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Russia threatens to attack US base in Poland with 'advanced weapons'

By Dave Oludare Oso

Russia has threatened to attack a new US defence base in Poland with "advanced weapons" — just hours after reportedly launching an intercontinental ballistic missile at Ukraine on Thursday.

Moscow leveled the warning after saying the opening of the ballistic missile defence base, located in the town of Redzikowo near the Baltic coast, would lead to an increase in overall nuclear danger.

"Given the nature and level of threats posed by such Western military facilities, the missile defense base in Poland has long been added to the list of priority targets for potential destruction, which, if necessary, can be executed with a wide range of advanced weapons," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova said.

The US base at Redzikowo, which opened November 13, is part of a broader NATO missile shield — known as "Aegis Ashore" — that can intercept short- to intermediate-range ballistic missiles, according to the alliance.

"This is another frankly provocative step in a series of deeply destabilizing actions by the Americans and their allies in the North Atlantic Alliance in the strategic sphere," Zakharova said of the base's opening.

"This leads to undermining strategic stability, increasing strategic risks and, as a result, to an increase in the overall level of nuclear danger."

Poland stressed that the base does not pose a threat and does not hold nuclear missiles.

"It is a base that serves the purpose of defence, not attack," said Pawel Wronski, Poland's foreign ministry spokesperson.

"Such threats will certainly serve as an argument to strengthen Poland's and NATO's air defenses, and should also be considered by the United States."

The Kremlin's warning came after Kyiv's air force said Russian forces launched an intercontinental ballistic missile during an attack on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro earlier Thursday.

The Ukrainian air force said the missile was fired from the Russian region of Astrakhan — some 435 miles from Dnipro in east-central Ukraine.



"Today there was a new Russian missile. All the characteristics — speed, altitude — are (of an) intercontinental ballistic (missile). An expert (investigation) is currently underway," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a video statement.

Moscow said the ballistic missile defense base would lead to an increase in overall nuclear danger.

Asked about the Ukrainian statement, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters to contact the Russian military for comment.

The launch, if confirmed, adds to the rapidly rising tensions after Ukraine fired US missiles at targets inside Russia this week — despite Moscow warning it would see such action as a major escalation and Russian officials saying it could lead to World War III.

Senate okays Tinubu's \$2.2bn loan request

By Dave Oludare Oso

A charity organization on Wednesday organized a mass wedding ceremony for about 240 grooms and brides in western Afghanistan's Herat province.

Mawlawi Abdul Sadiqi, head of the organization said each newlywed couple was gifted household appliances, including carpet, blanket, and kitchen tools valued at 100,000 afghani (about 1,460 U.S. dollars).

Young people may have to wait for years to have their wedding ceremonies due to unemployment,



the economic crisis, the high cost of lavish dowries and expensive gifts in the poverty-stricken country.

Earlier, a mass wedding event was held in northern Sari Pul province, where 100 couples got married.

The Afghan caretaker government has repeatedly called on people to prevent irrational marriage customs and avoid wasting money on wedding ceremonies.

Pope Francis refuses glitzy burial, opts for wooden casket

By Dave Oludare Oso

Pope Francis has opted to be buried in a wooden casket when he is laid to rest – amending a centuries-old tradition of a decorated send off as he works to simplify papal customs.

The 87-year-old pontiff – who turns 88 next month – enacted a new set of liturgical rites aimed at modernizing the Catholic Church that scraps lengthy, garish funeral practices his predecessors observed upon their deaths, Reuters reported.

When he dies, Francis will now be immediately placed in a single wooden casket lined with zinc, rather than the three interlocking caskets made of cypress, lead and oak.

Pope Francis will now be buried in a wooden casket lined with zinc when he dies. AFP via Getty Images

Prior tradition laid the pontiff's body within the airtight caskets and would allow for objects, such as coins and papers issued by the pope during his

reign, to be buried with him. The open coffin will then sit at St. Peter's Basilica for mourners to pay their respects — nixing a funeral custom of the papal body being displayed on a raised platform propped up by decoration, Reuters reported.

Francis opted to be laid to rest at Rome's Basilica of St. Mary Major, a church he frequently visits during international trips, and not alongside his immediate predecessors.

The new rites will scrap lengthy, garish funeral practices his predecessors observed upon their deaths.

Francis will become the first pope in more than 100 years to be buried outside the Vatican. AP

He will become the first pope in more



than 100 years to be buried outside the Vatican — a title held by Leo XIII, who was entombed at Rome's Basilica of St. John Lateran in 1903, Reuters reported. Francis, who announced last year his desire to modify the intricate and lengthy funeral rites, has been open about his health challenges, including knee and back pain that now requires him to use a wheelchair.

Senate confirms Omolola Oloworaran as DG, PENCOM

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

The Nigerian Senate on Thursday, November 21 has confirmed the nomination of Omolola Oloworaran for appointment as the new Director-General of the National Pension Commission (PENCOM). The confirmation followed a request from President Bola Tinubu, who had written to the Senate seeking approval for the nominee.

The Senate's decision came after it considered and adopted the report from the Senate Committee on Establishment and Public Service during plenary.

Senator Cyril Fasuyi, the committee chairman and member representing the Ekiti North Senatorial District, explained that the committee had thoroughly reviewed the nominee's

qualifications.

According to Fasuyi, Oloworaran met all the legal requirements specified under sections 19 (2), (5), (6), and 26 of the Pension Reform Act 2014, which governs the appointment of the PENCOM Director-General.

Fasuyi further emphasized that the committee had determined Oloworaran to be “a qualified, fit, and proper person” for the role.

Following the committee's recommendation, Deputy Senate President Barau Jibrin, who presided over the session, called for a voice vote, and the nomination was approved without opposition.



This marks the next step in the leadership of PENCOM as Oloworaran is set to take charge of overseeing Nigeria's pension system.

Simon Ekpa'll be extradited to face charges in Nigeria – DHQ

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

The Nigerian Defence Headquarters (DHQ) has announced plans to extradite Simon Ekpa, the self-proclaimed Prime Minister of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), to Nigeria to face charges.

In a statement released to journalists on Thursday, the Director of Defence Information, Brigadier General Tukur Gusau, revealed that Chief of Defence Staff General Chris Musa expressed satisfaction with Ekpa's recent arrest in Finland.

Gusau stated, "The CDS is happy with his arrest in Finland, with the hope this will be a step towards his extradition to Nigeria so that he will face justice."

Ekpa is accused of promoting separatist propaganda linked to IPOB through social media, inciting violence, and supporting activities that have reportedly led to civilian and security personnel casualties in southeastern Nigeria.

His offences allegedly date back to August 23, 2021.

The Finland district court in Lahti recently ordered Ekpa's remand on probable cause for public incitement to commit a crime with terrorist intent.

Finnish authorities are also investigating him for financial crimes, including raising funds through questionable means.

Crime Commissioner, Otto Hiltunen of Finland's Central Criminal Police stated that Ekpa's activities had led to crimes and unrest in Nigeria, primarily orchestrated from his residence in Lahti via social media.

Ekpa, a local politician in Finland, previously served as a deputy councillor with the National Coalition Party and represented Lahti's public transport board. Despite his political affiliations in Finland, he has used his platform to advocate for Biafra's independence and call for election boycotts in Nigeria.

Finnish police arrested Ekpa in February 2023 for similar allegations but released him after questioning.



Authorities have confirmed ongoing investigations into his activities and those of four other suspects arrested on allegations of financing terrorism. The DHQ's assurance of extradition highlights the Nigerian government's determination to address what it deems a critical threat to national unity and stability.

Nnewi shooting not to disrupt Ifeanyi Ubah burial – Police

By **Agency Reporter**

The Police Command in Anambra says the shooting in Nnewi on Wednesday was not to disrupt the burial of late Sen. Ifeanyi Ubah.

It said the shooting was from another security agency, which mistook the police operatives as unfriendly forces and shot at them.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Tochukwu Ikenga the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state disclosed this to newsmen on Thursday in Awka.

"The command is aware of the shooting incident that took place at Izuchukwu Junction, Nnobi/Nnewi road by 7 pm on Wednesday, were security operatives

mistook the police operatives as unfriendly forces and opened fire at them.

"We emphasize that the attack on the operatives was not from non-state actors or any attempt to disrupt the burial of late Senator Ifeanyi Ubah," he said.

Ikenga said that preliminary information showed that the security operatives on investigation trailed a suspect to a security checkpoint before the gun duel ensued.

According to him, unfortunately, bullets hit the fuel tank of the Toyota Venza Sedan carrying the men, and it



was razed down.

"Two innocent passers-by were injured and they have been taken to the hospital. He sued for calm to allow for investigations into the incident as the issue was under control", he said.

The PPRO said that joint security forces have been deployed to ensure Nnewi is calm throughout the burial ceremonies of the late senator.

Asset forfeiture: Ex-Petroleum Minister seeks to amend suit against EFCC

By Agency Reporter

Former Minister of Petroleum, Diezani Alison-Madueke, on Thursday, sought to amend her suit challenging the order obtained by the EFCC for final forfeiture of her seized assets.

Alison-Madueke, through her lawyer, Godwin Iyinbor, told Justice Inyang of a Federal High Court in Abuja upon resumed hearing in the suit.

When the matter was called, no counsel appeared for the EFCC.

Justice Ekwo then asked Iyinbor if he had received processes from the anti-graft agency and he responded in the affirmative.

“Yes, my lord. We received a counter affidavit to our originating process and we have filed a further affidavit in response,” Iyinbor responded.

The lawyer, however, informed the court that they had filed a motion to amend their processes and that the commission had been duly served.

The judge consequently adjourned the matter until Feb. 17, 2025, for hearing the motion to amend their originating process.

The ex-minister had, through his counsel, Chief Mike Ozekhome, SAN, sued the anti-graft agency as sole respondent.

Alison-Madueke, in the suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/21/2023, sought an order extending the time to seek leave to apply to the court for an order to set aside the EFCC’s public notice issued to conduct a public sale on her property.

In the motion dated and filed on Jan. 6, 2023 by her lawyer, the former minister sought five orders from the court.

The former minister, who argued that the various orders were made without jurisdiction, said these “ought to be set aside ex debito justitiae.”

She said she was not given a fair hearing in all the proceedings leading to the orders.

“The various court orders issued in favour of the respondent and upon

which the respondent issued the public notice were issued in breach of the applicant’s right to fair hearing as guaranteed by Section 36 (1) of the 1999 Constitution, as altered, and other similar constitutional provisions,” she said.

She argued that she was neither served with the charge sheet and proof of evidence in any of the charges nor any other summons regarding the criminal charges pending against her before the court.

She further argued that the courts were misled into making several final forfeiture orders against her assets through suppression or non-disclosure of material facts.

“The several applications upon which the courts made the final order of forfeiture against the applicant were obtained upon gross misstatements, misrepresentations, non-disclosure, concealment and suppression of material facts.

“This honourable court has the power to set aside same ex debito justitiae, as a void order is as good as if it was never made at all.

“The orders were made without recourse to the constitutional right to fair hearing and right to property accorded the applicant by the constitution.

“The applicant was never served with the processes of court in all the proceedings that led to the order of final forfeiture,” she said, among other grounds given.

But the EFCC, in a counter-affidavit deposed to by Rufai Zaki, a detective with the commission, urged the court to dismiss her application.

Mr Zaki, a member of the team that investigated a case of criminal conspiracy, official corruption and money laundering against the ex-minister and some other persons involved in the case, said the investigation had clearly shown that she was involved in some acts of criminality.



He said Mrs Alison-Madueke was therefore charged before the court in charge no: FHC/ABJ/CR/208/2018.

“We hereby rely on the charge FHC/ABJ/CR/208/2018 dated 14 November 2018 filed before this honourable court and also attached as Exhibit C in the applicant’s affidavit,” he said.

The EFCC operative said most of the depositions in Mrs Alison-Madueke’s suit were untrue.

He said contrary to her deposition in the affidavit filed in support of the suit, most of the cases which led to the final forfeiture of the contested property “were action in rem, same was heard at various times and determined by this honourable court.”

He said the courts ordered the commission to do a newspaper publication inviting parties to show cause why the said property should not be forfeited to the federal government before final orders were made.

Mr Zaki argued that one Nnamdi Awa Kalu represented the ex-minister in reaction to one of the forfeiture applications.

“We humbly rely on the judgment of Hon. Justice I.L.N. Oweibo dated 10th September, 2019 shown in Exhibit C of the applicant’s affidavit,” he said.

The officer said contrary to her, the final forfeiture of the assets, which were subject to the present application, was ordered by the court in 2017 and that this was not set aside or upturned on appeal.

Nigerian youths are backbone of Africa's progress – Shettima

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has underscored the crucial role of Nigerian youths in advancing Africa's development, stating that they are indispensable to repositioning the continent.

Speaking at the 2024 Youth Legacy Conference held at the Banquet Hall of the Presidential Villa in Abuja, Shettima reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to youth empowerment as a cornerstone of President Bola Tinubu's "Renewed Hope Agenda."

Represented by Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Office of the Vice President, Shettima emphasised that youth inclusion in governance and economic activities is not just symbolic but a necessity for sustainable development.

"There is no nation that can prosper without investing in its youth. They are not just leaders of tomorrow; they are also the anchors of today. President Tinubu is deeply committed to ensuring that the youth not only have a voice but are active participants in shaping our collective destiny," he said.

Themed "Shaping Africa's Future with AfCFTA and Agenda 2063," the conference highlighted the alignment

between Nigeria's youth-focused initiatives and Africa's broader developmental goals. Shettima pointed out that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Agenda 2063 present opportunities for Nigerian youths to excel as entrepreneurs, innovators, and leaders, driving Africa into a prosperous future.

