to short-term goals while expressing enthusiasm for the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

"The [2026] World Cup is going to be exciting. In America, it will be an incredible occasion, and ultimately, it's about trying to win that. We'll see where we are and what to improve on, but I don't like to look too far ahead."

Kane's journey from aspiring five-year-old to international star was celebrated with the unveiling of a statue and mural at the Peter May Sports Centre in east London, where he first played for Ridgeway Rovers.

"It's pretty special," Kane told BBC Newsround. "I played on these pitches as a five-year-old with dreams of playing for England, and I've been lucky enough to achieve that."

The England captain hopes the tribute will inspire the next generation of footballers.



"Hopefully, the boys and girls walking past will be inspired by the story of my journey, my life, and hard work."

Kane joked that securing a statue at Wembley Stadium would require winning a major international tournament. With the appointment of Thomas Tuchel as England's new manager starting January 1, Kane believes this is a realistic goal.

Sam Kerr and Kristie Mewis Announce Pregnancy, Baby Due in 2025

By **Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**

Chelsea striker Sam Kerr and West Ham midfielder Kristie Mewis have announced that they are expecting their first child together. The couple shared the news via Kerr's Instagram account with a post reading, "Mewis-Kerr baby coming 2025!" The 33-year-old Mewis is carrying the baby, marking a joyous milestone in their relationship.

West Ham United celebrated the announcement, posting on Instagram:

"A huge congratulations to Kristie and her partner Sam, who have announced they are expecting their first child."

Sam Kerr, 31, is Australia's all-time leading goalscorer and a global icon in women's football. She has been instrumental in Chelsea's dominance, winning five consecutive Women's Super League titles, three FA Cups, two League Cups, and the Community Shield. Despite her remarkable achievements, Kerr has been sidelined since January due to a knee ligament injury.

Kristie Mewis, an accomplished midfielder for the USA, has earned 53 caps for her national team. She joined West Ham United from NJ/NY Gotham FC in December 2022 and has since become a key player for the team.

While the baby news marks a joyous chapter, it comes amid a challenging period for Kerr. She signed a new two-year contract with Chelsea in June but has yet to return to the pitch due to injury. Additionally, in March, Kerr pleaded not guilty to charges of racially aggravated harassment involving a police officer in London. She is set to appear in court in February 2024.



The announcement has been met with widespread congratulations from fans and the footballing community. The couple's news highlights a personal milestone in the lives of two athletes who continue to inspire on and off the field.

NBA fines LaMelo Ball \$100,000 for homophobic remark

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Charlotte Hornets guard LaMelo Ball has been fined \$100,000 (£79,000) by the NBA for making what the league deemed an “offensive and derogatory” homophobic comment during a courtside interview.

The 23-year-old’s remark came after the Hornets’ narrow 115-114 win over the Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday. Ball was discussing his team’s defensive strategy during the game’s final moments, which saw Milwaukee’s Giannis Antetokounmpo miss a crucial last-second attempt.

The specifics of the comment have not been disclosed, but the NBA deemed it in violation of its policies promoting inclusivity and respect.

Following the incident, Ball addressed the media after scoring 31 points in Sunday’s 128-114 loss to the Cleveland Cavaliers.

“I really didn’t mean anything and don’t want to offend anybody. I’ve got love for everybody, and I don’t discriminate,” he said.

The \$100,000 fine is the maximum penalty

the NBA can impose for such conduct under its guidelines. The league has been consistent in penalizing players for discriminatory language, emphasizing its commitment to fostering an inclusive environment.

Ball’s fine follows other recent sanctions by the NBA:

Anthony Edwards (Minnesota Timberwolves): Fined \$35,000 (£28,000) for an obscene gesture towards fans during Friday’s 130-126 overtime win against the Sacramento Kings.

Past Offenses: Edwards was previously fined \$40,000 in 2022 for using homophobic language on Instagram.

Kevin Durant (Brooklyn Nets, 2021): Fined \$50,000 for using homophobic and misogynistic language in private messages later made public.

The NBA continues to reinforce its zero-tolerance policy toward discriminatory behavior. By issuing



significant fines, the league aims to underline the importance of respect and inclusivity within the sport.

Fans and advocacy groups have expressed mixed reactions. Some applaud the NBA’s firm stance, while others argue for more educational initiatives alongside punitive measures to promote understanding and prevent future incidents.

As the league navigates these challenges, the hope remains that players and teams will lead by example, fostering a culture of inclusivity both on and off the court.

CAF Awards 2024: Achraf Hakimi makes top five men’s shortlist

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) officially unveiled on Monday the shortlist of five finalists nominees in each of the men’s categories at CAF Awards 2024, including Moroccan international Achraf Hakimi, shortlisted for African Player of the Year.

In addition to the Moroccan and French club Paris Saint-Germain’s right-back, other contenders for the prestigious African Player of the Year award include; Ivorian Simon Adingra (Brighton and Hove Albion); Serhou Guirassy (Guinea/Borussia Dortmund); Ademola Lookman (Nigeria/Atalanta) and Ronwen Williams (South Africa/Mamelodi Sundowns).

In the “Young Player of the Year” category, Moroccan international, Eliesse Ben Seghir, who plays for

French club AS Monaco, is in the running alongside Karim Konaté (Côte d’Ivoire/Salzburg), Oumar Diakité (Côte d’Ivoire/Reims), Yankuba Minteh (Gambia/Brighton and Hove Albion) and Lamine Camara (Senegal/AS Monaco).

As for the Club of the Year category, the list of five finalists includes Berkane Renaissance alongside South Africa’s Mamelodi Sundowns, Egypt’s Al Ahly and Zamalek as well as Espérance Sportive de Tunis.

The prestigious CAF Awards 2024 ceremony will take place in Marrakech on December 16.