As a key highlight of the conference, the Ubuntu Trade App, a digital platform designed to promote trade and market access for African entrepreneurs, was launched.

The Vice President lauded the app as a testament to the ingenuity of young Nigerians, describing it as a critical tool for advancing Africa's digital transformation.

Shettima further commended youth-driven initiatives like the Mandela Washington Fellowship for their impact on critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and social justice.

He urged youths to embrace innovation and resilience, stressing that their contributions would define the future of Nigeria and Africa.

The conference also featured goodwill



Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Office of the Vice President representing Kashim Shettima

messages, including from U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission David J. Greene, who emphasized the importance of building networks to foster free trade and integration across Africa.

In her remarks, Hajiya Hauwa Liman, Technical Adviser to the Vice President on Women, Youth Engagement, and Impact, praised the administration's dedication to empowering youths.

She noted that initiatives like AfCFTA and Agenda 2063 offer unique opportunities for young Africans to lead the continent toward shared prosperity.

The event brought together prominent stakeholders, including the Minister of State for Youth Development, Ayodele Olawande, and representatives from the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC).

Sanwo-Olu Presents N3.05trn 2025 Budget To Lagos Assembly

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



Lagos State Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu on Thursday presented a budget estimate of N3.005 trillion for the 2025 fiscal year to the state House of Assembly.

A breakdown of the budget tagged, "Budget of Sustainability" showed that N1 trillion was proposed for Capital budget while N1.2 trillion was set aside in the budget before the lawmakers for recurrent spending in the coming year.

The budget proposal presented before the lawmakers on Thursday was about N800 billion higher than the approval granted for 2024.

Makinde flags off Eruwa farm settlement redevelopment

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State has performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the upgrade of the moribund 3,250 hectares Eruwa Farm Settlement to an agribusiness industrial hub.

The governor said that the project, once completed, would put Ibarapaland on the global agricultural map and create thousands of jobs for youths in the zone and across the state.

Governor Makinde, who stated this on Thursday at the Old Farm Settlement, Eruwa, Oyo State, added that his administration would also complete the Ido-Eruwa Road within the next one year, charging residents of Ibarapa zone to make investors feel welcome when the new agribusiness hub is completed.

He noted that the government recently approved the release of a tranche of N2 billion to the contractor handling the road project to fast-track its progress.

According to the governor, the administration established the Oyo State Agribusiness Development Agency (OYSADA) as a special-purpose vehicle to drive agribusiness in the state and so far, the state has achieved great successes and gone ahead to become a model for other states, and even some African countries, in the area of agribusiness. He equally expressed confidence that the new Agribusiness Hub in Eruwa would also be a success story like the Fasola Agribusiness Hub, as, according to him, development partners and investors, who have already committed to bringing in their money to the facility, were present at the ground-breaking ceremony.

He said: "About five years ago, we started what I will call the journey to make agribusiness the driver of Oyo State's economy. Immediately we came into office, we got access to a N7.6 billion loan facility taken by the previous administration and our plan was to use this loan to ensure that two of our moribund farm settlements are

converted to agribusiness hubs.

"So, we started a pilot project at the moribund Fasola Farm Settlement, which we picked to serve as a prototype. It was an ambitious project, because no state in Nigeria had ever done that.

"At first, we thought it would take like a year to complete the pilot project at Fasola, which is about 1,000 hectares. By calculation, it is bigger than Victoria Island in Lagos. Eruwa Farm Settlement is three times bigger than Fasola and what you see in the new Fasola Agribusiness Hub today is what we are putting up here.

"Fasola has taught us a very big lesson and we know that we have the capacity to take on this project and to see it to completion.

"As of today, it is not only that all states in Nigeria have come to inspect Fasola; we have had officials from Ogun, Ekiti, Cross River, Borno, Plateau, Delta, Bayelsa and Gombe states. We have also had visitors from outside Nigeria, including Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Mozambique and Kenya.

"So, I want to say to the people of Ibarapaland that you should be ready, because Ibarapaland is now on the agriculture map.

"We are quite happy and, as for me, I feel fulfilled that this journey to develop this farm estate is getting done. "I am happy to be joined on this journey by development partners and the private sector. Some of the people seated here today have committed to bring their money to invest in this environment.

"My people in Ibarapa; what you can do for me is to make the investors feel welcome. Support them and they will create jobs for our youths."

Speaking earlier, the Director-General of OYSADA, Dr Debo Akande, said that the Eruwa Agribusiness Hub is expected to be a 40-million-dollar public-private development investment that will change the agricultural landscape of Eruwa,



Ibarapa, and Oyo State.

"This facility will include a crop and livestock production centre, 15-20 processing centres, a state-of-the-art agribusiness training centre, a mechanisation and equipment leasing centre, an early-generation seed production centre, and, the icing on the cake will be an eco-resort centre that will put Eruwa on the world map.

"I thank His Excellency for his visionary leadership, the citizens of Oyo State, the good people of Ibarapa, and particularly Eruwa, the private investors, and AfDB for believing in this."

Explaining how Fasola Hub has become a success story, Akande maintained that the Hub has seen an influx of 12 medium to large national and international private companies occupying the 1,150 hectares of land for crop production, livestock rearing, and processing for domestic consumption and export.

He added that these companies have been contributing to supporting smallholder farmers in the state through training, taking their crops for processing and development of early generation seeds that will help yields across the state.

In his special remarks, Director-General, Nigeria, African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr Abdul Kamara, lauded Governor Makinde for resuscitating moribund farm settlements and putting the state on the path of agribusiness, which he described as consistent with AfDB's approach to rural and economic transformation and aligns with its focus to feed Africa, guarantee food security, nutrition, agro-processing, agricultural transformations, industrialisation and improving the quality of lives for Africans.

Governors pledge support for constitutional amendment

By Agency Reporter

A Federal High Court in Abuja, presided over by Justice Inyang Ekwo, has adjourned the hearing of a motion filed by former Petroleum Minister, Diezani Alison-Madueke, seeking to amend the originating process in her ongoing legal dispute with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The hearing has been rescheduled for February 17, 2025.

Alison-Madueke, through her lawyer, Professor Mike Ozekhome (SAN), filed a suit (marked FHC/ABJ/CS/21/2023) requesting the court to grant her more time to apply for an order to annul the EFCC's public notice for the sale of her assets.

She contends that the orders for the forfeiture of her assets were made without jurisdiction and that she was denied a fair hearing in the proceedings leading to those orders.

In her application, Alison-Madueke argued that she was not served with the charge sheet, proof of evidence, or any summons concerning the



charges against her. She further claimed that the forfeiture orders issued in favor of the EFCC were made in violation of her constitutional right to a fair hearing, as guaranteed by Section 36(1) of the 1999 Constitution. She also accused the courts of being misled due to the suppression or non-disclosure of critical information, which she asserts resulted in the violation of her right to property.

In response, the EFCC, represented by Detective Rufai Zaki, opposed Alison-Madueke's application. Zaki argued that the assets were lawfully forfeited in accordance with a 2017 court order and that the agency had followed all legal procedures in its efforts to auction the properties as part of its efforts to recover proceeds of crime. The EFCC

also insisted that the application for the final forfeiture of Alison-Madueke's assets was properly instituted and had not been overturned on appeal. At Thursday's proceedings, Alison-Madueke's counsel informed the court of their intention to amend their application challenging the final forfeiture of the seized assets. However, no legal representative from the EFCC was present in court. After confirming that the EFCC had served the necessary documents to Alison-Madueke's legal team, Justice Ekwo adjourned the matter until February 17, 2025, for the hearing of the motion to amend the originating summons.

Kwara workers told to register with KWASRRA

By Helen Okechukwu

The Kwara State Government has directed all staff under its local government payroll to register with the Kwara State Residents Registration Agency (KWASRRA) at designated centres across the 16 local government Council secretariats. The statement was shared on Thursday via the Facebook page of the state government.

In a statement signed by Alhaji Umar Danladi Shero, the Executive Chairman of the Kwara State Local Government Service Commission and the Local Government Pension Board, he clarified that the

exercise is not aimed at targeting or punishing any staff member.

Instead, it is intended to accurately document staff numbers and gather necessary information to support effective policy-making.

Alhaji Shero assured that all arrangements have been made to ensure a smooth registration process, with prior notifications sent to all 16 local government councils.

He, however, cautioned that any staff member who fails to participate in the exercise will be deemed illegitimate and will face consequences.

The Chairman reiterated the state government's new policy of "No Registration, No Salary or Bonus," emphasizing that it will be strictly enforced.

"Alhaji Umar however said any staff who decides to make his or herself unavailable for the exercise will be considered as an illegitimate officer of the council.

Reiterating this, he noted that the new policy by the state government of 'No Registration No Salary and Bonus' will not be hesitated to be applied," the statement noted.



Court adjourns hearing in Diezani Alison-Madueke's legal battle with EFCC

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

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constitutional right to a fair hearing, as guaranteed by Section 36(1) of the 1999 Constitution.

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Bauchi gov presents \$465b budget proposal for 2025

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed, on Thursday, presented a ₦465.855 billion budget proposal for the 2025 fiscal year to the state House of Assembly.

The proposed budget represents an 18 percent increase from the 2024 appropriation and is aimed at addressing ongoing reforms and rising inflationary trends impacting various sectors across the country.

Governor Mohammed highlighted that the increase in the 2025 budget reflects the state's response to economic challenges. He also noted that 80

percent of the 2024 budget had been implemented, underscoring the state's commitment to delivering on its promises.

The governor outlined several key sector allocations in the budget, with ₦166.938 billion earmarked for the social sector, focusing on education, healthcare, and welfare.

Additionally, the justice sector was allocated ₦9.578 billion, with plans to complete ongoing projects while initiating new ones to address pressing needs.

He further emphasised that the budget would prioritize the implementation of the new minimum wage, the contributory pension scheme, and

adherence to established budgetary guidelines.

Public hearings across the state's three senatorial zones were conducted to incorporate stakeholder input, ensuring the inclusion of grassroots needs in the planning process.

Governor Mohammed urged the state assembly to expedite the passage of the budget to ensure the timely implementation of its programs and projects.

In response, Speaker of the Bauchi State House of Assembly, Abubakar Sulaiman, commended the governor for the timely submission of the budget proposal and assured him of swift consideration and approval to ensure the state's continued development.

Tinubu assures IMF Chief of Nigeria's commitment to social welfare

By Friday Omosola



President Bola Tinubu has reiterated his administration's resolve to prioritise social investment programs to safeguard the welfare of Nigeria's vulnerable populations amid ongoing economic reforms.

He made this assurance during a courtesy visit from International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Acknowledging the challenges posed by the reforms, Tinubu expressed his determination to cushion their impact while ensuring long-term benefits.

He highlighted social safety nets and educational access as critical tools to reduce poverty and improve opportunities for

underprivileged children.

"We have started seeing positive results from our reforms, and the Nigerian people now understand the need for them, but we have to reduce the hardship that has resulted from the implementation," the President said.

REAF ALSO: Tinubu restructures media and communications team

Tinubu also discussed his administration's efforts to expand Nigeria's tax base without overburdening citizens, seeking the IMF's technical support to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Georgieva commended Nigeria's economic reforms, noting their positive indicators and pledging continued IMF support for diversification and social programs. She praised the Tinubu administration's focus on education

and social investments, assuring technical assistance to maximize the impact of fiscal policies.

During the meeting, Georgieva emphasized the IMF's commitment to helping emerging economies build resilience against global economic shocks.

She applauded Nigeria for hosting the IMF's African Caucus in August and highlighted the recent approval of a third chair for Sub-Saharan Africa on the IMF Executive Board, a move to enhance the region's representation.

The discussions underscored Nigeria's push for economic stability, with Tinubu reaffirming his dedication to uplifting the poor and driving infrastructural development across the nation.

Reps reject 6-year single tenure for elected officials

By Dave Oludare Oso

A bill seeking to amend the 1999 constitution to provide for a single term of six years for the offices of the president, governors and local government chairmen was rejected by the House of Representatives on Wednesday.

The bill, sponsored by the member representing Ideato North, South federal constituency of Imo State, Ikenga Ugochinyere and 33 other lawmakers, also seeks zonal rotation of presidential and governorship seats, as well as holding of elections into the offices in one day.

The proposed legislation seeks to alter Sections 76, 116, 132, 136, and some others of the 1999 Constitution (as amended).

According to the general principles of the bill, "these amendments are to ensure inclusive governance and curb wastages, occasioned by four-year periodic elections.

"The bill, among others, seeks amendment of Section 132 of the Principal Act by inserting a new subsection (2), deleting the extant subsection (4) and renumbering the entire section accordingly to provide that an election to the office of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be rotated between the north and the south regions of the country every six years.

"Other amendments include, Section 76 of the Principal Act is altered by inserting a new subsection (3) as follows; (3) For the Purposes of Section (1) of this section, all elections into the offices of President, Governors, National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly shall hold simultaneously on the same date to be determined by the Independent National Electoral Commission in consultation with the National Assembly and in accordance with the Electoral Act.

"Section 116 of the Principal Act is amended by inserting a new subsection (3) as follows: For the purposes of subsection (1)

of this section, all elections into the offices of President, Governors, National Assembly, State Houses of Assembly and Local Government Councils shall be held simultaneously on the same date to be determined by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, in consultation with the National Assembly and in accordance with the Electoral Act.

"Section 132 of the Principal Act is amended by inserting a new subsection (2), deleting the extant subsection (4) and renumbering the entire section accordingly: An election to the office of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be rotated between the north and the south regions of the country every six years, provided that where it is the turn of the north or south to present a candidate for election into the office of President, it shall be rotated among the three geo-political zones that constitutes

"The extant subsection (2) becomes subsection (3) The extant subsection (3) becomes subsection (4) The extant subsection (4) is hereby deleted. The extant subsection (5) remains subsection (5).

"Section 136 of the Principal Act is amended by deleting the extant subsections 1 & 2 and replacing them with new subsections I, 2 and 3 as follows: If a person duly elected as President dies before taking and subscribing to the oath of allegiance and oath of office. or is for any reason whatsoever, unable to be sworn in, the person elected with him as First Vice President shall be sworn in as



President and he shall appoint a new First Vice President with the approval by a simple majority of the National Assembly at a joint sitting.

"A person who was sworn in as governor to complete the term for which another person was elected as governor shall not be elected to such office for another term. The Principal Act is altered by inserting a new Section 188 immediately after the extant 187 and immediately before the extant 188 and renumbering accordingly as follows; 188(1)

"Notwithstanding any other provision, the governor shall present a mid-term account of stewardship performance report to the State House of Assembly at the end of the third year of the six-year term.

"The State House of Assembly shall determine by a resolution supported by not less than two-third majority of members, whether the governor has, by the account of stewardship report, justified his continuous stay in office.

"Where, upon the consideration of the mid-term report under subsection (1) of this section, the state House of Assembly is not satisfied with the performance of the governor for the period he has been in office, the State House of Assembly shall pass a vote of no confidence on the governor.

"The State House of Assembly shall immediately commence the process for the impeachment of the governor from office."

Thereafter, the bill was put to a voice vote by the speaker who presided over the plenary and the nays had it.

NEC moves to address power grid failures, launches committee on national electrification

By Friday Omosola

The National Economic Council (NEC) has taken decisive steps to tackle the ongoing issues plaguing Nigeria's power sector, including the recent power grid collapses, by establishing a committee to implement the National Electrification Strategy.

This initiative is aimed at ensuring reliable and affordable electricity access across the country.

At the 146th meeting of NEC held on Thursday at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, Vice President Kashim Shettima, who chairs the Council, underscored that access to electricity is a fundamental right, essential for economic growth.

He emphasised that 'electricity is the oxygen of economic growth' and must be treated as a basic necessity rather than a luxury.

In a bid to address the challenges of electricity access, the Council constituted a new committee led by Cross River State Governor, Bassey Otu.

This committee will focus on deepening states' involvement in the implementation of the Electricity Reform Act 2023 and the National Electrification Strategy.

The group includes governors from Katsina, Gombe, Osun, Imo, and Plateau states, along with key federal officials such as the Ministers of Finance, Power, and Budget, as well as the Managing Directors of the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) and the Niger Delta Power Holding Company.

READ ALSO: Lagbaja: Tinubu postpones NEC meeting

During the meeting, the Council recognised the need for a reformed and diversified electricity system to empower regional needs and ensure equitable access to energy.

A key aspect of the strategy is the promotion of private-sector-led, distributed renewable energy generation, which will enhance electricity availability for households and small enterprises, particularly in



rural areas.

Shettima also highlighted other critical sectors needing urgent attention, including energy infrastructure, human capital development, and Nigeria's creative industries, which he said could significantly boost the nation's economic future.

Kashim Shettima and governors at the NEC meeting [PHOTO CREDIT: X]

He called for greater support for Nigeria's burgeoning creative sector, which has garnered global recognition through its music, films, and cultural exports.

In addition to discussions on power reform, the meeting also addressed the ongoing debate on the establishment of state police.

The NEC has mandated states to submit their positions on the matter by the next meeting to facilitate a unified stance on the issue

Other key highlights included a presentation on the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ), with states urged to support the initiative, which aims to stimulate agricultural and industrial

development across the country.

The Council also approved key governance appointments for the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA), aiming to strengthen the country's investment strategy for critical sectors.

READ ALSO: Lagbaja: Tinubu postpones NEC meeting

The meeting also featured updates on Nigeria's fiscal balances, with the Excess Crude Account standing at \$473.7 million and the Stabilization Account at over N33 billion as of November 20.

Additionally, discussions on NASENI's innovations in solar and electric vehicle technology were noted, with states encouraged to leverage these advancements to foster industrial and economic growth.

This comprehensive approach by the NEC reflects the government's determination to address Nigeria's power challenges while positioning the nation for long-term economic transformation.

Atiku slams Tinubu's new loan proposal amid Nigeria's rising debt

By Friday Omosola

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has expressed deep concern over Nigeria's escalating debt crisis, following a recent World Bank report that ranks the country as the third most indebted nation to the International Development Association (IDA).

In a statement released on his social media platform, Atiku criticised President Bola Tinubu's intention to borrow an additional N1.7 trillion to cover a shortfall in the 2024 budget through Euro Bonds.

He described the move as alarming, particularly because the proposed loan is benchmarked at an exchange rate of N800 to 1 USD, while the current Central Bank of Nigeria exchange rate has soared beyond N1,600 to 1 USD.

"Nigeria is sinking further into debt, and the National Assembly has become an accomplice once more," he said.

He questioned President Tinubu's administration, citing earlier claims of record-breaking revenue collections by

the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and Nigeria Customs Service.

READ ALSO: Atiku arrogant, jealous of Tinubu – Presidency

"Why are they still borrowing? There is something they are not telling Nigerians, even as they are being crushed by a combination of failed trial-and-error policies and loan rackets," he added.

The former Vice President accused Tinubu's administration of mismanaging loans, asserting that they have become a tool for corruption rather than serving infrastructure and developmental needs.

Citing a recent report by BudGIT, a budget transparency organisation, he lamented the poor allocation of funds in the 2024 budget, which he described as riddled with "pork projects."

"Reflecting on Nigeria's debt history, Atiku expressed dismay over the reversal of gains made during former President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration,



which had successfully cleared the country's foreign debt.

"I feel a sense of personal agony seeing that just a few years after the administration of President Obasanjo took our country out of foreign indebtedness, we are today back at the top spot in the same conundrum," he said.

READ ALSO: Nigerians have rejected you, Wike slams Atiku

Atiku called for greater caution and financial prudence, urging the government to adopt a more calculated approach to borrowing. "It is time to apply more caution and arithmetic to the loan frenzy," he said.

FAAC distributes N1.411trn to federal, state, local governments

By Friday Omosola

The Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) has disbursed N1.411 trillion to the three tiers of government for October 2024, reflecting an increase in revenue compared to the previous month.

The funds, derived from statutory revenue, Value Added Tax (VAT), Electronic Money Transfer Levy (EMTL), and Exchange Difference, were shared at the FAAC meeting in Bauchi, chaired by the Accountant General of the Federation, Dr Oluwatoyin S. Madein.

According to the FAAC communiqué, the federal government received N433.021 billion, states got N490.696

billion, and local government councils were allocated N355.621 billion.

FAAC

Additionally, oil-producing states received N132.404 billion as derivation revenue (13% of mineral revenue). The report highlighted significant increases in VAT and statutory revenue.

Gross VAT for October amounted to N668.291 billion, up by N84.616 billion from the previous month.

Statutory revenue also rose to N1.336 trillion, reflecting a N293.009 billion increase.

READ ALSO: Autonomy: FG, govts, LG chairs sign implementation agreement

The FAAC also distributed N646 billion



from Exchange Difference, with the federal government receiving N259.545 billion, states N131.644 billion, and local councils N101.493 billion.

The remaining amount was allocated to derivation revenue and interventions.

Dr Madein commended the improved revenue performance, attributing it to increased collections from oil royalties, import duties, and company taxes.

Tinubu advocates military unity at Africa Games kickoff in Abuja

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has called on African militaries to unite in addressing the continent's security challenges, emphasising the importance of cooperation and solidarity in fostering peace and stability.

The President made this appeal on Wednesday while declaring open the second edition of the Africa Military Games at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

Represented by Vice President Kashim Shettima, President Tinubu described the event as a historic platform to enhance military cooperation, camaraderie, and unity across Africa.

Themed "Enhancing Military Cooperation in Africa through Sports," the games mark a revival of the tradition initiated over two decades ago in Nairobi, Kenya.

President Tinubu emphasised the collective effort required to address Africa's security threats, stating, "Our collective safety and the well-being of our people demand that we stand together, shoulder to shoulder, as one united Africa."

He hailed the Games as a symbol of the cooperation that binds military institutions across the continent.

READ ALSO: Tinubu restructures media and communications team

"This occasion is more than a gathering of extraordinary athletes; it is an undeniable reminder of what we can achieve when we stand together—not just as neighbours, but as guardians of a continent," the President added.

He commended the Chief of Defence Staff, General C.G. Musa, and the President of the Organisation of Military Sports in Africa (OSMA), Major General M. Abdullahi, for their leadership in reviving the event.

Mr Tinubu also highlighted the importance of sports in instilling discipline, resilience, and physical fitness among military personnel, key



traits for addressing diverse security challenges.

The Chief of Defence Staff, General Musa, echoed the President's sentiments, stressing that the games are a celebration of both physical prowess and the bond that unites armed forces across Africa.

He urged the 1,625 athletes and officials from across the continent to embrace the spirit of sportsmanship.

Maj. Gen. Maikano Abdullahi, President of OSMA, praised Nigeria's leadership in hosting the Games and emphasised their role in fostering unity, friendship, and solidarity among African armed forces.

READ ALSO: Ondo: Seek redress in court, Tinubu tells aggrieved losers

The opening ceremony featured a range

of performances, including a callisthenics display, artist showcases, flag hoisting, and the symbolic lighting of the Games torch by Vice President Shettima.

Dignitaries in attendance included the Speaker of the House of Representatives, represented by Babajimi Benson; the Minister of Defence, Mohammed Abubakar Badaru; Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle; and service chiefs from Nigeria's armed forces, among others.

The games, which aim to strengthen military cooperation through sports, will feature participants from various African nations competing in multiple disciplines, reinforcing the shared vision of a safer, united continent.

FG seeks unified action to tackle healthcare challenges

By Agency Reporter

The Federal Government has called for collective action to address healthcare challenges, especially women and children's problems.

The Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Pate, made the call during a side event hosted by the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) at the 65th National Council on Health (NCH) in Maiduguri on Thursday.

The event, titled "ALGON Mission, Mandate, and Priority for Health 2024-2030," focused on the role of local governments in shaping health policy and improving health outcomes in Nigeria.

The minister stressed the need for collaboration across all sectors, including government, healthcare providers and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) "to tackle systemic barriers in healthcare, particularly in maternal health."

He shared a personal account of a pregnant woman suffering from eclampsia, highlighting the risks faced by many Nigerians due to lack of access to essential healthcare services.

Eclampsia is a rare but serious condition that occurs in the second half of pregnancy, causing seizures, high blood pressure, headaches, blurry vision and convulsion, which usually occurs in pregnant women with preeclampsia.

The minister said "this is a true story; external support was the only reason the woman and her child survived.

He used this example to stress the importance of building systems that provide affordable and timely interventions for all Nigerians, especially the most vulnerable.

"We must act with urgency," he declared, urging national effort to address the root causes of preventable deaths, particularly among women and children.

He called for unified approach across



federal, state and local levels, stressing the importance of the National Health Act, which aims to provide universal access to healthcare services.

Pate also emphasized the need for improved healthcare infrastructure, especially in rural areas, where limited access to services and resources remained a significant challenge.

He added that "it is not just about building more hospitals or clinics, but ensuring healthcare workers are trained, supported, and equipped to deliver the best care."

He also called on the private sector to contribute to the national health agenda, aligning with government efforts to improve healthcare outcomes.

He highlighted the long-term benefits of improving women's health, suggesting that solving maternal health challenges would create ripple effects, enhancing overall health outcomes for families and communities.

Bello Lawal, National President of ALGON, reiterated the organisation's commitment to reposition local governments to effectively deliver services and

enhanced governance, saying "Our goal is to build the capacity of local government councils to provide essential services to citizens."

Dr Aminu Hassan, the ALGON Chairman in Taraba, presented the ALGON PHC Revitalisation and Operationalization Programme (APH-ROP), which seeks to strengthen

primary healthcare delivery across Nigeria's 774 local government areas.

"This initiative aligns with national programmes like the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF) 2.0 and aims to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030," Hassan said.

Dr Walter Kazadi Mulombo, the Head of WHO Nigeria, highlighted the importance of global partnerships in advancing health and education.

Mulombo praised the ongoing technical support efforts to strengthen health systems across the region and expressed optimism about the future impact of the initiatives.

Dr Pamela Ajayi, the President of the Healthcare Federation of Nigeria (HFN), emphasised the role of the private sector in healthcare delivery, underscoring two key initiatives – the GDP and the New World Initiative – which use telecommunications and mobile health technology to improve primary healthcare in underserved areas.

Dr Garfa Alawode, the Co-convener of the UHC2023 Forum, also called for united efforts to reduce preventable deaths, improve healthcare infrastructure, and support healthcare workers.

"Addressing Nigeria's healthcare challenges requires collective will and action," Alawode added.

What you need to know about hirsutism: Male pattern hair growth in females

By Helen Okechukwu

Ladies who are diagnosed with hirsutism have excessive facial, chest, along with back hair growth.

While the presence of body hair is normal for all genders, hirsutism is often associated with underlying hormonal imbalances or medical conditions.

Research from International Journal of Women's Dermatology titled 'Endocrine Evaluation Of Hirsutism' revealed that hirsutism is an endocrine disorder that affects 5 to 10% of reproductive-age women in the population.

Although hirsutism affects but is difficult to be noticed, it is noted that this medical condition is common among dark-skinned individuals.

However, in children, hirsutism is a sign of precocious puberty, which means rapid growth, which is when children's bodies begin to change into adult bodies too soon.

Women who discontinue oral contraceptives and gain weight are likely to have hirsutism.

Let's delve deep into what you need to know about the underlying medical condition.

What is hirsutism?

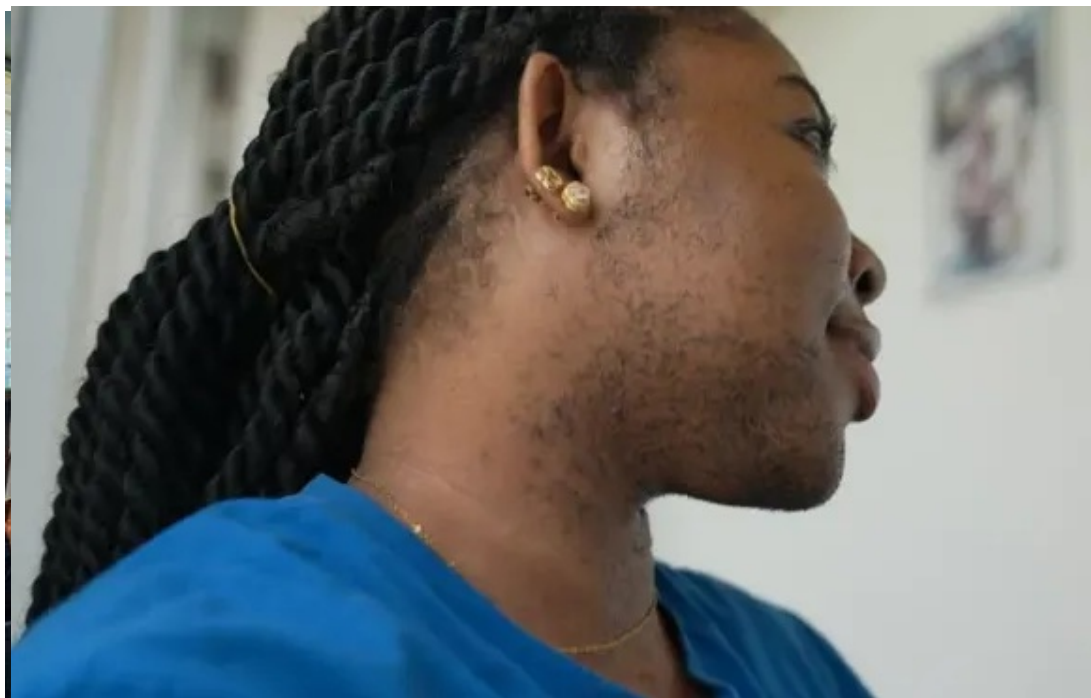
Hirsutism refers to the presence of terminal hair with male distribution in women on their faces, chest, and back.

Causes of hirsutism

The primary cause of hirsutism is an excess of androgens, the male hormones present in both men and women but typically in smaller amounts in females. Several conditions can lead to elevated androgen levels, including:

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): A common hormonal disorder affecting the ovaries, although 70% to 80% of all people with PCOS develop hirsutism, a Cleveland Clinic study revealed.

Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia



(CAH): A genetic condition affecting adrenal gland function.

Medications: Certain drugs, including anabolic steroids and some contraceptives, can trigger hirsutism.

Idiopathic Hirsutism: In some cases, no identifiable cause is found, and the condition is considered idiopathic.

Cushing's Syndrome: Long-term exposure to high cortisol levels can lead to excessive hair growth.

Symptoms and Diagnosis

Hirsutism is often accompanied by other signs of hyperandrogenism, such as acne, irregular menstrual cycles, deepening of the voice, and thinning of scalp hair.

Diagnosis typically involves a medical history review, physical examination, and blood tests to assess hormone levels. In some cases, imaging studies like ultrasounds or CT scans are conducted to check for abnormalities in the ovaries or adrenal glands.

Treatment Options: Managing hirsutism involves addressing the underlying cause and reducing hair growth. Common treatment approaches include:

Medications: Anti-androgens like spironolactone or oral contraceptives help balance hormones.

Lifestyle Changes: Weight loss in cases of PCOS can improve symptoms.

Kolla_bharathi, an X user, twitted, "A 22-year-old girl came to me with a history of irregular cycles, hirsutism, and pcos 7 months ago; her weight was 83 kg at that time.

Now, after 7 months, she's 65 kg. And cycles regularised hirsutism decreased. Was on LSM along with fewer medications. LIFESTYLE PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE; WATCH OUT WHAT YOU EAT!"

Hair Removal Techniques: Methods like shaving, waxing, laser hair removal, or electrolysis can reduce visible hair.

Surgical Intervention: Rarely, surgery may be necessary for hormone-secreting tumours.

Coping and Support

Hirsutism can impact self-esteem and mental health, making emotional support essential. Women experiencing this condition should seek guidance from healthcare professionals for personalised care. Early intervention can significantly improve symptoms and quality of life.

NAFDAC seizes N2bn fake drinks in Lagos market raid

By Helen Okechukwu

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) on Thursday announced the uncovering of illegal alcohol packaging operators at Article Market in Abule-Osun, Lagos State.

The regulatory body revealed that during raiding, about 50,000 counterfeit branded labels and packaging materials for fake alcoholic beverages were seized.

The information disclosed that approximately ₦2 billion worth of goods were confiscated.

The anti-food agency said the seized items in the shared documents was used for the production of unapproved and hazardous alcoholic products for the public.

“During the raid, over 50,000 counterfeit branded labels and



packaging materials for fake alcoholic beverages, valued at approximately \$2 billion, were confiscated. These items were being used to produce unapproved and hazardous alcoholic products,” NAFDAC X handle revealed.

Addressing this, NAFDAC issued a warning as they highlighted the health risk involved in consuming fake alcohols, which can lead to severe health damage, including poisoning and organ damage.

The health agency advised consumers to

purchase alcoholic beverages from trusted vendors, urging them to report any suspicious activities to the nearest NAFDAC office.

“NAFDAC warns about the severe health risks of counterfeit alcohol, including poisoning and organ damage. Consumers are advised to purchase alcoholic beverages only from trusted vendors and report any suspicious activities to the nearest NAFDAC office.”

UHC: Borno govt seeks wide coverage for Nigerians

By Helen Okechukwu

The Health Commissioner of Borno State, Prof. Baba Mallam Gana has called for collaboration among public ministries across Nigeria with the aim of achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for its citizens.

Prof. Gana made this call during their 65th National Council on Health (NCH), organized by the Federal Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Borno State Ministry of Health.

The theme for this 65th NCH was “Accelerating Pathways for Universal Health Coverage: Strategies for 2030 Success.”

This development was made known via a statement shared on X on Thursday, noting the urgency to achieve this health scheme and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) before the proposed deadline slated for 2030.

“Today marks the opening of #NCH65 in the host state, Borno, bringing together leaders, experts, and advocates from across the country to discuss how we can

accelerate progress, tackle barriers to healthcare access, and build a future where no Nigerian has to choose between their health and their livelihood,” the documents noted.

Speaking at the programme as the host, Prof. Gana stressed on the importance of the 65th meeting of NCH targeting to improve partnership and drive impactful health policies for the benefit of all Nigerians.

Adding that the aim is to ensure that citizens have quality access to healthcare facilities in Nigeria, urging for a united effort to ensure that no Nigerian is left behind before the schedule deadline.

Highlighting the challenges his state faces, Prof. Gana noted these challenges have been there for over a decade but have recorded improvement.

Expressing his excitement, he acknowledged that being a chief host was a “testament to the state’s resilience and commitment to ensuring no one is left behind in the journey toward improved healthcare.”

“The push for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Nigeria is a race against time, a fight to save lives, and a necessity to secure the nation’s future.”



Shehu Abubakar Ibn Umar Garbai Al-Amin El-Kanem, the Shehu of Borno, His Royal Highness, represented by the Shehu of Dikwa, explained the important role community played in their various communities, describing their position as a driving force to draw support for government reforms.

Mitigating Bird Strike: Strategy for Nigeria airport wildlife management

By Agency Reporter

Bird strike is a collision between an aircraft and a bird or other wildlife, such as bats or small animals.

It can pose a significant threat to aviation safety.

Causes of bird strikes include birds attracted to airport surroundings by things such as food, waste and water; and habitat encroachment whereby airports built near wetlands.

Others are weather conditions which includes like storms, turbulence and aircraft flight path.

The effects of bird strikes are huge and can be catastrophic. They include engine failure or damage, windshield damage, air frame damage, loss of control and emergency landings or crashes.

The consequences of bird strike consist of safety risks to passengers and crew, aircraft damage or loss, flight delays or cancellations.

There are also economic costs in terms of repairs, lost revenue; and environmental concerns like bird habitat disruption.

Aviation experts say Nigerian airports recorded over 93 bird strike incidents in the first half of 2022.

According to them, the Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA) in Lagos is as a high-risk area for bird strikes with 54 incidents out of 93 bird strike incidents recorded.

According to a report from the Federal Airports Authority (FAAN), 134 bird strike incidents occurred in the country between 2015 and 2020.

Recently, Nigeria's Air Peace airline confirmed that its early morning flight from Abuja to Lagos was forcefully aborted due to a bird strike incident.

A statement issued by the airline's Head of Corporate Communications, Dr Ejike Ndiulo, informed that Abuja-Lagos flight experienced a bird strike before take-off, prompting a ramp return as a safety measure.

"All passengers disembarked normally. We have deployed a replacement aircraft for the affected flight to minimize disruptions and ensure that passengers continue their journeys promptly.

"We appeal for the understanding of our



valued passengers impacted by this development, as well as those on other flights that may experience delays.

"At Air Peace, we are committed to providing safe, comfortable, and reliable air travel for all our passengers," he said.

Worried by the huge losses incurred by airlines as a result of bird strikes, FAAN said it would acquire "Phonic Bird Wailers" which would help in combating wildlife and bird strikes in the country.

Capt. Muktar Muye, former FAAN Director, Airport Operation, said the equipment was already being shipped into the country.

Furthermore, FAAN took delivery of bird strike fighting equipment from Canada on October 4, 2024 to support airline operators.

FAAN Managing Director, Mrs Olubunmi Kuku, is confident that the equipment would drastically to promote safety at nation's airports.

Kuku said that the achievement would ultimately increase Nigeria's rating in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

According to her, FAAN also received wildlife hazard control equipment from ICAO to enhance safety and mitigate wildlife hazards at various airports in the nation for effective utilization.

The managing director said this demonstrated FAAN's commitment toward confronting bird strike incidents and ensuring airport safety.

Kuku, however, said that she regretted the menace of bird strike incidents on the operations of the airline operators in the country.

The delivery of bird strike fighting equipment from Canada was well lauded by the Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) as a proactive measure to address infrastructure challenges at the nation's airports.

Nevertheless, retired Group Capt. John Ojikutu, an Aviation Security Consultant, told the newsmen recently that the nation would not make much progress in air safety unless the nation purged itself of issues that trigger air mishaps.

According to him, FAAN bought the appropriate equipment and recruited specialists from the universities with offices in the FAAN headquarters and at Abuja Airport.

"The sooner the ICAO Audits and the US FAA Audits were completed and Category One was bestowed on us, every ladder that took us up was destroyed including the human capital skills.

"The results are not only FAAN, so it is for the Airlines without skilled manpower such as pilot, engineers, in sufficient numbers.

"So it is with NAMA without sufficient Air Traffic Controllers and also in FAAN without sufficient skilled manpower in its various operations and support services.

"The general problems have to do with the oversight and enforcement Authority, NCAA which also lacks skilled manpower for the periodic inspections, checks, audits, survey, among others on all the Aviation Operators," he said.

Ayra Starr, Asake, Rema return for Coke Studio 2024 'Beat the Drop'

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Coke Studio2024 has launched its much-anticipated 'Beat the Drop' campaign, featuring a star-studded lineup of acclaimed Nigerian music icons Ayra Starr, Rema, and Asake.

This groundbreaking initiative aims to celebrate music fandom across the nation, offering fans unique experiences and exciting rewards that resonate with their passion for music.

With a focus on uplifting music enthusiasts throughout Nigeria, the campaign promises thrilling prizes that are set to mesmerize participants.

Among the attractive offerings is an exclusive all-expenses-paid trip to South Africa for a unique musical experience.

Additionally, participants stand the chance to win a staggering ₦75 million in cash prizes, although terms and conditions apply.

This initiative not only enhances the engagement of fans but also emphasizes the integral role of music in forging connections among individuals.

Yusuf Murtala, the Senior Director of Frontline Marketing at Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited, expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration with the beloved music trio.

"We're proud to continue our partnership with fan-favourite artists Ayra Starr, Rema, and Asake for our Coke Studio2024 'Beat the Drop' campaign.

This initiative celebrates the compelling power of music and fandom across our vibrant country.

We aim to offer fans in Nigeria unparalleled access to these iconic artists and live acts, promising exhilarating digital and real-world moments like never before," he noted.

Murtala emphasized that fans can expect a variety of thrilling experiences as part of the campaign.

Following the artists closely, the anticipation builds for exclusive track drops and heart-pounding live performances, with more details to be divulged in the upcoming weeks.



To further enhance fan engagement, the campaign will also include custom-designed Coca-Cola packs, adorned with the imagery of Ayra Starr, Rema, and Asake.

These specially designed packs are intended to immerse fans in a unique experience with their favourite artists, enabling them to feel connected to the music in their daily lives.

Murtala highlighted that Coke Studio is committed to transforming how fans connect with their musical idols.

"We are excited to bring fans incredible opportunities through our 'Drink, Find, Scan, and Win' promotion.

Participants stand a chance to win exclusive tickets to the highly anticipated Coke Studio Live event scheduled for December.

Also up for grabs are Boomplay subscription vouchers and, of course, the coveted trip to South Africa," he stated.

The rewards don't end there. Murtala revealed that fans could also unlock various goodies, including Bolt ride vouchers for hassle-free transportation, recharge cards to ensure uninterrupted connectivity, and Showmax vouchers for cinema lovers, all designed to elevate the music experience.

Participating in this campaign is straightforward. Consumers must purchase a Coca-Cola drink with a distinctive white cap or crown and scan the QR code found on the packaging or promotional materials.

By entering the unique 10-character code revealed under the cap, fans unlock an exciting world of possibilities.

The instant announcement of winners adds an extra layer of thrill to the campaign, creating an ongoing buzz around the initiative.

Beyond immediate rewards, the campaign also features compelling weekly draws, where five fortunate fans will have the opportunity to win ₦1 million each week.

Moreover, one grand prize winner will be awarded an exclusive ticket to a remarkable musical experience in South Africa, further incentivizing participation.

Murtala reassured fans that the campaign is approved and overseen by the relevant regulatory authorities, emphasizing Coca-Cola's commitment to rewarding loyal customers while creating thrilling engagement opportunities for music lovers across the nation.

"We're excited to celebrate the synergy between Coca-Cola and the dynamic world of music, enhancing the connection we share as a community," he concluded.

As the 'Beat the Drop' campaign unfolds, music enthusiasts in Nigeria can look forward to an electrifying experience that not only recognizes their love for music but also provides fantastic opportunities for unforgettable memories.

This initiative solidifies Coke Studio's reputation as a platform that champions music culture and deepens connections through the universal language of sound.

Why I see marriage as a scam- Abimbola Craig

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

In a candid and revealing interview with notable media personality Chude Jideonwo, actress and film producer Abimbola Craig has stirred conversation by labelling marriage as a “scam.”

Her provocative statement touches upon deeper issues related to traditional marital roles and the inequities often faced by women within such unions.

Craig celebrated for her outstanding performances and production work, utilized the platform to express her reservations toward conventional expectations tied to matrimony.

She indicated that many of these expectations can leave women feeling burdened and undervalued.

“All marriage is a scam,” Craig stated firmly, drawing upon personal anecdotes to illustrate her point. Reflecting on her upbringing, she recalled her mother’s teachings on the nature of marriage.

“When I was young, my mum always told me marriage is an institution,” she said. She humorously noted that her mother had described the title “Mrs.” as shorthand for “Master’s in Residential Servicing.”

Such an interpretation highlights the antiquated notion many women face, often being seen as primary caretakers and supporters with little regard for their individuality and ambitions.

Yet despite Craig’s critical perspective on marriage, she was keen to clarify that her decision to remain single is not rooted in a disdain for the institution itself.

Instead, her choice arises from a quest for a meaningful partnership with someone who has attained self-awareness and a strong sense of purpose.

“I am not married, not because I do not want to be married, but if you are a man who does not know who he is, you cannot be with me,”

Craig asserted, emphasizing the



importance of mutual understanding and personal growth in any relationship.

Craig’s insights are particularly resonant in today’s fast-evolving societal landscape, where many individuals, particularly women, are reassessing traditional roles and expectations.

In recent years, the dialogue surrounding marriage has expanded to include diverse viewpoints, many of which echo Craig’s sentiments about compatibility, self-awareness, and personal aspirations over societal pressures.

Her impressive career, exemplified by her role in the web series “Skinny Girl in Transit,” alongside her co-production of the vibrant 2019 film “Sugar Rush,” speaks volumes about her commitment to the entertainment industry.

Through her artistic platform, she actively advocates for narratives that empower women and challenge preconceptions.

On a more personal note, Abimbola Craig has also bravely shared her battle with health issues, recounting a near-death experience she faced following brain surgery in 2014.

This vulnerability adds depth to her character, showcasing her resilience and strength. Her journey through adversity serves as a powerful reminder that one’s path is often unpredictable and can lead to profound self-discovery.

In articulating her thoughts on marriage and relationships, Craig not only raises eyebrows but also encourages a broader discussion about what partnerships should look like in contemporary society.

Rema, Seun Kuti, others set to perform at Coachella 2025

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian singer Rema is set to make his highly anticipated debut at the renowned Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in 2025.

Joining him in this landmark event will be Afrobeat pioneer son Seun Kuti, who returns to the iconic festival after captivating audiences in 2012.

This year, the festival promises to showcase an impressive lineup, representing the diversity of African music talent.

Adding to the richness of the African musical presence at Coachella, Ghanaian artist Amaarae and talented South African singer Tyla will also grace the stage, contributing to an exciting representation of the continent's artistic prowess.

Their inclusion alongside Rema highlights the growing influence of African artists on the global music scene, reflecting a deeper recognition of the genre's significance.

Headlining the 2025 edition of Coachella are internationally celebrated acts, including multifaceted pop icon Lady Gaga, punk rock legend Green Day, rap superstar Post Malone, and the ever-popular Travis Scott.

Each headliner promises a memorable performance, demonstrating their artistry and impact on modern music.

The festival landscape does not fall short of diverse talent either, as other prominent performers taking the stage include the legendary Missy Elliott, K-pop sensation Lisa, avant-garde artist FKA Twigs, rising rap star Glorilla, and electronic music powerhouse Charli XCX.

The lineup is further enriched by acts like Misfits, Brazilian sensation Anitta, R&B veteran T-Pain, the formidable Megan Thee Stallion, and internationally acclaimed DJ Zedd, ensuring that fans will experience an eclectic mix of genres and styles throughout both weekends of this



unmissable celebration.

Coachella 2025 will be held over two exhilarating weekends, slated for April 11-13 and April 18- 20, at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, California, an idyllic setting that has become synonymous with the festival's colourful atmosphere and vibrant spirit.

This year marks a significant milestone for African artists at Coachella, whose prior performances have paved the way for rising stars in the Afrobeat genre.

Notable previous appearances include the illustrious Seun Kuti in 2012, followed by Mr Eazi and Burna Boy in 2019, Ckay in 2022, and the remarkable Tems in 2024.

Each performance has paved the way for increased visibility of African music on a global stage, showcasing the profound impact of the continent's artists in a multicultural landscape.

Rema's performances on both Sundays, April 13 and April 20, will align him with an exciting roster that includes headliner Post Malone, alongside powerhouse performers such as Megan Thee Stallion, Zedd, Jennie, Shaboozey, and Ty Dolla \$ign.

The anticipation surrounding his debut lies in his unique musical style,

characterized by his infectious melodies and dynamic stage presence, which promise to leave an indelible mark on Coachella guests.

Seun Kuti, performing on Fridays April 11 and 18, will undoubtedly bring the spirit of Afrobeat to life once again.

His act will share the stage with Lady Gaga, Missy Elliott, Lisa, FKA Twigs, Glorilla, rising stars such as Benson Boone, and legendary acts like The Go-Go's and Three6 Mafia.

This fusion of renowned artists from different genres will amplify the festival's mission to celebrate musical diversity.

Renowned as one of the largest music and arts festivals in the world, Coachella attracts over 125,000 attendees each year.

It serves as a cultural melting pot that unites music lovers and artists alike, creating an atmosphere of creativity and inspiration.

With an exceptional lineup that champions both established musicians and emerging talent, Coachella 2025 is poised to be a landmark event for music enthusiasts, marking a promising future for artists from Africa and beyond.

My husband ruined my career- Olajumoke Bread seller-turned-model

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular model and former bread seller, Olajumoke Orisaguna, famously known as Olajumoke Onibread, has come forward with serious allegations against her ex-husband, Sunday Orisaguna, accusing him of physical abuse during their marriage.

This announcement marks a critical moment in her life as she recounts her harrowing experiences of domestic violence, shedding light on the often-hidden struggles faced by many.

During a candid interview with City FM, Olajumoke opened up about the toll that her marriage took not only on her well-being but also on her burgeoning career.

She recalled the trials and tribulations she endured while residing in her husband's family home located in Iree, Osun State.

This environment, she explained, was far from conducive to a peaceful domestic life, and the tension within the household was palpable.

Living in a household dominated by her mother-in-law's hostility, Olajumoke found herself in a situation that felt increasingly suffocating.

"There is no way you stay in such a place that you would not encounter problems," she expressed, highlighting the fraught dynamics that pervaded her life at the time.

She often found herself closing her hairdressing shop early each day, hurriedly preparing dinner in a bid to appease her mother-in-law, who wielded significant influence over her husband's actions and decisions.

As Olajumoke described, "It was whatever she told her son that he listened to. He would not hear my own side of the story before beating me."

This troubling pattern of violence revealed itself in moments of conflict, particularly when misunderstandings arose between her and her mother-in-law.

Regrettably, Sunday would resort to severe physical violence, leaving Olajumoke with battered faces and bruised bodies, and in some instances, resorting to beating her with a belt.

With her dignity at stake, Olajumoke kept her suffering largely concealed,



terrified of burdening her mother, who lived nearby.

"I didn't want my mother to hear," she shared, noting, "Whenever I reported incidents to her, she would say she didn't give me out in marriage to anyone."

Olajumoke further revealed that even her aunt had been sceptical about her marriage to Sunday, cautioning her against the arrangement based on her own experiences living in Iree.

Unfortunately, when the pregnancy issue arose, it left her with little choice, as societal pressures and familial expectations began to loom over her.

Feeling trapped in an oppressive environment, she noted, "Only those who lived with us knew about the beating. I didn't tell anyone."

The gravity of her situation escalated in January 2016, when an argument erupted while frying akara in remembrance of her father-in-law.

An altercation with Sunday's elder sister spiralled into yet another episode of violence, prompting Olajumoke to make a life-altering decision she would leave her husband and relocate to Lagos to reclaim her life.

As she packed her belongings with her two children in tow, Olajumoke felt a glimmer of hope.

"I decided that I was going to leave, move to Lagos, and start working at the bakery because I had been there before," she recounted, reflecting on her past experiences and the strength she had built over the years. Upon arriving in Lagos, she felt a weight lifted from her shoulders as she confided in a close friend who celebrated her newfound freedom, recognizing the oppressive toll that her marriage had taken on her spirit.

"I was enduring all of it," Olajumoke recalled, detailing her relentless hustle to provide for her family while Sunday remained unemployed.

Unfortunately, after their separation, things took a turn for the worse. The aftermath of their split witnessed Sunday tarnishing her reputation, further complicating her journey as she attempted to navigate her career in the aftermath of personal upheaval.

"Everything started going down the drain after separation because he started spoiling my name," she lamented.

New Daily Prime takes a reflective glance back at Olajumoke's rise to fame, which catapulted her into the public eye in 2016 when she inadvertently walked into a photoshoot with British rapper Tinie Tempah, her image captured by renowned photographer TY Bello.

This serendipitous moment helped transform her life, turning her into a sought-after model and symbol of resilience.

Today, Olajumoke Orisaguna stands as a beacon of hope for many, as she fearlessly recounts her story in the hope of inspiring others to break free from the shackles of abuse.

Her journey amplifies the message that truth has the power to liberate, with each revelation reshaping the narrative, not just for herself, but for countless others finding their voice in the struggle against domestic violence. Her willingness to share such intimate and painful details of her past serves as a reminder of the myriad challenges that many individuals face in silence, often feeling trapped by societal norms or personal fears.

Diddy accused of sexually assaulting 39-year-old man in new lawsuit

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Sean “Diddy” Combs is accused of sexually assaulting a then-39-year-old man who attended a 2022 house party hosted by Combs “in a large, glamorous home in New York City,” according to a new lawsuit filed Tuesday night.

The anonymous plaintiff, who now lives in Georgia, said he attended the party with friends and consumed alcohol that had been provided to him by other individuals at the party.

“After consuming the drink, Plaintiff began to feel disoriented and began to lose control of his body and to lose consciousness,” the lawsuit said, mirroring a fact pattern by other anonymous accusers represented by personal injury attorneys who have filed numerous other lawsuits against Combs.

One of those attorneys, Tony Buzbee, was sued this week by an anonymous plaintiff somehow linked to Combs who accused Buzbee and his firm of extortion.

According to the new Combs accuser, when he regained consciousness, “he was in a dark bedroom with black walls, on a bed with black sheets. Everything around him was dark. Plaintiff was horrified to find Combs on top of him, sodomizing him.”

Another new accuser said he was an

actor in the late 1990s and early 2000s when Combs and others sexually assaulted him after luring him to New York for a possible role in a music video.

“Plaintiff heard Combs say ‘he’ll do.’ Combs then told Plaintiff he could sit back down,” the lawsuit said.

The man said he was given a soda spiked with something that caused him to pass out. “His vision was blurry, but he recognized Combs’ chest tattoo and the large gold chain with a jeweled cross on it that Combs wore during the interview. Plaintiff tried to fight him off, but felt dizzy and sick whenever he tried to move. Additionally, Combs’ bodyguard was holding Plaintiff down by the arms,” the lawsuit said.

A third new accuser said she was 17 years old in 2004 when Combs sexually assaulted her at a Fourth of July party in the Hamptons.

“Combs and two of his bodyguards approached Plaintiff and threatened her. Combs told Plaintiff that she would be in danger if she spoke about what had occurred, stating that he ‘ran New York and would ruin her.’ At this point, Plaintiff recognized that at least Combs had sexually assaulted her while she was unconscious. She feared for her life,” her lawsuit said.

In a statement to ABC News on Tuesday, Combs’ attorneys addressed the filing



against Buzbee, saying, “The extortion lawsuit against Mr. Buzbee exposes his barrage of lawsuits against Mr. Combs for what they are: shameless publicity stunts, designed to extract payments from celebrities who fear having lies spread about them, just as lies have been spread about Mr. Combs.”

In regard to the sexual assault filings, Combs’ attorneys said, “Mr. Combs has full confidence in the facts and the integrity of the judicial process. In court, the truth will prevail: that Mr. Combs never sexually assaulted or trafficked anyone — man or woman, adult or minor.”

Car dealer gifts Davido N228m Escalade as birthday gift

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A car dealer, Mr J Autos has announced that they would be gifting Davido a car as a gift to mark his new age.

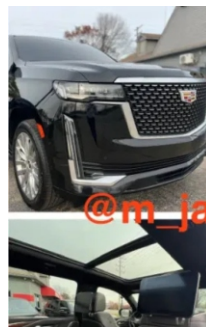
Mr J Autos took to their Instagram page to note that the brand new Escalade reportedly worth over N228M has already been packaged for the singer as his 32nd birthday gift.

The ‘Fall’ crooner turns 32 years today, November 21, 2024.

He had recently taken to social media to note that he would be disbursing N300m to orphans as part of his birthday charity.

They (Mr J Autos) wrote ...

“ON YOUR BIRTHDAY, OUR BRAND, MR JAY AUTOS LLC HAS DECIDED TO GIFT YOU THIS NEW ESCALADE 600 PREMIUM LUXURY. WE APPRECIATE YOUR PATRONAGE AND LOVE FOR THE BRAND. HAPPY BIRTHDAY ORIADE @davido CHEERS TO MANY MORE YEARS.



SHIPPING THIS OUT IMMEDIATELY TO YOUR DESIRED LOCATION WAITING ON YOUR DIRECTIVE!!!"

Davido was impressed by this and took a moment to react to the comment section.

He wrote ...

Davido to livestream 32nd birthday worldwide

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

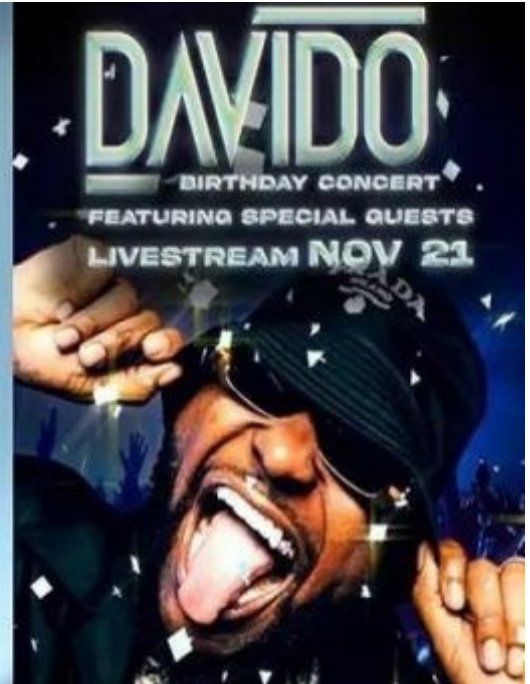
Afrobeat sensation Davido is poised to mark his 32nd birthday in grand style with a live-streamed extravaganza, aptly titled “Davido & Friends Birthday Concert.”

The highly anticipated event is set to take place today, November 21, at Atlanta’s prestigious State Farm Arena, promising an unforgettable experience for fans worldwide.

In a collaborative effort with the innovative streaming service Kiswe, music enthusiasts across the globe can tune in to witness a night filled with electrifying performances and surprises, as well as special guest appearances.

This remarkable concert aims to create a vibrant atmosphere, allowing fans to feel a part of the celebration, even from the comfort of their homes. The excitement surrounding this sold-out spectacle is palpable, especially as it builds upon the significant success of last year’s A.W.A.Y Festival, which showcased Davido’s impressive array of musical talents and his ability to captivate audiences.

Moreover, this year’s celebration transcends the mere occasion of



Davido’s birthday; it coincides with the commemoration of the fifth anniversary of his critically acclaimed album, ‘A Good Time.’

This milestone serves as a testament to Davido’s enduring impact on the Afrobeats genre and his continued evolution as an artist.

As fans eagerly await the festivities, anticipation mounts for what promises to be a spectacular showcase of talent and creativity.

Davido, renowned for his dynamic performances and engaging stage presence, is set to deliver a memorable event that celebrates not only his achievements but also the profound connection he shares with his global fanbase.

Join in the celebration and be part of this remarkable musical journey as Davido turns 32, fostering a sense of unity and joy through the power of music.

Why I like ladies who wear short dresses – Falz

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian hip-hop sensation, Folarin Falana, widely recognized by his stage name Falz, has openly shared his appreciation for women’s fashion, particularly miniskirts and short dresses.

In a candid conversation during a recent podcast episode hosted by Madame Joyce, the acclaimed rapper articulated his fondness for the allure and elegance that these garments can showcase.

Falz eloquently conveyed his belief that short dresses possess an exceptional ability to accentuate a woman’s femininity and confidence.

“I have a particular admiration for short skirts and dresses,” he expressed. “Their design brings out the innate sexiness inherent in a woman. There’s something undeniably captivating about miniskirts that I truly adore,” he stated.

Falz’s comments are part of a broader dialogue surrounding beauty standards and the empowerment of women through fashion. The rapper’s perspective resonates in an era where self-expression is celebrated, and individual style is embraced.

Read Also: Falz Reflects: Threesome Attempts Failed

By highlighting the charm of short



dresses, he not only shares his taste but also encourages discussions about body positivity and the confidence that arises from embracing one’s unique style.

Team Trump assails Biden decision on missiles for Ukraine

By Dave Oludare Oso

Donald Trump's allies voiced vehement criticism Monday of President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine use US-supplied long-range missiles for attacks inside Russia, accusing him of a dangerous escalation.

With two months left in office, lame-duck US President Biden made a major policy change that yields to a long-standing request from Ukraine as it fights the Russian invasion, now in its third year.

The new policy and Biden's pledge to speed up military aid to Ukraine come as the United States prepares for Trump to take over as president in January, having questioned US assistance throughout the war.

Trump has repeatedly promised to end the war, but has not provided details of how he would do so.

With Russia gaining ground and increasing talk of negotiations, Ukraine is wary of being at a disadvantage when it comes to hashing out a peace settlement.

Moscow has pledged an "appropriate" response if the US-supplied missiles are in fact used against Russia, and Trump's team accused Biden of escalating the war for political reasons.

At a daily briefing, US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller accused Russia of escalation by accepting a deployment of North Korean soldiers to fight Ukrainian forces.

Miller noted that Biden, not Trump, was still the US president — for now.

Biden's move, however, complicates things for Trump's incoming administration.

'A whole new war'—

"It's another step up the escalation ladder and nobody knows where this is going," Mike Waltz, Trump's choice to be national security



adviser, told Fox News.

"No one anticipated that Joe Biden would ESCALATE the war in Ukraine during the transition period. This is as if he is launching a whole new war," Richard Grenell, who was acting Director of National Intelligence during Trump's first term, wrote on X.

All has changed now — all previous calculations are null and void. And all for politics," Grenell said.

For now, Grenell does not have a job in the incoming administration but his name had come up as a possible Secretary of State before Trump finally decided to go with Senator Marco Rubio.

Also weighing in was Donald Trump Jr., who wrote on X: "The Military Industrial Complex seems to want to make sure they get World War 3 going before my father has a chance to create peace and save lives."

Trump himself has not spoken publicly on Biden's change of heart regarding the long-range missiles.

"He is the only person who can bring both sides together in order to negotiate peace, and work towards ending the war and stopping the killing," said Trump spokesman Steven Cheung.

Race against time—

Ahead of Trump's return to power, Biden appears to be attempting to ringfence support for Ukraine.

And as the war hits 1,000 days, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga will visit the US Congress on Tuesday seeking to drum up support.

Trump, who takes office on January 20, has said he could end the war "in 24 hours" and has questioned the more than \$60 billion in military aid that the United States has given Ukraine since the war started.

"How do we get both sides to the table to end this war? What's the framework for a deal and who is sitting at that table?" said Waltz.

"Those are the things that I and President Trump, of course, will be working with."

Shortly after his election victory on November 5 over Kamala Harris, Trump spoke with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who called the conversation "constructive."

ICC issues arrest warrants for Netanyahu, Hamas leader, Deif

By Dave Oludare Oso

The International Criminal Court in The Hague on Thursday issued warrants for the arrest of Hamas leader, Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri (also known as Mohammed Deif) as well Israel's President, Benjamin Netanyahu and former defence minister, Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity over the war in Gaza and the October 2023 attacks that triggered it.

Jordan's FM says ICC's decision must be respected

Jordan's Foreign Minister, Ayman Safadi said on Thursday the ICC's decision must be respected and implemented, adding the Palestinians deserved justice after what he termed Israel's "war crimes" in Gaza.

Netanyahu's office says ICC arrest warrant 'anti-Semitic'

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office on Thursday rejected the International Criminal Court's decision to issue arrest warrants against him and his former defence chief, describing them as "anti-Semitic".

"Israel rejects with disgust the absurd and false actions leveled against it by ICC," his office said in a statement, adding Israel won't "give in to pressure" in the defence of its citizens.

France says it is looking into legal implications of Netanyahu ICC arrest warrant

France's reaction to the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will be in line with the court's statutes, the foreign ministry spokesman said on Thursday, but declined to say whether France would arrest the leader if he came to the country.



When asked during a news conference if France would arrest Netanyahu, Christophe Lemoine said it was a legally complicated question.

"It's a point that is legally complex so I'm not going to comment on it today," he said.

UN Special Rapporteur for Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese issues statement on ICC arrest warrant

Mohammed Deif, the leader of Hamas's Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, organized the deadly October 7 assaults on Israel that triggered the war raging in Gaza.

Hamas urges ICC to expand accountability to all Israeli leaders

Palestinian militant group Hamas on Thursday welcomed the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants for Israel's Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and its former defence minister Yoav Gallant.

"We call on the International Criminal Court to expand the scope of accountability to all criminal occupation leaders," the group said in a statement.

Israeli FM says ICC has 'lost all legitimacy' with Netanyahu, Gallant ruling

The International Criminal Court has "lost all legitimacy" after issuing arrest

warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and his former defence chief Yoav Gallant, Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said on Thursday.

"A dark moment for the International Criminal Court," Saar said on X, adding that it had issued "absurd orders without authority".

Netherlands says ready to act upon ICC arrest warrant

The Netherlands is prepared to act upon the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu if needed, Dutch news agency ANP reported on Thursday, citing the country's foreign minister Caspar Veldkamp as its source.

Former Israeli PM Bennett says Netanyahu, Gallant warrants 'mark of shame' for ICC

The International Criminal Court's decision to issue arrest warrants for Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and former defence minister Yoav Gallant, are a "mark of shame" for the ICC, former prime minister Naftali Bennett said on Thursday.

Israel's main opposition leader Yair Lapid also denounced the move by the Hague-based court, calling it "a reward for terrorism".

Canadian billionaire accused of sexually abusing underage girls in prostitution ring

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A Canadian billionaire is facing allegations he sexually abused more than five dozen women when they were children — with the victims alleging they were recruited and paid to participate in his chilling sex ring.

Robert Miller, the founder of Future Electronics, is

accused of repeatedly giving underage girls money and gifts in exchange for sex between 1994 and 2016, Canadian outlets reported, citing that the alleged abuse happened in hotels throughout Montreal.

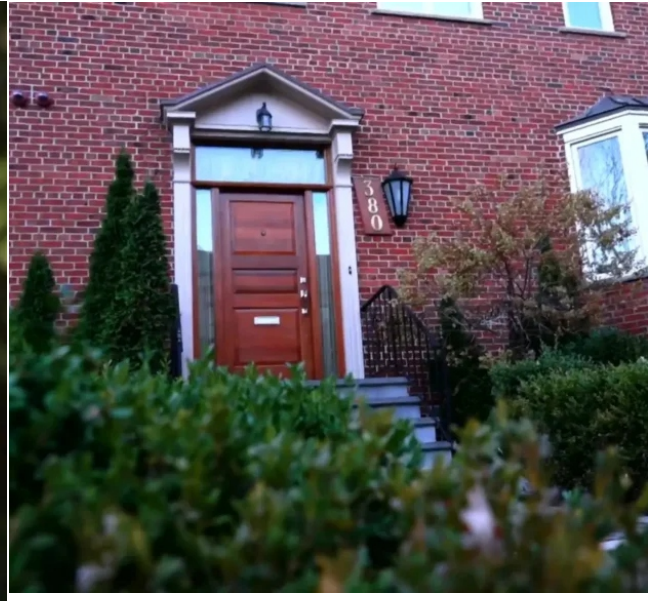
Miller was ordered on Tuesday to fork over two of his million-dollar Montreal homes as part of a lawsuit filed by four of his accusers, who feared the 81-year-old would try to hide his assets as his legal woes worsened.

Robert Miller is accused of repeatedly giving underage girls money and gifts for sex.

The four victims, who are suing for millions, challenged that the two homes — worth more than \$2 million each — were listed under the names of lawyers for several years, according to The Canadian Press.

“It is troubling to note that Miller, a billionaire, has no bank account in his name,” Justice Serge Gaudet said in Quebec Superior Court, noting a “persistent” pattern of listing his fortune and valuables under other people’s names, the outlet reported.

The women accused the alleged



predator of recruiting them as high school students to have sex in exchange for money, describing his prostitution scheme as a “planned system of sexual exploitation” of girls and teens, according to court documents, obtained by Canadian outlets.

One victim alleged she had sex with Miller more than 30 times over two years starting in 1999 when she was 14 years old, according to court documents.

On one occasion, she was given \$1,000 to have sex with Miller — who allegedly refused to wear a condom due to a latex allergy — at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel after being pampered with steak and champagne by one of his employees.

The victim said the alleged sexual abuse left her suicidal as she struggled with alcohol and drugs.

Miller, who has denied the allegations, is also facing a separate proposed lawsuit by more than 50 women who reported that he gave them money and gifts in exchange for sex between 1996 and 2006, CBC reported.

He was also arrested in May on sexual abuse and exploitation charges involving 10 victims, some of whom

were minors at the time of the alleged offenses, which occurred between 1994 and 2016.

A Canadian radio exposed his alleged prostitution ring in 2023, resulting in him stepping down from his company.

Miller stepped down from his tech company following a Radio-Canada Enquête report that exposed him for paying minors between the ages of 14 and 17 cash and gifts in exchange for sex between 1994 and 2006, according to CBC.

The report resulted in dozens of women coming forward to report the abuse they sustained as minors.

Lawyers for the accused, who is bedridden with Parkinson’s disease, have attempted to delay the criminal case due to his health, according to Canadian outlets.

His cases will continue in December.



Mali PM dismissed after criticizing military rule

By Agency Reporter

Mali Prime Minister Choguel Kokalla Maïga has been dismissed after he criticized the military rulers' handling of the transition to civilian rule.

The secretary general of the presidential office, Alfousseyni Diawara, announced the decision on national television stating that "the duties of the prime minister and the members of the government are terminated."

The move came after Maïga's remarks at a rally in Bamako on Saturday, when he accused the junta of unilaterally and indefinitely postponing the transition process that was initially set to begin on March 26.

Maïga also expressed frustration over the lack of debate on the issue, claiming he has been left to rely on media reports for updates.

While military leader Assimi Goïta had



previously promised elections would be held in February, those plans have since been delayed "for technical reasons" with no new timeline provided.

Goïta was among the rebels to overthrow the government in 2020 and then became interim president after

another coup in 2021.

He then announced a 24-month transition timetable starting in March 2022 to return Mali to civilian rule.

The government has yet to announce who will replace Maïga as prime minister.

Gaza civil defence agency says 22 killed in Israeli strike

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Gaza's civil defence agency said Thursday 22 people were killed in an Israeli strike on Gaza City, while medical sources reported dozens of deaths in another overnight air raid.

"We can confirm that 22 martyrs were transferred (to hospital) after a strike targeted a house... in Sheikh Radwan" neighbourhood of Gaza City, civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal said.

Dozens more were killed in another strike at around midnight in northern Gaza, medical sources said. The civil defence has yet to announce a death toll from that strike.

Dozens were killed and wounded in Israeli air strikes on several houses in Beit lahiya in northern Gaza Strip, medics told Reuters on early on Thursday.

The US Senate on Wednesday blocked legislation that would have halted the sale of some US weapons to Israel,

which had been introduced out of concern about the human rights catastrophe faced by Palestinians in Gaza.

79 of the 100 senators opposed a resolution that would have blocked sales of tank rounds to Israel, while 18 approved it and one voted present.

Seventy-eight opposed a second measure, which would have stopped the shipment of mortar rounds, while 19 supported it and one voted present. The Senate was to vote later on Wednesday on a third resolution that would stop shipments of a GPS guidance system for bombs.

All of the votes in favor of the measures came from the Democratic caucus, while "no" votes came from both Democrats and Republicans. The



"resolutions of disapproval" were filed by Senator Bernie Sanders, an independent who caucuses with Democrats, and co-sponsored by a handful of Democrats.

Strong bipartisan support for Israel in Congress meant the resolutions were never likely to pass, but backers hoped significant support in the Senate would encourage Israel's government and President Joe Biden's administration to do more to protect civilians in Gaza.

68 pro-Iran fighters killed as Israel attacks Syrian town

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Sixty-eight pro-Iran militants were killed in Israeli air strikes on the Syrian city of Palmyra, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said on Thursday.

Those killed in Wednesday's strikes included 42 fighters from pro-Iran Syrian groups, 26 foreign fighters, most of them from the Iraqi Al-Nujaba movement, and four from Lebanon's Hezbollah armed group, the monitor said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said "Israeli strikes targeted two positions of pro-Iran groups in the Homs region," including "a Hezbollah site in the Qusair area" near the border where "six Iran-backed fighters were killed."

It did not specify their nationalities.

The Observatory, which is based in the UK and whose sources of funding are unclear, has been accused of exaggerating the effectiveness of Israeli strikes in the past.

A Hezbollah source told AFP that at least one fighter from the group was killed in Israeli strikes in the Qusayr area.

Israel rarely comments on individual strikes in Syria but has repeatedly said it will not allow Iran to expand its presence there.



On Saturday, the Observatory said an Israeli drone strike near the Lebanese border targeted a vehicle carrying "a Hezbollah commander and his companion," without reporting casualties.

Hezbollah did not announce any deaths among its ranks on Saturday.

Woman charged for killing 15-yr-old adopted daughter in Florida

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A former Florida Department of Children and Families employee has been arrested for allegedly abusing her 13-year-old adopted daughter, who was later found dead.

According to the Highland County Sheriff's Office, Diane Natasha Mack, 34, a former guardian ad litem (GAL) and employee of the Florida Department of Children and Families, called police to report the death of her adopted daughter, 13, after discovering her "lying unresponsive" on a floor at their home in the Sun 'n Lake of Sebring golf and recreation community early Tuesday at 12:19 a.m.

Highlands County Sheriff Paul Blackman said the authorities will not quickly forget what they found there.

"This is one of the most disturbing crime scenes I have encountered in more than 30 years of law enforcement," Blackman said Wednesday in a sheriff's office video

announcing Mack's arrest on murder and child abuse charges.

"There are no words I can say that can truly convey the nightmare that this child's life must have been."

According to Blackman, deputies allegedly discovered Mack's daughter dead inside her house, only wearing a diaper and displaying "clear" symptoms of abuse and neglect.

According to the sheriff, Mack revised her time of finding from Tuesday morning, when she first informed authorities she had located the girl, to approximately 3 p.m.

"She was extremely emaciated and obviously malnourished," Blackman said of Mack's daughter.

"Her body was covered in wounds in all stages of healing, including open lacerations that were clearly recently suffered."

The sheriff's office said that once deputies looked into the matter further, they discovered evidence that the homeschooled child had been locked up



in the garage before she died.

"It looks like she was strapped to the garage door and watched from inside the house by a security camera that was installed inside the garage, but we don't know how long she had been there yet," Blackman said.

Before dialing 911, police claim Mack tried to destroy evidence in the garage with pool chlorine while her child was "lying dead on the floor," according to Blackman.

John Prescott, Former Deputy Prime Minister, Dies at 86

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

John Prescott, the former British Deputy Prime Minister who played a pivotal role in the transformation of the Labour Party alongside Tony Blair, has passed away at the age of 86, his family confirmed on Thursday, November 21.

Prescott's death on Wednesday was described as "peaceful," and he was surrounded by his wife Pauline, his two sons, and the music of jazz artist Marian Montgomery.

"We are deeply saddened to inform you that our beloved husband, father, and grandfather, John Prescott, passed away yesterday at the age of 86," the family statement read.

Prescott, a former merchant seaman, trade union activist, and Member of Parliament (MP) for Hull in northern England for 40 years, was one of the most recognizable figures of British politics in the late 20th century.

He became a key figure in the Labour Party's shift to the political center during Blair's leadership, with his working-class background acting as a balance to Blair's more affluent upbringing.

Blair, who appointed Prescott as his deputy in 1997 after Labour's sweeping victory in the general election, expressed his deep sorrow over the loss.

"There was no one quite like him in British politics," Blair told BBC Radio.

"He was more than just a deputy prime minister – he was a force of nature."

Prescott's legacy was also honored by Keir Starmer, the current Labour leader, who called him "a true giant of the Labour movement." Starmer



praised Prescott's tireless defense of working people and his work as a trade unionist.

"He was one of the key architects of a Labour government that transformed the lives of millions of people," said Starmer.

"His legacy will live on well beyond his lifetime."

Throughout his decade-long tenure as deputy prime minister, Prescott made his mark in various key areas, including the environment, transport, and social issues.

One of his most significant roles was leading Britain's negotiations for the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.

Additionally, Prescott's involvement in addressing regional inequalities and his passionate defense of working-class interests remained central to his work in government.

Blair, in a personal letter to Prescott in 2007, reflected on the deputy prime minister's distinctive approach to politics, saying that Prescott's "blend of charm and brutality" was instrumental in keeping the government together during a challenging period. "I was lucky to have you as my deputy," Blair added.

Prescott, who was appointed to the House of Lords after stepping down as deputy prime minister in 2007, had been in poor health in recent years. He suffered a stroke in 2019 and had been living with Alzheimer's disease. Due to his deteriorating health, he ceased to be a member of the House of Lords in July.

A colorful and candid figure in British politics, Prescott's legacy extends beyond his political career. He will be remembered not only for his transformative work but also for his down-to-earth, no-nonsense style that resonated with ordinary working-class Britons. Prescott's death marks the end of an era for the Labour Party, which continues to evolve in the shadow of the changes he helped implement during his time in office. His family, while grieving their loss, take comfort in knowing that he left an indelible mark on the nation's political landscape.

Italian village offers \$1 houses to Americans fleeing Trump

By Dave Oludare Oso

An Italian village is offering villas for \$1 to Americans who were distressed and looking to flee the country after Donald Trump's decisive 2024 presidential election win. The village of Ollolai, located in central Sardinia, is offering real estate for as little as \$1.06 in a pitch to woo Americans who fancy the ex-pat lifestyle in the wake of the Nov. 5 election results, according to a new statement from Commune di Ollolai.

"Are you worned (sic) out by global politics?" a website for the town wrote in a new advert.

"Looking to embrace a more balanced lifestyle while securing new opportunities? It's time to start building your European escape in the stunning paradise of Sardinia."

The promotion boasts of the beautiful climate, incredible food, and ancient



additions that offer a healthier and fuller life.

The mayor has even formed a specialized team to help guide international buyers through every step of the purchase process, according to the outlet.

Ollolai resides in the heart of Sardinia's

Nuoro Province.

That area is world renowned for being one of five places in the world considered a "blue zone."

"Blue zones" are locations around the world where people notably have higher than average life expectancies.

Team Trump assails Biden decision on missiles for Ukraine

By Dave Oludare Oso

Donald Trump's allies voiced vehement criticism Monday of President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine use US-supplied long-range missiles for attacks inside Russia, accusing him of a dangerous escalation.

With two months left in office, lame-duck US President Biden made a major policy change that yields to a long-standing request from Ukraine as it fights the Russian invasion, now in its third year.

The new policy and Biden's pledge to speed up military aid to Ukraine come as the United States prepares for Trump to take over as president in January, having questioned US assistance throughout the war.

Trump has repeatedly promised to end the war, but has not provided details of how he would do so.

With Russia gaining ground and increasing talk of negotiations, Ukraine is wary of being at a disadvantage when it comes to hashing out a peace settlement.

Moscow has pledged an "appropriate" response if the US-supplied missiles are in

fact used against Russia, and Trump's team accused Biden of escalating the war for political reasons.

At a daily briefing, US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller accused Russia of escalation by accepting a deployment of North Korean soldiers to fight Ukrainian forces.

Miller noted that Biden, not Trump, was still the US president—for now.

Biden's move, however, complicates things for Trump's incoming administration.

'A whole new war'—

"It's another step up the escalation ladder and nobody knows where this is going," Mike Waltz, Trump's choice to be national security adviser, told Fox News.

"No one anticipated that Joe Biden would ESCALATE the war in Ukraine during the transition period. This is as if he is launching a whole new war," Richard Grenell, who was acting Director of National Intelligence during Trump's first term, wrote on X.



All has changed now — all previous calculations are null and void. And all for politics," Grenell said.

For now, Grenell does not have a job in the incoming administration but his name had come up as a possible Secretary of State before Trump finally decided to go with Senator Marco Rubio.

Also weighing in was Donald Trump Jr., who wrote on X: "The Military Industrial Complex seems to want to make sure they get World War 3 going before my father has a chance to create peace and save lives."

EPL: Nigerian soccer fans call Reece James 'national grid' after new injury

By Dave Oludare Oso

Reece James, Chelsea captain who has been laid off for most part of last season, and who just resumed playing, has suffered yet another injury setback.

His fresh injury has made Nigerian, especially Chelsea FC supporters to troll him on social media and humorously liken him to the country's frequently collapsing national grid.

The 24-year-old right-back has been ruled out of Chelsea's Premier League clash against Leicester City due to a hamstring issue.

After just recently returned from a lengthy injury layoff, Reece was deemed unfit after feeling discomfort during training.

Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca confirmed the development during a press conference, stating, "Reece, unfortunately, felt something minor, and we don't want to take any chances this weekend."

Known for his immense talent, James has unfortunately battled numerous injuries over the past two seasons.

This reputation led to a wave of reactions on Nigerian Twitter, where users drew comparisons between James' recurring fitness issues and the nation's unstable power grid.

One user, Pablo of UNN, tweeting as @chudy_jnr, posted, "If the Nigerian National Grid was a football player, it would be Reece James."

Another user, BASH-AAR, tweeting as @FaruqBashar, remarked, "The national grid has collapsed again, the one that plays for Chelsea."

Others joked about his frequent hospital visits, with Mr. Right (@MrRightke), writing, "He's had more hospital appearances than match appearances."

While Chelsea fans hope for the



defender's speedy recovery, the comparisons have further fuelled discussions on social media about his durability.

The London club is also grappling with injuries to other key players, including Cole Palmer, Levi Colwill, Romeo Lavia, and Malo Gusto.

Coach Maresca will be hoping to manage his squad's fitness carefully as the busy football calendar rolls on.

Manchester Utd planning African record bid for Lookman

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Record English Premier League Champions, Manchester United are weighing up a €100 million offer for Super Eagles and Atalanta forward, Ademola Lookman, Soccer.net.ng reports.

The former Everton man has enjoyed a rapid ascent to stardom since joining Atalanta in 2022, notably peaking in the last year as he led Nigeria to the AFCON 2023 final, and his club side to the Coppa Italia final and the UEFA Europa League triumph, scoring a hat-trick in the final, and becoming the first-ever player to do so.

His brilliance saw him finish 14th in the 2024 Ballon d'Or rankings and he's a frontrunner for the CAF Player of the Year award after making the final five cut. Paris Saint-Germain were linked with a move for Lookman in the summer, but nothing concrete materialized.

In the last few weeks, there's been interest from Arsenal as they look to bring in another winger but things are about to take a huge turn regarding the future of the 27-year-old.

As per Spanish outlet, Fichajes, Ruben Amorim's Manchester United have already lodged a €100m bid for Lookman.

The former Sporting Lisbon manager is reportedly set to be handed a low transfer budget to work with in 2025, following Man Utd's recent failures in their transfer recruitment over the past years.

Due to this, Amorim is keen on making important signings, and believes Lookman will be vital during his time at Old Trafford.

Lookman's contract with Gian Piero Gasperini's side runs till the summer of 2026, meaning he'll be entering into the final year of his contract next summer, and with talks of a new contract yet to yield fruit, it appears the former RB Leipzig man has eyes set on a move away from Italy.

While Lookman eyes a return to the nation where he was born, it'll



take a while before a decision to join Manchester United is made, as they're about to kick off life under Amorim.

It is very likely that United's position in the league at the end of the season will play a crucial role in their acquisition of their transfer targets.

Should Lookman move to United, it'll be the most expensive African transfer in the history, just after the €83m Napoli paid for Victor Osimhen.

Lookman has scored eight goals and provided five assists in 14 appearances across all competitions so far this campaign.

Reece James suffers new hamstring injury in training

Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Chelsea captain Reece James has been dealt another injury blow, as manager Enzo Maresca confirmed the 24-year-old will miss the Blues' Premier League clash against Leicester City on Saturday due to a hamstring issue sustained in training.

James, who only recently returned to action after undergoing hamstring surgery last season, experienced a "small" problem during training earlier this week. While Maresca downplayed fears of a lengthy absence, he admitted caution would be exercised to prevent aggravating the injury. "We have just one injured player and that's Reece," Maresca said. "Unfortunately, he felt something small in training two days ago, and we don't want to take a risk for the weekend. It's a muscular problem, a hamstring issue.

"We will see. At the moment, it's probably difficult for him to be ready for the Conference League next Thursday, but hopefully, he will be back soon."

The injury is the latest in a string of

setbacks for James, who endured a frustrating 2022/23 season marred by fitness issues. The Chelsea captain underwent surgery in an attempt to resolve chronic hamstring problems but has struggled to maintain full fitness since.

Despite his absence, Maresca will have several key players available, including Cole Palmer, Levi Colwill, Wesley Fofana, Malo Gusto, and Romeo Lavia, all of whom missed international duty but have recovered in time for the trip to Leicester.

Maresca also highlighted concerns about players returning from international duty, particularly those traveling from South America. Moises Caicedo and Enzo Fernandez only returned to training on Friday and are unlikely to be at full fitness for Saturday's game.

"The team will not be at 100%," Maresca admitted. "The players who traveled long distances have only had one training session. We'll assess them carefully before making decisions."



James' absence is a significant blow for Chelsea as they aim to build momentum after a mixed start to the season. The Blues will need to rely on depth in their squad, with Malo Gusto likely to step in at right-back during James' recovery. Chelsea currently sit mid-table in the Premier League and are looking to secure a vital win against Leicester as the season progresses. Balancing league commitments with their UEFA Conference League campaign adds to the challenge, especially with the ongoing injury concerns surrounding their captain.

Giannis Antetokounmpo shines with 41 points as Bucks overpower Bulls

Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Giannis Antetokounmpo delivered a dominant performance on Wednesday night, scoring 41 points to lead the Milwaukee Bucks to a 122-106 victory over the Chicago Bulls. The two-time MVP showcased his versatility with eight rebounds and nine assists, helping the Bucks secure their fourth win in five games.

The Bucks' resurgence has been critical after a slow start to the season, where they won just two of their first ten games. With this victory, they improved their record and climbed to ninth in the Eastern Conference standings.

Brook Lopez and Damian Lillard also made key contributions, adding 21 and 20 points, respectively. The Bucks pulled away late in the fourth quarter after the Bulls, led by Zach LaVine's 27 points, had closed the gap to 104-102 with just under eight minutes left.

"It's all about staying focused," Antetokounmpo said after the game. "We've been working on our chemistry, and it's starting to show."

Cavaliers Bounce Back with a Blowout

Win Against Pelicans

The Cleveland Cavaliers responded emphatically to their first loss of the season with a dominant 128-100 victory over the New York Pelicans. Ty Jerome was the star of the night, scoring a career-high 29 points and draining six of seven three-pointers.

Jerome's breakout performance included a stellar second quarter where he scored 20 points, energizing the Eastern Conference leaders.

"It was a superstar performance," said Cleveland coach Kenny Atkinson. "Those moments don't happen often in the NBA, and tonight was Ty's night."

The Cavaliers, who had their 15-game winning streak snapped by the Boston Celtics earlier in the week, looked every bit like contenders in their dismantling of the Pelicans.

Warriors Extend Home Streak with Win Over Hawks

The Golden State Warriors,



currently sitting atop the Western Conference, continued their strong form at home with a 120-97 victory over the Atlanta Hawks. Andrew Wiggins led the way with 27 points, while Stephen Curry added 23 in a commanding performance.

The Warriors' win marked their fifth consecutive home triumph, solidifying their place as early-season favorites in the West.

Golden State's defense was crucial in holding the Hawks to under 100 points, while their offense clicked behind strong performances from their core players.

Rodri settles Ronaldo-Messi debate: "He has no natural talent"

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Manchester City and Spain midfielder, Rodri, has ignited debate amongst football fans with his remarks about Cristiano Ronaldo, asserting that the Portuguese star lacks innate talent compared to Argentine's Lionel Messi.

The Ballon d'Or winner made the statement during an interview with the Spanish TV program El Hormiguero on Wednesday.

He said, "Lionel Messi is the greatest player of all time, without any doubt.

"Cristiano has managed to match Messi without innate talent. But those of us who have played against them can see the difference."

The 28-year-old shared his experience of facing the two football icons, emphasizing that Messi posed a far more pervasive threat on the pitch.

He said, "With Cristiano, we didn't want him to step into the box because he was lethal there.



"But with Messi, the danger was everywhere on the pitch."

The Spaniard's comments have sparked widespread debate among fans, with many interpreting his remarks as a dismissal of Ronaldo's natural abilities.

Rodri also used the platform to reflect on winning the prestigious Ballon d'Or last month, beating Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior to the

coveted title.

Recounting, Rodri said, "There was a rumour three weeks prior that Vinicius was going to win, so I had no optimism going to the gala.

"But just before arriving in Paris, many people started congratulating me. I didn't even have a speech prepared, but my father insisted I prepare something just in case."

Leicester City's Abdul Fatawu sidelined for season with ACL injury

Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Leicester City's promising young winger Abdul Fatawu will miss the remainder of the 2024/25 Premier League season due to a serious knee injury, manager Steve Cooper has confirmed.

The 20-year-old Ghanaian international sustained the injury during his country's recent international fixture against Angola, which ended in a draw. Cooper revealed the extent of the damage, stating:

"It's not good; it's a serious injury. He's had an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injury that will rule him out for the rest of the season. It's a real blow, first and foremost for him, being a young player, and for us as a team."

A Rising Star Cut Short

Fatawu has been a bright spark for Leicester this season, playing 11 league matches and registering two assists. His electrifying performance against Southampton in October, where he inspired a dramatic 3-2 comeback victory after coming off the bench, highlighted his potential.

"This guy is absolutely lightning," former Premier League goalkeeper Shay Given said following Fatawu's display against the Saints. "He's a brilliant talent, and probably should be starting."

Fatawu's contribution has been vital for Leicester, who currently sit 15th in the Premier League table with 10 points from 11 matches. His absence leaves a significant gap in Steve Cooper's squad as they look to climb away from the relegation zone.

Leicester's Response
Steve Cooper expressed sympathy for the young winger but remains optimistic about Fatawu's recovery.

"It's a common injury in football, but it's still serious. For it to happen at such a young age is tough for him and us. However, it's only a pause, and we'll make sure he comes back stronger."

Fatawu has shown resilience and determination in his career so far, traits Cooper believes will aid him



during his rehabilitation.

"He's a big talent, with lots to learn. With the mentality and character he has, I have no doubt he'll return as a better player and person."

What's Next for Leicester?

Fatawu's injury adds to Leicester's challenges in a season where consistency has been elusive. The Foxes host Chelsea this Saturday in a critical fixture as they aim to steady their campaign.

For Fatawu, the focus will now shift to a long recovery process, with hopes of returning to action next season stronger than ever. His injury is a harsh reminder of the physical toll of elite football, but his talent and potential suggest this is only a temporary setback in what promises to be a bright career.

Szoboszlai's panenka denies Germany late in Nations League clash

Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Liverpool midfielder Dominik Szoboszlai delivered a moment of magic in the ninth minute of stoppage time, scoring a Panenka penalty to salvage a 1-1 draw for Hungary against Germany in their UEFA Nations League Group A3 match.

Szoboszlai calmly chipped the penalty down the center, leaving German goalkeeper Alexander Nubel helpless, after a VAR review determined Robin Koch had handled Mihaly Kata's shot. The equalizer denied Germany a perfect campaign in the group stage, although Julian Nagelsmann's side had already secured top spot and a quarter-final berth. Germany, making nine changes to their starting lineup, looked set for another victory when Felix Nmecha netted his first international goal. Nmecha reacted quickest to a rebound after Nico Schlotterbeck's shot was saved by Denes Dibusz in the 25th minute.

Nagelsmann's experimental lineup

included standout performances from Alexander Nubel, who made several key saves, and Arsenal's Kai Havertz, who nearly broke the deadlock with a shot that hit the post shortly after his introduction in the second half.

Germany, unbeaten in the Nations League group phase, now await a quarter-final clash in March against one of Croatia, Italy, or Denmark.

Hungary, finishing third in Group A3, will enter a two-legged relegation play-off in March to retain their place in the top tier of the Nations League. Despite the draw, their spirited performance in Leipzig showcased resilience, with efforts from Andras Schafer, Zsolt Nagy, and Barnabas Varga testing Nubel early on.

Szoboszlai's late heroics will serve as a morale boost for Hungary as they prepare for the play-offs.

Elsewhere in Group A3, the



Netherlands concluded their campaign with a 1-1 draw against Bosnia-Herzegovina. Brian Brobbey opened the scoring for the Dutch, but Ermedin Demirovic equalized to secure a point for Bosnia, who were coming off a humiliating 7-0 defeat to Germany.

The Dutch lineup featured appearances from Brentford's Mark Flekken, Brighton's Mats Wieffer, and Manchester United's Matthijs de Ligt and Joshua Zirkzee. Liverpool duo Ryan Gravenberch and Cody

Patrick Vieira appointed Genoa head coach amid Serie A struggles

Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Genoa CFC has officially announced Arsenal legend Patrick Vieira as their new head coach. The 48-year-old former French international takes over the reins from Alberto Gilardino, tasked with steering the Serie A club away from relegation. Genoa currently sits 17th in the league table, just one point above the drop zone after a challenging start to the season.

Vieira, a celebrated figure in world football, brings a wealth of experience both on and off the pitch. Known for his illustrious playing career with Arsenal, AC Milan, Inter Milan, and Manchester City, Vieira also boasts a decorated international career. He was instrumental in France's 1998 FIFA World Cup and UEFA Euro 2000 triumphs.

Since retiring as a player in 2011, Vieira has transitioned into management, taking charge of clubs like New York City FC, OGC Nice, and Crystal Palace. Most recently, he managed RC Strasbourg before leaving the French club in July. His tenure at Crystal Palace saw him guide the team to an FA Cup semi-final,

while at Nice, he achieved a seventh-place finish in Ligue 1 during his debut season.

Vieira's arrival at Genoa marks a reunion with Mario Balotelli, who joined the club last month. The pair previously worked together at Nice during the 2018-19 season, a period that ended with tactical disagreements leading to Balotelli's departure. However, their renewed partnership could prove pivotal in Genoa's battle for survival.

Alberto Gilardino, a 2006 World Cup winner with Italy, departs Genoa after nearly a year in charge. Under his leadership, the team managed just two wins in 12 Serie A matches this season and suffered a penalty shootout exit in the Coppa Italia at the hands of local rivals Sampdoria.

Vieira faces an uphill task at Genoa. With only two victories in their campaign so far, the team has struggled for consistency.



However, Vieira's leadership and tactical expertise could be the key to turning their fortunes around.

The appointment underscores Genoa's ambition to retain their Serie A status and build for a stronger future. Vieira's track record of working with diverse squads and managing under pressure will be crucial as he embarks on this new challenge.

Vieira's tenure at Genoa will begin immediately, with his first match as head coach expected to draw significant attention. Fans and pundits alike will be eager to see how he transforms the team's performance in the weeks ahead.